

## **Subjectivity, gesture and language consciousness in the early prose fiction of Jean Genet (1910-1986).**

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SUBJECTIVITY, GESTURE AND LANGUAGE CONSCIOUSNESS  
IN THE EARLY PROSE FICTION OF  
JEAN GENET (1910-1986)

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis interprets the language of the self in both editions of Jean Genet's five works of early prose fiction. Its appendices present the first list of the 65000 words of excisions and variants between the subscribers' (1943-48) and public editions (1949-53).

Many critics have interpreted Genet's works in terms of his life, applying to them a reductive notion of the self. Subjectivity in this thesis is a broader concept which addresses the (self-)representation of narrators and characters. I apply close textual analysis to two types of passage (relating to gestures and language consciousness respectively) which represent subjectivity in non-specular language (where one thing does not clearly reflect or refer to another).

I use the ubiquitous 'geste' as the guide-word for my analysis of gesture since its usage is similar in each of the texts considered. Gestures are of course mediated by language in Genet's texts but, surprisingly, are only *partially* represented in visual terms. Consequently, gestures do not serve to consolidate subjectivity and resist attribution to individual characters. It is rather in the interpretation of gestures that narrators and characters who both perform and interpret gestures can negotiate the assigning of meaning and the concomitant firming up of subjectivity.

Language consciousness is a textual speculation on the production and reception of a passage or text and each of Genet's texts demonstrates different interactions between such speculations and the representation of subjectivity. My emphasis on language consciousness helps to elucidate the structure of the prose text (narrative frames, for example) and its relation to other genres (literary criticism and poetry, for example).

I conclude that in Genet's texts innovative language represents (and sometimes fails to represent) plural subjectivity in complex ways. I argue that the interdependence of these three aspects (language, representation and subjectivity) presents a new paradigm for understanding Genet's texts. Furthermore, I outline in my conclusions how it is possible to apply a comparative analysis of these aspects to other works such as Martin Heidegger's *Zur Seinsfrage* (1955).

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview of the First Chapter

First of all, this chapter seeks to justify my choice of the five works of Jean Genet's early prose fiction as the primary corpus of the present thesis; the five works are: *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*, *Miracle de la rose*, *Querelle de Brest*, *Pompes funèbres* and *Journal du voleur*. This justification is coupled with a review of the conventions, aims and methodology of the thesis (1.2). Subjectivity, the central concept in the thesis, is introduced in 1.3. There follows a critical evaluation of previous studies of the corpus, allowing the distinctiveness of the present thesis to emerge (1.4). The next subsection (1.5) gives an account of the publication history of both editions of the corpus. This history of the texts focuses not on the biography of Jean Genet, but on the wider cultural contexts of their publication: including the different groups of people involved (centred around Jean Cocteau and Jean-Paul Sartre), the different conceptions of the texts (pornography versus philosophy) and two contrasting modes of book production and distribution (clandestine versus public). In 1.6, it is argued that excision, the source of the differences between the editions, is important for the representation of subjectivity in both a concrete and theoretical way. Concretely, the series of excised passages that I analyse in 1.6.1 all use sexuality to explore the relations between people (intersubjectivity) and the way in which their individuality can flow away temporarily during sex. On a more theoretical level, 1.6.2 examines the unattributability of excision which leaves no positive and identifiable trace; the excisions themselves only emerge through comparison between the editions and their provisional status concords with the representation of subjectivity in Genet's texts. The introduction closes with a preview of the analysis of subjectivity in the second and third chapters and the links and distinctions between them (1.7).

### 1.2 Approach, Corpus, Conventions and Methodology

Say the name 'Genet' and some of the first things that will suggest themselves are related to both Genet's life and Genet's work. Homosexuality, criminality and love are but three examples. This connection between life and work seems to be straightforward, but much previous criticism on Genet's work has taken it for granted and disregarded its implications. It is easy to pass from a notion that there must be *some* connection to a causal link which assumes that Genet's life is the producer and Genet's work is the

product. As a consequence, critics continue to use the name 'Genet' to refer to the narrator. This simplifies the narrator and the connection between life and work which is actually extremely complex.

I stress that we must be aware of the difference between life and work at a terminological level and therefore the present thesis uses the following convention to refer to the life: 'Jean Genet (1910-1986)'. The convention denotes the existence of a man in empirical reality by indicating the span of his life.<sup>1</sup>

The present thesis will refer to Genet's work with the following convention which has two formulations: 'Genet's early prose fiction' and 'Genet's texts'; these phrases refer to the primary corpus of this thesis comprising five texts (all first published within six years from 1943 to 1948 inclusive).<sup>2</sup> Genet's early prose fiction forms a discrete unit on account of the following features: cross references to other works in the corpus, recurrent names of characters, recurrent character types and similar situations.<sup>3</sup> These

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The two indispensable works which give the detail of Jean Genet's life (1910-1986) are Edmund White's *Jean Genet* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1993 and Pan Picador 1995, for the paperback edition) and Albert Dichy and Pascal Fouché's *Jean Genet; essai de chronologie 1910-1944*, Paris, Bibliothèque de littérature française contemporaine de l'université Paris VII, 1991.

2

For ease of access, my reference editions will be the inexpensive Gallimard 'Collection Folio' reprint in the case of *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*, *Miracle de la rose* and *Journal du voleur* and the Gallimard 'Collection L'imaginaire' reprint for *Querelle de Brest* and *Pompes funèbres* (this reprint reproduces the text of the first edition, albeit with several minor misprints). The following short forms of these titles are used: *Notre-Dame*, *Miracle*, *Querelle*, *Pompes* and *Journal*. I have chosen the appellation 'early prose fiction' for its precision in terms of genre and publication history. The term 'novel' is acceptable only in more informal contexts as the word 'roman' is principally used to denote popular fiction, whereas Genet's texts usually refer to themselves as 'livre', 'histoire' or 'récit'.

3

All texts except *Querelle* contain cross references to each other; these are analysed in the relevant Language Consciousness section. An example of a general reference is: 'Pourquoi suis-je limité dans mon choix et me vois-je dépeindre bientôt le troisième enterrement de chacun de mes trois livres?' (*Pompes*, p. 9). An example of a specific reference is: '(Je venais d'écrire un roman intitulé *Notre-Dame des Fleurs* dont la publication me valut quelques riches relations.)' (*Journal*, p. 259). Regarding recurrent names, 'Guy' recurs and is found in *Miracle* and *Journal*, Erik is found in *Pompes* and *Journal* and Roger in both *Notre-Dame* (p. 45) and *Querelle*. Of course, the most

features remain constant between the subscribers' and the public editions of the texts.

This thesis aims to provide an analysis of the representation of the self in the language of the text; unlike the life and work which are two elements of different orders, the representation of the self in the language of the texts is not preconstituted. The connections between language and the self and subjectivity have yet to be made. Therefore assumptions, such as the traditional notion that subjectivity is synonymous with individuality, can be challenged. When interpreted in terms of the language of Genet's texts, subjectivity is plural and concerns the ways in which the narrators and characters (who use the first person singular) represent themselves in Genet's texts. This approach contrasts with that of previous studies which base their interpretations of Genet's texts on a circumscribed notion of the life of Jean Genet (1910-1986) grounded in reductive versions of his biography and coterminous with his personality or individuality. The two conventions introduced above thus help us to avoid using 'Genet' as the agent of an effect in the text, as in the following extract for instance: 'Voyez avec quel art Genet se présente dans le *Miracle de la rose*: un voleur désenchanté qu'on emmène en prison.'<sup>4</sup> We will see later (in 1.4) how the authors of the majority of the first (and several of the later) critical texts about Genet's early prose fiction (from the 1950s onwards) adopt the same reductive way of writing both about Genet's texts and Jean Genet (1910-1986).

In my approach to Genet's early prose fiction, I am free to concentrate on both editions of the texts (and their respective publication histories) because the events in the life of Jean Genet (1910-1986) have been dealt with in another place. Surprisingly, Edmund White's biography of 1993 marks a watershed in the history of critical writing on Genet's work because, before that date, critics often felt themselves obliged to

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ubiquitous name in the texts is 'Jean'; this intersection with autobiography is discussed in 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6. One recurring character type is the wily *mater dolorosa*: Ernestine in *Notre-Dame* and Jean D.'s mother in *Pompes*. As far as similar situations are concerned, Gil is erotically fascinated with Querelle in the same way as Louis Culafroy is enthralled by Alberto in *Notre-Dame*; this is a relationship which is reproduced many times in the amorous hierarchies of *Miracle*.

4

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Saint Genet, comédien et martyr*, Paris, Gallimard, 1952 (p. 553). The work was first serialised in *Les Temps modernes* from July to December 1950. My reference edition is the Gallimard 1988 reprint and is referred to henceforth as *Saint Genet*.

comment in detail on the life of Jean Genet (1910-1986), rather than on the relationship between the life and the work or on the work alone. Furthermore, this obligation tended to preclude different approaches, such as my own foregrounding of the linguistic features (gesture and language consciousness) which represent subjectivity.

The first chapter of this thesis seeks to demonstrate that Genet's early prose fiction (in common with all Genet's other texts) has its own publication history distinct from the personal history of Jean Genet (1910-1986). However, I do not intend to use the publication history in the same absolutist manner as some previous critics (analysed in 1.4) have used Genet's personal history: I emphasise the coexistence of two editions of Genet's early prose fiction and analyse the variants between them (the first publication of the texts from 1943 to 1948 for subscribers was followed from 1949 to 1953 by a second, 'public' edition). Therefore my account of the publication history does not privilege one particular edition of the texts. Rather, it illustrates the viability and co-authority of two different editions of the texts (and admits the possibility of more versions if and when the untraced manuscripts of Genet's early prose fiction surface).<sup>5</sup> In the case of the viability of both editions, and in this thesis in general, I favour a more sceptical attitude to singularity. Thus what was known as the corpus of Genet's early prose fiction is in fact plural and can no longer function as a singularity: here we are dealing with two corpora.<sup>6</sup>

As far as methodology is concerned, the present thesis constantly seeks to engage with the language of both corpora of Genet's early prose fiction (which are not fundamentally different from each other, but vary to a significant degree in domains such as the representation of sex and sexuality). For example, as we will see in 1.6.1, each

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All the handwritten manuscripts of Genet's early prose fiction have been lost. However, a half-typescript half-manuscript version of *Notre-Dame* is part of the collection of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin and a similar version of *Journal* which belonged to Jacques Guérin was auctioned at La Maison Drouot in 1986.

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Indeed if one were to consider the L'Arbalète editions of *Miracle* the situation is more complicated still: Marc Barbezat published the text in three versions (1956, 1966 and 1991) which are all different from each other and from the subscribers' edition of 1946 and the public edition of 1951.

of the subscribers' editions contains approximately ten sustained passages which discuss sex, sexuality and subjectivity. Interpretations of gesture and language consciousness are therefore grounded in examples taken from *both* editions of each of the five texts (this is the first study to use this wide range of primary material). Indeed, I would suggest that the relevance of any approach in literary criticism is a function of the prevalence of corroborating examples in the primary texts and according to that measure, gesture and language consciousness - the two pillars of my approach - are of exemplary relevance. Close textual analysis is the preferred technique in the present thesis. Although this technique is interpretative like any other, a text-immanent approach provides a closer link between the directions an interpretation can take and the language of the texts which are being interpreted. Therefore use of this technique which quotes a section of text and then comments on it helps to avoid the application of an interpretative grid to the texts which is alien to them. Criticism which is based on the events in Genet's biography is an example of one such interpretative grid.

There is one text which is closer to the early prose fiction than any other of Genet's texts: *Un Captif amoureux* (Paris, Gallimard, 1986). This is Genet's only other full-length prose work and (at 504 pages) is far more sustained than his political or aesthetic essays. *Un Captif amoureux*, Genet's last work, is not analysed in depth in the present thesis for four reasons. First, it does not contain any detailed writing on gesture. Secondly, although it does contain a speculation about the status of the text which is similar to language consciousness in the early prose fiction, this speculation is concentrated on one question: whether and in what ways this account of Jean Genet's (1910-1986) experience of the Palestinian revolution is fictional. We will see that language consciousness in the early prose fiction ranges much more widely. Thirdly, the early prose fiction texts are so closely related to each other (for the reasons indicated above) that they exclude it. Fourthly and finally, *Un Captif amoureux* does not belong to the early period (1943-1953) and has a totally different publication history. The specific publication history of the early prose fiction is crucial for defining both corpora and the differences between them. Of course, *Un Captif amoureux* is not outside history, because it concerns the struggle to represent the Palestinian revolution adequately.<sup>7</sup>

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Cf. 'He [Genet] never achieves unambiguous political commitment in his writing, but he has written perhaps its finest elegy'; p. 17 (Colin Davis; 'Commitment in *Un Captif amoureux*', *French Studies Bulletin*, 23 (1987) 16-18).

However, this history is very different from that of the early prose fiction, both in the geopolitical sense (for Genet this concerns the aspirations of the Palestinian people - and their Arab allies - set against the state of Israel and her allies in the West) and in the sense of its being the first and most substantial posthumous publication of an established writer.

### 1.3 Subjectivity

But the proliferation of interest in, and work on, subjectivity suggests that [...] it may be on its way to exhaustion.<sup>8</sup>

I disagree with the implication in this statement that the term 'subjectivity' is becoming redundant; but in order to clarify my position let us survey the range of ways in which the term may be understood. First, I quote five of the definitions of the term 'subjectivity' from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Although none of these definitions corresponds to the way in which it is used in the present study, they show characteristics against which my understanding of the term is configured.

The earliest usages which come from the 1820s relate to the 'consciousness of one's perceived states'. In another definition subjectivity is germane to subjectivism: 'the philosophical theory according to which all our knowledge is merely subjective and relative and which denies the possibility of objective knowledge'. Another philosophically inclined definition considers subjectivity as 'the quality or condition of resting upon subjective facts or mental representation, the character of existing in the mind only.' Finally, there are two related definitions to consider; the first addresses 'the quality or condition of viewing things exclusively through the medium of one's own mind or individuality; the condition of being dominated by or absorbed in one's personal feelings, thoughts, concerns etc., hence individuality, personality.' The second definition transposes the definition immediately above into the realm of the work of art: 'that quality of literary or graphic art which depends on the expression of the personality or

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Andrea K. Henderson; *Romantic Identities: Varieties of Subjectivity, 1774-1830*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996; p. 3.

individuality of the artist, the individuality of the artist expressed in his work.'

In all of these definitions 'the mind' or 'consciousness' is singular and sovereign, absolute and exclusive. Indeed the second philosophically inclined definition and the meaning which refers to being 'absorbed in one's personal feelings [...]' are closely related to the doctrine of solipsism. The final meaning is the most interesting for the present approach as it touches on the literary art work, but only to circumscribe it as an expression of the artist's personality or individuality.

At a very general level, my use of subjectivity is associated with neither absolutes nor exclusivity, nor unified interpretations of 'the mind' (and 'consciousness') like those found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. More specifically, my use of subjectivity does not take language for granted. This is because when asking questions about the writing of the self, it is essential to consider the language in which that writing takes place.

The attention to the interrelationship between language and subjectivity (between the text and the self) entails a freeing up of my concept of subjectivity. Writing about the narrator, characters and even the reader in Genet's early prose fiction is brought into the ambit of subjectivity - thus significantly broadening its frame of reference when compared with the definitions from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. My more linguistic and textual use of subjectivity necessarily suggests a more complex plurality, because it is not based on sovereign entities in empirical reality. As a consequence, less than self-sufficient constructions can be admitted into the discussion of subjectivity, constructions such as narrators and ideal readers which are only intermittently referred to in the text and which do not have counterparts in empirical reality. My notion of subjectivity admits the fractional, yet is not measurable. It is the aim of this thesis to analyse the dynamic relations between language and subjectivity (between the self and text). I do not understand this relation in terms of universal applicability where the parameters of each of them are fixed (as in the case of the metre which is the same 'everywhere'). I use the terms 'Language' and 'subjectivity' to describe less than complete concepts, unable to stand alone, related to each other and yet perpetually shifting in interesting ways.

If we look again at the title of the present thesis: 'Subjectivity, Gesture and Language Consciousness in the Early Prose Fiction of Jean Genet (1910-1986)' we see that the singularity of two elements has been put into question. Although they may have appeared at the outset to be two distinct unities: the Early Prose Fiction and Subjectivity have been associated with plurality and their singularity has been put on hold. As far as the unity of the first, 'the Early Prose Fiction', is concerned, I have already indicated

how this thesis presents not one well-defined corpus of primary texts, but two corpora (with excision, the source of the differences between them). The second - Subjectivity - is treated as a notional or virtual singular. That is to say that it is the unitary term for something which always has more than one dimension in Genet's texts. On one hand there is the abstract notion of subjectivity (the dictionary definition unrelated to context) and, on the other, representations of subjectivity in each of the five texts (these include representations of the subjectivity of the narrators, characters and even of the ideal readers). These representations of subjectivity can be altered at a very local level such as from one paragraph to another in the shifting of subjectivity associated with gesture and language consciousness.

Let us now give a concrete example of this process: if we focus on something which appears to be singular in the text - a first person singular used by the narrator of *Pompes* for example - this singular shifts. The shift does not take place along only one axis: for instance the first person plural is not used by the narrator only to create a plural solidarity between him and other characters; in *Pompes* (and in the other works of early prose fiction) the narrator also uses the first person singular on different occasions with different characters. This is to say he speaks 'in the person' of these characters. Although this may appear to be a straightforward example there is a potential for an interesting plurality at the moments when the pronoun 'je' shifts from one character to another. For example after his murder of the French youth in *Pompes*, Erik continues the narration of his own retreat in the first person singular: 'Enfin, j'osai me retourner. Tenant, dans la main gauche [...] le calot noir [...]' (p. 124). The description of Erik's retreat across the countryside continues for a page in the third person until the following passage: 'La nuit me permettait de distinguer un fouillis de branches désolées [...] Je marchais toujours, sans hésitation pourtant. Dans ce paysage nocturne, voisin d'une abbaye où je recopiais ce livre idiot et sacré [...]' pp. 125-126. The shift of the first person from Erik to the narrator is unannounced. With hindsight the first person singular of '[j]e marchais' applies both to Erik and the narrator.<sup>9</sup>

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Unlike Roman Jakobson's concept of a 'shifter', the plurality of the first person singular in Genet's texts is not a combination of two functions (the indexical sign, 'being in existential relation' and the symbolic sign, 'being associated [...] by a conventional rule') rather it is a type of plurality marked by 'je' in which no notion of singularity can be applied. Jakobson's concept is elaborated in *Selected Writings*, volume II, 'Word and Language', The Hague and Paris, Mouton, 1971; pp. 130-133.



What then of other cases in *Pompes* (and in Genet's other texts) when the narrator uses the first person plural 'nous'? It may be argued that the first person plural is nothing more than a convention implying a virtual community between the writer and the reader which is grounded in the rhetorical persuasion of the former directed towards the latter. Therefore the 'we' or 'nous' is an artificial plural. This possibility of an artificial plural does not leave the first person singular untouched. The first person singular is not absolutely singular. Analogous to the way in which the first person plural may be understood as a virtual singular at certain moments, it is also possible to argue that the first person singular can act (and be read) as a virtual plural, of two or more than two (especially if the narrator uses both the first person singular and plural).

In making a connection between subjectivity and plurality the present thesis inevitably enters a contemporary debate on subjectivity, polarised around an acceptance or a rejection of plural subjectivity in connection with postmodernity.<sup>10</sup> Recent studies which mention the term 'subjectivity' tend to stress the plurality of the term as it intersects with gender, race and sexual orientation. This is illustrated by the following quotation:

The postmodern re-inscription of subjectivity re-formulates the self as difference or abyss, (*Abgrund/mise-en-abyme*) placing the grounding concept of the self radically in question (Hatley). The self as difference is read as fragmented and de-centered, affirming multiple values rather than a single set of unitary self-determinations (Bordo and Moussa). The subject is embodied ontologically (O'Connor), gendered (Butler) and culturally charged (Spivak).<sup>11</sup>

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However, the plural self is not confined to the postmodern period or to post-structuralist texts. This is confirmed in the subtitle of Baudelaire's *Les Paradis artificiels* (Paris, Union générale d'éditions, 1962) which compares wine and hashish as '[...] moyens pour la multiplication de l'individualité' (p. 27) and attempts to represent that multiplication in language.

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'Introduction' in *Questioning Foundations; truth, subjectivity, culture* (New York and London, Routledge, 1993; p. 3) introduced and edited by Hugh J. Silverman. Cf. 'Developments in postmodernist theory and practise [sic] and the influence of critics, such as Philippe Lejeune, have led to a more complex concept of the self in writing as a site intersected by discourses of race, gender, class and sexuality' (Claire Gorrara and Charles Burdett, 'Figures of the Self', *New Readings*, volume 2 (1996) p. 1). Cf. also 'The poem [*A place: fragments*] is a significant document in Atwood's elaboration of post-colonial alterity, and one which brings into focus both the problematised subjectivity

However, there is an alternative view which is most ably elaborated by Andrew Bowie:

[...] the view of individuality, exemplified by Schleiermacher, [...] precisely does not posit a unified, self transparent subject - but rather one which constantly strives to attain an impossible identity. The subject's lack of identity is what forces it into interpretation of itself, which is impossible to complete, but which is not simple dispersal. If it were such a dispersal the most basic facts of conscious life would become inexplicable, much in the way they do in post-structuralism.<sup>12</sup>

So for Bowie, the striving to attain an impossible identity (and interpret itself) is an ordering principle which girds the subject. It is this directedness and rationale which gives the subject a form. On a point of information, it is clear from references within Bowie's text that there is an overlap between the writers he considers representative of post-structuralism and the postmodernists of the quotation from H.J. Silverman above; therefore, for Bowie the multiplicity, plurality and complexity of the subject and subjectivity in recent studies, is negative and threatening because it is uncontrolled and cannot be measured against the subject in empirical reality (the present thesis will avoid this use of the subject in empirical reality as the gold standard against which all textual representations of subjectivity are measured).

Commenting on Derrida's phrase 'singulier pluriel', which she reads as a reply to Jean-Paul Sartre's 'universel singulier' (*L'Idiot de la famille*, volume 1; pp. 7-8), Marian Hobson writes:

Dissemination is not multiplicity coming after a primary unity which has split up, but on the contrary, it is a working towards a unity which cannot come about except through a plural. It is this primary unity which is traditionally the condition of possibility of transcendental subjectivity; it is also an impossible unity, and thus a condition of the impossibility of transcendental subjectivity; every circumscription of the singular and of the so-called "individual" opens it out to numbers, to plurality, to plethora.<sup>13</sup>

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characteristic of postmodernist writing and the post-colonial desire to move from positions of marginalisation, not to opposing versions of falsely centred subjectivity but towards an acceptance of identity defined in and through relationships that are themselves shifting, specular and permanently in process of construction' (Colin Nicholson, *Margaret Atwood: Writing and Subjectivity*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1994; pp. 25-26).

12

*The Question of Subjectivity; from Kant to Nietzsche*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990; p. 247.

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'On the Subject of the Subject: Derrida on Sollers in *La Dissémination*' in *Philosophers'*

There is a terminological difference between dispersal in Bowie and dissemination in Hobson (and Derrida) but both commentators share the notion of an impossible unity (Bowie writes: 'impossible identity' and Hobson: 'a unity which cannot come about'.) However, the commentaries bifurcate immediately after this point. What distinguishes them is their understanding of plurality. Hobson does not view it negatively at all: after the impossibility of the transcendental subject there is not nothing and no void, but a plurality of the subject which is presumably configured in language in interesting ways. Bowie, on the other hand, keeps a transcendental subject alive as teleology and also calls on the experience of the subject in empirical reality.

The rather portentous comments of Andrea Henderson in the epigraph to the present section regarding the limited future viability of 'subjectivity' as a critical term, should perhaps be put in the context of a vain desire to limit the varieties of the term that may be admitted. Henderson warns us about 'proliferation' and Bowie about 'dispersal', but the titles of their studies (*Romantic Identities: Varieties of Subjectivity, 1774-1830* and *The Question of Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*) show that they *do* allow a certain plurality of definitions of subjectivity and the subject. There continues to be interest in subjectivity and the title of a later book on the subject acknowledges its variety explicitly: *Deconstructive Subjectivities* (Simon Critchley and Peter Dews eds. Albany, New York, State University of New York Press, 1996). Yet, as Gideon Calder has pointed out, ('Changing the Subject' in *Radical Philosophy*, 83 (May-June 1997) pp. 51-52) while the contributors to *Deconstructive Subjectivities* acknowledge the Heideggerian and structuralist critiques of subjectivity, they also

reject the conclusion that the topic is thereby somehow exhausted, or deconstructed out of meaningful existence. This rejection need not mean, as Critchley and Dews put it in their useful introduction, "a naive attempt to return to a pre-deconstructive, pre-Heideggerian, or, indeed, pre-Kantian position". But it does demand that subjectivity be taken with the sort of seriousness befitting an issue which, far from being outmoded, arises with new urgency just as the traditional, foundational philosophical question comes up against its limits.<sup>14</sup>

Let us now attempt, in the light of this quotation, to be more specific about the nature of multiple subjectivity and multiplied selves in Genet's texts. We will see that the

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*Poets* edited by David Wood (London and New York, Routledge, 1990; p. 133).

attitude to plurality itself which was the source of the contrast between Bowie and Hobson is central to the present study. Here I refer to and continue to use the term 'subjectivity' in the singular. This is because in my use of the term there is at least a structural residue of traditional conceptions of subjectivity (exemplified by *The Oxford English Dictionary* definitions above). By 'structural residue', I am referring to the way that subjectivity always has a singular and individual element, even if this element is only representative of one domain of the many in which the term is active (such as the typographical or grammatical). A notion of singular subjectivity is necessary for one to be able to conceive of the differences between characters which make them individually distinct (even if the text then undercuts this individuality with other uses of language). Singular subjectivity is necessary for the concept of narrative authority, it enables one subjectivity to comment authoritatively on the actions of another. However, subjectivity is interesting and placed at the conceptual centre of the present thesis because Genet's early prose fiction *also* makes an attempt to transcend singular subjectivity. The linguistic methods and practice of this transcendence are complex because singular subjectivity is so closely linked to language in ways that I have outlined above; nevertheless, Genet's texts refer to different models of representing subjectivity which are non-specular (where one thing does not clearly reflect another) and non-referential (where one thing does not refer to another). Such means of representation are necessarily problematic and are mainly developed within Genet's texts as possibilities, as potential expressions and as theories.

#### 1.4 Critical Survey of Secondary Literature (1949-1997)

In her article Nathalie Fredette gives a convincing analysis of critical texts devoted to Jean Genet's *oeuvre* ('A propos de la fiction biographique', *Études françaises* 26, 1 (Spring 1990) 131-145). Fredette has a particularly keen eye for spotting what she calls 'brouillage biographique' (p. 136). This is the assumption in critical texts that the writer and the narrator are synonymous. The result of this assumption is that the writer's pronouncements outside the texts and the narrators' utterances within them are seen as interchangeable. Consequently, Jean Genet's (1910-1986) utterances in interviews are considered, not as a performance in front of a more or less sympathetic interlocutor in a given historical, geographical and linguistic context, but as the source of elements of a poetics of his *oeuvre*. Fredette describes the confusion between biography and the texts as 'complétant les renseignements biographiques par des extraits de textes de Genet' (p.

140). I too consider such confusion dangerous; from the point of view of the critical approach of the present study, it tends to disrupt the boundaries of the texts in the corpora.

Accordingly, I have divided criticism of Jean Genet's works into six categories in terms of the roles that the writer's life and work play within these critical texts. I have assigned categories according to aspects which are most relevant to my own approach. I begin with those texts which are furthest from my approach, moving on to those which foreground the role of language in Genet's early prose fiction. I propose this categorisation with two caveats. The first is that I am able to discuss only the most representative and important texts here, giving an overview of all the published studies devoted to Genet's works up to June 1997. Secondly, discussion of the individual text may be brief. A comprehensive treatment of both of these areas would doubtless necessitate a study of thesis length. As a consequence, there are often other minor aspects in a text which belong to another category. For instance both Thody's and Bonnefoy's texts (in the fifth category - criticism which is sensitive to the language of the texts) also refer to the life of Jean Genet (1910-1986).

The first category is devoted to Jean-Paul Sartre's *Saint Genet* which is founded on Sartre's own version of Jean Genet's biography. Other sources used by Sartre are the writings of Hegel, Marx and Freud. This combination takes the relevance of Genet's prose fiction into new and simultaneously more general domains such as sociology and metaphysics.

The second category comprises the following works which are organised around Jean Genet's life (1910-1986) in a simple way and where the life is a model for the critical text: Bettina Knapp (*Jean Genet*, New York, Twayne, 1968 and New York, St. Martin's Press, 1975 - I use the second edition as my reference text), Tom Fawcett (*Jean Genet*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1966), Joseph McMahon (*The Imagination of Jean Genet*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1963), Arnaud Malgorn (*Jean Genet qui êtes vous?* Paris, La Manufacture, 1988) and Jean-Bernard Moraly (*Jean Genet, la vie écrite*, Paris, Éditions de la Différence, 1988).

The third category comprises the following texts which provide a sustained discussion of a theme (or themes) in the work linked to the life of Jean Genet (1910-1986): texts in this category are: Jean-Marie Magnan (*Essai sur Jean Genet*, Collection poètes d'aujourd'hui, Paris, Seghers, 1966), Gisèle A. Child Bickel (*Jean Genet, criminalité et transcendance*, Stanford, ANMA libri, 1987), Gene Plunka (*The Rites of*

*Passage of Jean Genet, the Art and Aesthetics of Risk Taking*, Rutherford, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1992) and Maurice Chevaly (*Genet I, l'amour cannibale* and *Genet II, l'enfer à fleur de peau*, Marseille, Le temps parallèle, 1989).

The fourth category concerns the following works of criticism which allow the life of Jean Genet as presented in *Saint Genet* and particularly the Hegelian slant of its philosophical interpretation to play an important role in their argumentation: Richard Coe (*The Vision of Jean Genet*, London, Peter Owen, 1968), Georges Bataille (*La littérature et le mal*, 'Collection idées', Paris, Gallimard, 1957) and Véronique Bergen (*Jean Genet, entre mythe et réalité*, Brussels, De Boeck Université, 1993). Works in this category engage in various ways with the problematic of the separation of the writer's life and work.

The fifth category concerns the following texts in which the language of Genet's work plays a role (however minor) in the organisation of the critical texts: Claude Bonnefoy (*Jean Genet*, Paris, Éditions universitaires, 1965), Philip Thody (*A Study of his Novels and Plays*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1968), Laura Oswald (*Jean Genet and the Semiotics of Performance*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1989) and Camille Naish (*A Genetic Approach to Structures in the Works of Jean Genet*, Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1978).

The sixth and final category is made up of two texts which are very different from each other but which both are based around the work rather than the life of Jean Genet and make this work relevant to new and simultaneously more general domains (in the manner of *Saint Genet*): Jacques Derrida, *Glas* (Editions Galilée, 1974) and Hélène Cixous, *Souffles* (Paris, Editions des Femmes, 1975).

All the texts in the first four categories are characterised by the importance they accord to the life of Jean Genet (1910-1986) although they deal with this life in significantly different and more or less intensive ways. I am much more sympathetic to the approach of the studies in the fifth and sixth categories. In general terms, they may be described as more linguistic and text based than the first four categories.

All criticism on Genet's works (apart from a few articles)<sup>15</sup> follows in the wake

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One of the earliest, lengthy (at three pages) and most interesting was: Rinieri J.-J., 'Journal du Voleur' *Temps modernes*, 4th year, number 43 (May 1949) 943-45. The earliest reference to Genet's early prose fiction is in Jean Turlais's: 'Introduction à l'histoire de la littérature fasciste', *Les Cahiers français*, number 6, (26th May 1943) 22-

of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Saint Genet* (1952, but first published in article form in 1950). Sartre had the first word in Genet criticism and all subsequent critical writing needs be written against *Saint Genet*, in the sense that, at the very least, it should clarify its position in relation to Sartre's methodology and conclusions. Sartre's study is not only unique on account of its privileged historical position (it even preceded the public editions of *Querelle* and *Pompes*); in an extraordinary act of publication (Gallimard published Sartre's study as the first volume of Genet's *OEuvres complètes*), *Saint Genet* broke into the domain of Jean Genet as the writer and producer of his own work - one aspect of subjectivity which is usually thought to be unassailable. As Albert Dichy has pointed out, many a reader looking for the first volume of Genet's writing will unwittingly pick up Sartre's study. Instead of offering a sustained analysis and critique of *Saint Genet* which might disrupt the specific focus of this introduction on the main concepts of my own approach to Genet's texts, I will limit myself to an analysis of Sartre's use of the biography of Jean Genet (1910-1986)<sup>16</sup> and the implications of this for the critical works which followed his study.

For Edmund White, the 'concrete biographical material [in *Saint Genet*] could be reduced to a thirty-page summary' (p. 431). It is certainly the case that if concrete biography is to be understood as a history of the life of the individual based on dates, then *Saint Genet* is something other than a biography in this concrete sense of the word. And yet it does trace the intellectual life and nascent artistic sensibility of its subject in great detail. It is certain that Sartre did not intend to write a concrete (factual, event-based) biography of Jean Genet (1910-1986) which would have discussed as many events in its subject's life as possible. Rather, Sartre was fascinated by the question of how and why Jean Genet (1910-1986) came to write. This is the main question to which *Saint Genet* aims to provide an answer. The question concerns not only concrete biographical facts but both a profoundly intimate part of Jean Genet's (1910-1986) motivation and psyche and, given that Genet had no contact with his parents, the effect of the society

I nevertheless accord more space to Sartre's study than many contemporary critics. If *Saint Genet* had an entry in Flaubert's *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* it might read: 'Le qualifieur de 'monumental', puis le passer sous le silence'.

around him on him as a child, that is to say his formative influences. Sartre provides a synthesis of the intensely private portrayal of an individual while also attempting to describe the broader social framework around him.<sup>17</sup> However, it is possible to suggest tentatively that both parts of Sartre's project are different from biography. One could say that the first is more closely related to the domain of autobiography and that the second is closer to social history.

*Saint Genet* is Sartre's attempt to write the biography of Jean Genet (1910-1986) in such a totalising fashion that even *Journal* would become a pendant to *Saint Genet* (in 3.6, I stress how *Journal* can be read as different from autobiography). It is almost as if Sartre wanted to write Genet's autobiography for him. Perhaps this paradoxical formulation of an autobiography written by another expresses best the supreme self-prescribed challenge that *Saint Genet* represents and also the location of its central weakness (presuming to know Jean Genet's intentions and motivations). Once again, we come to the question of subjectivity, certain aspects of which (intentionality, psychological motivation, and drives) Sartre attempted to appropriate from the subject of his study. In quantitative terms, we have already seen how *Saint Genet* is much less than the biography of Jean Genet (1910-1986) written by Edmund White more than forty years later and encompassing the full span of Genet's life and works. In qualitative terms, *Saint Genet* is different from biography and is also a masterpiece if one accepts its right to provide an authoritative interpretation of the events in the life of Jean Genet (1910-1986). In my discussion of Sartre's work in relation to gesture (2.1) I put the 'Genet' who peoples his pages in inverted commas. These commas perform a dual function: first, they distinguish 'Genet' the protagonist of Sartre's study from Jean Genet (1910-1986) and from the narrator in the works of early prose fiction. Secondly, they indicate that Sartre's use of the proper name is problematic. Thus the inverted commas function both as quotation marks and 'scare quotes'.

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In *Jean-Paul Sartre and the Politics of Reason* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993), Andrew Dobson has argued convincingly that this second part of Sartre's aim is not foregrounded and elaborated with the same detail as the first: 'Of course Sartre has placed Genet in a situation, but he has not explained either the historical basis of that situation or Genet's relationship to that history. [...] He can hardly be said to have succeeded in demonstrating the limits of Marxism since he has devoted so little space to discussion of it' (pp. 144-145).



So, when critically evaluating the difference between *Saint Genet* and biography and between 'Genet' and Jean Genet (1910-1986), it is not a case of objecting to the inclusion of biographical material in *Saint Genet*, but of questioning the use to which it is put. Sartre is not transparent in his own description of the methodology of his study. While he acknowledges the importance of 'l'interprétation psychanalytique' and 'l'explication marxiste' (p. 645), no mention is given of the use of the conversations that Sartre had with Jean Genet (1910-1986). Sartre is careful to acknowledge (from the very first page of *Saint Genet*) the unreliability of his subject's own information about a key event in his life: 'Sans doute "cette coupure" [between the sacred childhood of 'Genet' and the rest of his life] n'est pas très aisément localisable: elle se promène au gré de ses humeurs et de ses mythes entre sa dixième et sa quinzième année' (p. 9). However, Sartre's magisterial tone overrides this possible uncertainty regarding the precise dates to affirm that the break ['la coupure'] is valid *in principle*. Sartre continues: 'Peu importe: elle existe, il y croit; sa vie se divise en deux parties hétérogènes' (p. 9). Sartre thus recounts the beliefs of 'Genet' without any reference to their provenance or the presumed mediation between Jean Genet (1910-1986) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980). What is uncertain is not the precise matter of the date of the break which Sartre glosses over, but whether the notion of a break is valid in principle.

The break carries a great deal of theoretical weight in *Saint Genet*. 'Genet' is caught stealing from behind by an adult (p. 26). This is simultaneously the moment when the child within 'Genet' dies, where he is made acutely aware of the link between possessions and being and of the fact that he has no possessions and thus no being. Moreover, this moment is his first engagement with the voice of the other which names him as a thief. Given the vacuum of his being, his activity (stealing) comes to define his existence (the thief). The question that Genet Criticism in the wake of *Saint Genet* must ask itself is whether this break is more important for the coherence of *Saint Genet* than for an interpretation of Genet's early prose fiction or not (I would tend to agree with the former option). Regarding the veracity of his own account, Sartre presents us with a paradox which undervalues the precise details of his narration of the break with the same words used above ('peu importe'), but which simultaneously insists on the importance of the moment as a period in 'Genet's' life. I suggest such precision is only possible if 'Genet' is always made to conform to the rhetorical demands of *Saint Genet*. Sartre writes:

Cela s'est passé ainsi ou autrement. Selon toute vraisemblance il y a eu des fautes

et des châtiments, des serments solennels et des rechutes. Peu importe: ce qui compte, c'est que Genet a vécu et ne cesse de revivre cette période de sa vie comme si elle n'avait duré qu'un instant.<sup>18</sup>

Let us now turn to those critical texts in the second category (Bettina Knapp (1975), Tom Faw Driver (1966), Joseph McMahon (1963), Arnaud Malgorn (1988) and Jean-Bernard Moraly (1988)). These texts display Fredette's 'brouillage biographique' most clearly. This biographical slippage leads to what I call the developmental approach. This is where a spurious development and maturation of Jean Genet (1910-1986) directly affects an equally spurious development or evolution of the narration of the works of early prose fiction. Biographical slippage is represented in the titles of the works of criticism.<sup>19</sup> McMahon's *The Imagination of Jean Genet* explicitly focuses on the writer's imagination as generator of the works. The developmental approach is also found in McMahon's study; he states that the reader will 'see how Genet's imagination matures' (p. 10). The imagination referred to in McMahon belongs to Jean Genet himself - as does the 'vision' which is only found in Richard Coe's (1968) title. In my thesis the only thing which 'belongs' to Jean Genet (1910-1986) is his work (hence the use of the possessive in one of my conventions - Genet's texts). My analysis of the publication history of the work (influenced by external factors such as the Second World War, the publication industry) and the interpretations in the second and third chapters of this thesis all question an absolutely proprietorial notion of belonging. We must remember that Jean Genet is not the only writer represented in his own *Oeuvres complètes*; Jean-Paul Sartre wrote the first volume.

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pp. 26-27.

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Many of the early articles published on Genet in the late 1940s, 1950s and 1960s referred to the author and his life story as literary phenomenon as much as they introduced his writing; their content confirms the biographical viewpoint indicated by their titles. The prime (and first) example is François Mauriac's 'Le Cas Jean Genet' (1949). Other examples include: 'Genet' by K. Botsford (1951); 'The World of Jean Genet' by E. Clark (1949); 'Looking for Genet' by A. Chester (1963); 'The Antitheism of Jean Genet' by A. Cismaru (1964); 'Jean Genet, a Legend to Be Legible' by E. Morgan (1962); 'The Revenge of Jean Genet' by C. Myerhoff (1961); 'Genet and the Indefensibility of Sexual Deviation' by P. Thody (1969) and, finally, 'The Uncompromising Morality of Jean Genet' by H. Yeager (1965).

Furthermore, the critics in the second category tend to analyse the texts in the order in which they were published. Yet Knapp, McMahon and Driver in particular do not merely use chronological order as a non-discursive framework for their arguments, they base part of their analyses on it. Consequently, chronology is no longer simply an order, but becomes rather a development and an evolution, an order with an implied teleology. Accordingly, these critics see an evolution in the sophistication and merit of Genet's early prose fiction from *Notre-Dame* to *Journal*.<sup>20</sup> This approach leads to an undervaluing of *Notre-Dame*: Driver states that its 'method is childlike [...] it reveals with astounding candour the hunger which the pornographic imagination stimulated but cannot feed' (p. 9). The language of Driver's analysis is loaded with overtones of the narcissistic stage in his simplistic application of the Freudian model of infantile development. The implications are that the contents of Genet's imagination are regressive and primitive. To deprecate Genet as an infantile masturbator who has no control over his rhetoric is a simplification. Let us take the following example in which the narrator describes his own reaction to Mignon's triumphant arrival at Divine's funeral: 'De l'avoir évoqué suffit pour que ma main gauche par ma poche percée... Et le souvenir de Mignon ne me quittera pas que je n'aie terminé mon geste' (p. 21). Driver's simplification dissolves when the mediation of language is acknowledged: the characters represented in the text do not correspond to individuals in empirical reality. As a consequence, I would interpret the passage above as an example of the narrator's enactment of a loss of rhetorical control at key moments in *Notre-Dame* (and *Pompes*). This enactment demonstrates the possibility of a violent emotional reaction to writing.

In his analysis of *Notre-Dame*, McMahon (1963) reintroduces Sartre's assertion that the text is masturbatory, yet also perpetuates the myth that it is naive at the same time as being self-absorbed. McMahon's undervaluing of Genet's first text continues in comparisons between *Notre-Dame* and *Miracle*. McMahon contrasts the 'alienation' (p. 46) of the first text with the 'sense of community' (p. 46) in the dual locations of Mettray and Fontevrault in the second text which are said 'to give [it] structure.'

My aim in criticising the developmental approach, particularly in terms of the order in which the works are presented to the reader in the critical texts above, is not to

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Knapp begins her discussion of *Pompes* with the assertion that the text demonstrates 'a more cerebral approach to technique' (Knapp (1975), p. 49).

put forward another single order which aspires to the same objectivity as the developmental model (which is based on the order in which the texts were published). In this thesis I propose to admit that many different groupings of the texts are possible; for instance, my second chapter ('geste') dispenses with an order of analysis which each takes text in turn. Instead it examines the concept of gesture across the corpus because the guide-word of the chapter 'geste' is used in a similar way in all five texts. The third chapter, by contrast, consists of five separate discussions of language consciousness which allow the individual particularities of each text to emerge. The sequence of the texts (*Querelle*, *Notre-Dame*, *Pompes*, *Miracle* and *Journal*) corresponds to the increasingly concrete representation of the narrator; however, I do not present this as an intentional progression, nor privilege one text over another because of a more or less concrete representation of the narrator. In fact no single text occupies the extremes by representing the narrator in a wholly textual or wholly concrete manner. Therefore this thesis presents Genet's texts, not in terms of a hierarchy or of precedence but in a way that allows both comparison and contrast to emerge, without the structure of the critical text itself militating in favour of one hierarchical hypothesis and against apposite lateral comparisons and contrasts.

Let us now move on to the third category of critical texts which discuss a theme in Genet's work which is linked to the writer's life. These texts are more sophisticated in their approach to Genet's early prose fiction than the criticism in the second category; this is because they choose a theme rather than the life of Jean Genet (1910-1986) which is not the model for their treatment and discussion of the texts. However, the life of the writer tends to inform the choice of the theme in the first place as well as provide additional illustrative material at specific points in their analyses. Gisèle A. Child Bickel's *Jean Genet; Criminalité et transcendance* (1987) is a representative example of criticism in this third category.<sup>21</sup> It must be noted at the outset that Child Bickel's book refers to the whole of Genet's *oeuvre* with the exception of *Un Captif amoureux* (posthumously published in 1986). I quote part of the justification of Child Bickel's decision to base her approach on criminality:

Dans cette première phase de notre étude nous tiendrons compte des facteurs économiques, sociologiques et politiques qui contribuent à la formation de

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<sup>21</sup> Child Bickel now publishes under the name of G. Child-Olmsted.

l'univers criminel génétien. Cette phase, la plus sartrienne de toutes, est marquée par la croyance en une réalité extérieure que Genet se propose de décrire et d'expliquer.[...] Aussi subjective que soit la présentation de cet univers, elle forme un tout cohérent.<sup>22</sup>

Leaving aside the question of the acknowledged influence of *Saint Genet* in Child Bickel's approach in this chapter, I would simply point to the use of terms such as 'croyance en une réalité extérieure'. This belief should not be attributed to Genet (as the writer of the texts) because these so-called beliefs are gleaned from reading texts such as *Notre-Dame* which delight in the play of plural narrative positions. Both the beliefs attributed by Child Bickel to 'Genet' and the coherence of the criminal world in the texts are a reduction of their complexity as part of an approach which does not make an initial distinction between writer and work or between work in different genres. Child Bickel's analysis of criminality in Genet's 1949 essay *L'Enfant criminel* (*OEuvres complètes de Jean Genet*, volume 5; pp. 377-393) is quite appropriate, but to conflate it with a selective reading of one theme in the early prose fiction without concentrating on the unique linguistic means of the representation of that genre will lead to simplifications which my approach will avoid. There is always a fictional filter between Jean Genet (1910-1986) and the narrators or characters called Jean, Jeannot or Genet in the five early prose fiction texts, whereas Genet's essay has no narrator and is primarily concerned with the historical reality of the penal colony at Mettray.

After the texts in the second and third categories which contain reductive applications of the biography of Jean Genet (1910-1986), the passage from the third category to the sixth will accompany my gradually increasing sympathy with the methodology and conclusions of the critical texts concerned.

In a critical text belonging to the fourth category (*The Vision of Jean Genet*), Richard Coe is at pains to make a distinction at the outset between his monograph and biography. Coe states in a preliminary author's note that his work is 'a study of his [Genet's] ideas, his art, his imagery and his dreams - in short his vision of the world as he has chosen to give them to us in his poems, plays and novels' (p. vii). Coe makes a distinction between 'Jean-Genet-the-Writer' and the first person in Genet's fiction. Coe continues by stating that:

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*Un Captif amoureux*, p. 25.

the being who says "I" in Jean Genet's novels, poems, plays and essays is as much a fictional character as Harcamone or Mimosa half-IV, as Stilitano or Clément Village. Nothing that Jean-Genet-the-Writer says about this character is necessarily false; but neither is it necessarily true.

Jean Cocteau, who was one of Genet's earliest champions, once uttered a famous paradox: *Il faut mentir pour être vrai*. This phrase should stand in letters of gold at the head of every chapter in this study.<sup>23</sup>

Coe is simplifying matters at this point because there is no singular 'being who says 'I': all the narrators in Genet's early prose fiction are different. Furthermore Coe makes a link between the narrator and ontology in his term 'being' which is not confirmed by the texts. It is more a question of the relative consolidation and fluidity of the narrator's authority and the representation of his body rather than an existence. Coe acknowledges, on the occasion when he discusses subjectivity, that he does so mainly in phenomenological terms, foregrounding perception:

Fundamentally, then, all Genet's characters - including his "I" - are composites: he himself is in part made up of others, and these others, conversely, are partly or largely fashioned out of himself. Perceiver and perceived are inextricably interwoven. The composite character of subjectivity is reflected in the fragmented structure of the novels themselves [...]<sup>24</sup>

While I would sympathise with Coe's questioning of the unity of both character and the narrator, I would not use division and compositeness to describe subjectivity because they are dependent on the possibility that the text can represent the essences which compose the narrator or the character or the 'larger' essence of the character which envelopes them. The discussion of subjectivity in the present thesis bypasses essences completely.<sup>25</sup>

I have included Philip Thody's *Jean Genet: A Study of his Novels and Plays* in the fifth category because it was the first work of criticism in English to argue a significantly

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p. vii.

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pp. 118-119.

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Sidonie Smith provides a similar description of the difference between essences and my notion of subjectivity: 'Barbara Johnson refers to this constant mobility of narrative voice and speaking positions as self division. I would use another mathematical term, calling it self multiplication' (p. 121) *Subjectivity, Identity and the Body*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, University of Indiana Press, 1993.

different thesis from *Saint Genet*. Thody foregrounds irony in the portrayals of criminals and homosexuals (Thody's categories) in the early prose fiction and concludes that Jean Genet (1910-1986) is much more conservative in his attitudes than Sartre suggests because the criminal life is depicted as miserable. I do not agree with this view of Genet as a closet conservative, nor in principle with pronouncements about the writer's views of society based on his fictional writings alone. Notwithstanding this, Thody's study marks a new departure in critical writing on the work of Jean Genet (1910-1986) because he based his critique of *Saint Genet* on a reading of elements in the texts which had been overlooked by Sartre. He quotes several specific instances where criminals and homosexuals (Thody does not allow any sympathy for the characters to disrupt his moral framework which tends to condemn their actions) are represented in a realistic and unflattering way (Thody, pp. 32-35 and 39-42). More important than Thody's use of textual evidence from the texts to prove his conservative interpretation of Genet's fictional universe (which is close to 'brouillage biographique'), is his introduction of the notion of irony into the study of Genet's texts. Thody's ironic reading of Genet's texts means that, after Thody, it is no longer possible to read Genet's early prose fiction, or his other texts for that matter, at face value. Thody's approach can be compared favourably with Joseph McMahon's (1963) (and all the other critics in the second category) as well as with that of Richard Coe (1968) and even Gisèle A. Child Bickel (1987) (who as we have seen acknowledges a great debt to Sartre as far as her methodology is concerned).

There have been three critics in particular who have been able to develop a textually based approach to Genet's early prose fiction in book-length form.<sup>26</sup> The first

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Important articles which fall into this category will be analysed as and when they are relevant in the course of the discussions of Gesture and Language Consciousness. Authors, dates and short titles follow: R. Wilcocks, 'Genet's Preoccupation with Language' (1970), S.A. Heed, '*Querelle de Brest*, un scénario de fantasmes' (1988), S. Meitlinger, 'L'Irréel de jouissance dans *Le journal du voleur* de Jean Genet' (1986), M. Sheringham, 'Experience and Narration in *Journal du voleur*' (1988), D. H. Walker, 'Antecedents for Genet's Persona' (1995), D. Lloyd, 'Genet's Genealogy, European Minorities and the Ends of the Canon' (1990), P. Watts, 'Political Discourse and Poetic Register in Jean Genet's *Pompes funèbres*' (1992), C. Davis (1994) and P. Bougon, 'Genet recomposé' and *Jean Genet, vision, politique, rhétorique* (1991 and 1997). Theses which fall into this category include: P.-M. Héron, *La poésie de Jean Genet dans Journal du voleur*, and *Jean Genet et les avatars du récit* (1990 and 1991), F. Leca, *L'esthétique du roman chez Jean Genet* (1987), J. Neutres, *Le Retour sur le texte; les*

is Claude Bonnefoy (1965), the second Camille Naish (1978) and the third Laura Oswald (1989). I have listed them in order of the success with which they integrate their readings of the text within a broader conceptual framework which is more relevant to the language of the texts.

Despite the small scale of Claude Bonnefoy's *Jean Genet* and the constraints of space which mean that he must deal with his subject in 125 small pages, Bonnefoy stresses the importance of (poetic) language from the outset: 'L'écrivain est là, irréfutable, maître de sa langue comme on l'était au grand siècle' (p. 5). He goes on to justify these initial subjective judgements, but they are important for giving a different cast to his methodology. The difference of his approach is confirmed by Bonnefoy's use of thematic rather than chronological sub-divisions.

The works of academic criticism on Genet's fiction which in my view do the most justice to the complexity of the texts were written by Camille Naish (1978) and Laura Oswald (1989).<sup>27</sup> I will reserve quotation from them and detailed discussion of them until specific points in my own analysis. However, it is appropriate to outline their approaches here. Naish writes, as her title perfectly describes, *A Genetic Approach to Structures in the Work of Jean Genet*. She describes this as an analysis of 'the process by which a work comes into existence [...] ' (p. 13). Although some space is devoted to events in the life of Jean Genet (1910-1986) in Naish's introduction, the genetic approach mainly focuses on those passages in the text which refer to the creation of the texts and the characters, as well as on intertexts. As a consequence, Naish's text provides a sustained analysis of structures in the individual works of prose fiction (though without indicating as I do that structures - such as the introductory and concluding narrative frames - which are initially sketched out in a text such as *Notre-Dame* are not maintained

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*récits de Jean Genet ou la littérature considérée comme jeu de massacre* (1993), K.-N. Liu, *Genet faux conte de Tillancourt, Genet et le genre narratif* (1984), P.-M. Barriquand, *Pompes funèbres de Jean Genet, structure et technique narrative* (1986), C.R. Rowe, *Jean Genet and Hélène Cixous, Reading Genet Through The Feminine* (1985).

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By academic criticism I mean all the monographs which have the words 'Jean Genet' in their title, that is all except: J.-P. Sartre (1952), G. Bataille (1952) (not a monograph, published as part of *La Littérature et le mal*, Paris, Gallimard, 1957), J. Derrida (1974) and H. Cixous (1975).



for the entire length of the text and that their non-completion is as important as their origin). It is for this reason that, within language consciousness, I also look at those passages in the text which read or re-read other sections of text because interpretation, criticism and dissolution are just as important as structures and their origins. Naish's awareness of intertextuality leads her to an analysis of correspondences between *Notre-Dame* and the Bible, between *Miracle* and François Rabelais's *Gargantua* and between *Pompes* and André Breton's *Nadja*.

Of all the academic critics only Laura Oswald in her *Jean Genet and the Semiotics of Performance* (1989) has been able to ground a textually based approach to Genet's early prose fiction coherently in a general theory of communication. As in the case of Naish I will provide more sustained discussion of specific intersections between Oswald's study and my own in chapters two and three of the present thesis. However, let us consider Oswald's study in general methodological terms. Initially she proposes 'an approach which investigates the act which allows subjects to participate in dominant discourse, an act of performance' (p. xiii). However, at the end of her introduction, Oswald goes on to propose an accommodation or synthesis between a 'study of the subjectivity of language' which she associates with semiotics and Jacques Derrida's 'critique of metaphysics'.<sup>28</sup> Although she does not state this directly, it is possible that what she is attempting to do is to put forward a critique of the notion of the speaking subject in semiotic approaches. Oswald will study 'those aspects of discourse which trace the subject's movement in textual performance'. The present thesis will study variation in the representations of subjectivity as they intersect with features such as gesture and language consciousness. However, it is also at this point that Oswald puts forward a developmental aspect to her study arguing that Genet's "theater of the double" evolves out of his early work with subject-address and reference in narrative' and that 'Genet takes up the question of the subject in a problematic of narrative, dramatic, and cinematic voice, exposing the double at the origin of speech and the lie at the origin of meaning.' (p. xvii). I have two reservations about Oswald's approach. The first concerns her

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Oswald situates this accommodation or synthesis in a more precise way by pointing to how an Artaudian notion of pure *mise-en-scène* is taken up and elaborated by Derrida in *Dissémination* (Paris, Le Seuil, 1972 and translated by Barbara Johnson, London, Athlone Press, 1981 (pp. 195 and 291)). Derrida uses the concept of mime play to work out a 'poetics which would transcend theater per se' (p. xvi).

notion of the double which, for me, signals an approach in which only whole subjects can communicate with each other. Oswald is attempting to answer the 'question of the subject' using the concept of the double. In my own approach to the early prose fiction, I suggest that the double is too structurally determined according to a binary system to account for the complexity and multiplicity of the representations of the subject in the texts in question. The second reservation concerns the developmental model (already criticised in my discussion of those works belonging to the second category) which undervalues the early prose fiction and cannot account for its specificity. It is reductive to see the early prose fiction as but one stage on the way to Genet's theatre, not least because Genet's last work *Un Captif amoureux* was in prose. While I am sure that it is not Oswald's intention to undervalue the early prose fiction, it is nevertheless a potential consequence of her approach. There is a possible third reservation which is linked to the second one: in common with Naish, Oswald discusses only *Notre-Dame*, *Miracle* and *Pompes*.

The sixth and final category contains works which transcend the genre of criticism because they are not responses to Genet's work alone, but integrate their response into a philosophical project which goes beyond the works. The most original critical texts on Genet's early prose fiction belong in this category.

*Saint Genet* would belong to the sixth category if it were grounded in a philosophical framework related to the language of the text rather than in Sartre's questionable version of the biography of Jean Genet (1910-1986). Two texts belong squarely within this category; they are H  l  ne Cixous's *Souffles* and Jacques Derrida's *Glas*.

H  l  ne Cixous's most sustained engagement with Genet's works is found in *Souffles* (1975). In common with *Glas*, the other work in this category, *Souffles* does not present a systematic or equal treatment of all five works of Genet's early prose fiction; it refers only to *Pompes*.<sup>29</sup> The first person narrator of Cixous's text is moving through an imaginary topography which is also a topography of the imagination and the psyche.

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The section is entitled 'L'Autre Part' (pp. 78-99). In terms of the number of references and quotations of the individual text, *Glas* foregrounds *Miracle* and *Journal*, followed by *Notre-Dame* and *Pompes*; *Querelle* is only mentioned three times (see *Glassary*, J.P. Leavey Jr. and G. Ulmer, Lincoln and London, Nebraska University Press, 1986. p. 226).

As the title suggests, Cixous's text is concerned with the intersections and echoes running between language, body, text and voice. In French 'souffle' is much more visceral than 'parole' and yet more tentative because, unlike 'langue' and 'langage', it is not specific to a people or to a geographical location. The aim for the narrator and hence also the attraction of *Pompes* is a type of writing which takes account of the body, its specificity at given moments in the text and its potential for change (in growth, puberty and sexual congress). The first person narrator in 'L'Autre Part' explores its counterpart in *Pompes*. Both texts begin with a death to which the narrators work out their emotional reactions. As the narrator of *Souffles* states the difference between herself and the male narrator of Genet's text, she explores the nature of the relationship between the latter and his dead lover Jean:

[...] je ne suis pas dans son flacon. Mais son dernier né, ce fils qu'il s'était donné pour époux, l'autre Jean, le deuxième, le meilleur de lui-même? Non pas lui. Lui qui tire de son corps le corps de ses amants faits pour qu'en leurs flacons son âme réfugie au présent son angoissant désir d'éternité?<sup>30</sup>

It appears that the contents and limits of the vessel of the narrator's self and position within the archetypal family structure are indeterminate. The narrator of Genet's text is thus at once bisexual, incestuous and of indeterminate gender. Cixous's first reading of *Pompes* in 'L'Autre Part' ends with the following question: "C'était un homme." De quel genre?' (p. 84). It would appear that Cixous is focusing on the problematic representation of subjectivity in one of Genet's works of prose fiction, though primarily in terms of sexual and familial difference.

It has already been stated that the works in this sixth category do not fall under the rubric of academic criticism and thus it is permissible for them to write about the connection between Genet's texts and a whole series of questions, themes and problematic areas (as in the case of Cixous's text above), whereas in academic criticism it is usually the case that at least a provisional answer has to be provided for an initial question before a second or third question is proposed. It seems that the more literary and fluid type of writing of texts in the sixth category is particularly suited to the representation of fluid subjectivity which is such an integral part of Genet's works discussed here. If we compare Cixous's open syntactic structures to Richard Coe's mention of subjectivity

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p. 83.

interpreted in phenomenological terms (recalling that Coe foregrounded a rule of compositeness: 'he himself is in part made up of others, and these others, conversely are partly or largely fashioned out of himself' (pp. 118-119)), Cixous has none of the neat equilibrium and reciprocity which is part of Coe's analysis; that is to say that there is no orderly exchange between narrator and character(s) in *Souffles*. Cixous does not describe compositeness at the level of essences or fundamental structure as Coe does. She describes interaction in terms of sexuality and familial relations. Although there is reciprocity in Cixous's analysis ('ce fils qu'il s'était donné [...]') and 'Lui qui tire de son corps le corps de ses amants [...]' (p. 83)) the individual elements are not related to each other in only one way, but as father to son in the first quotation and as part to whole in the second. Cixous proposes other relations (for example the shared name 'Jean') which complicate and intensify the interaction between the first person singular narrator in *Pompes* [whom Cixous calls 'lui'] and Jean, his dead lover. In this way it can be said that Cixous skirts along the border of subjectivity ('le flacon') never pinning it down, but partially constructing it in terms of other things which interact with it.

The present analysis of *Souffles* also provides an occasion to give a brief overview of feminist approaches to Genet's works.<sup>31</sup>

Interestingly, writing about Genet's works is found in one of the founding texts of feminist criticism in English: Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (London, Virago, 1977; first published 1969). Millet provides a critique of the power structures prevailing in society. It is indicative of the overdeterminedness of Genet's writing that it is analysed twice in *Sexual Politics*. Initially, Genet's prose fiction is said to be representative of the

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Here are the key publications with their authors, dates and short titles: K. Millet, *Sexual Politics* (1969), H. Cixous, *Souffles* and *La Jeune née* (1975 and 1977), M. A. Frese Witt, 'Spatial narration in Jean Genet's *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs* and *Le Balcon*' and 'Mothers and Stories of Female Presence/Power in Jean Genet' (1985 and 1989), J. Féral, 'Antigone and the Irony of the Tribe' (1978), C. Running Johnson, 'The Medusa's Tale, Feminine Writing and 'La Genet' and 'Genet's 'Excessive' Double, Reading *Les Bonnes* through Irigaray and Cixous' (1989 and 1990), B. Klausmann-Molter, *Aussenseiter Frau. Zur Darstellung der Frau in den Werken von Genet* (1986), M. Hanrahan, *Djuna Barnes, Jean Genet et la différence des sexes, des sexualités, pour une poétique du désir* (1994), W. Thompson, *Women in the Prose Fiction of Genet* (1989), I. Marcia, *Remembering the Phallic Mother: Modernism Autonomy and the Fetish* (1990), E.W. Williams, 'Jean Genet, White Goddess, the Search for the Woman in *Notre-Dame-Des-Fleurs*' (1980) and E.R. Viti, 'Genet's Fantastic Voyage in *Miracle de la rose*; All at Sea about Maternity' (1990).

prevailing patriarchal power structures; however, Millet goes on to use *Le Balcon* in the conclusion of her study to indicate ways in which the power structures may be overcome. There are several points in Millet's argumentation that contain biographical slippage (I will not detail them because the reader is familiar with that tendency by now). However, when we look closely at Millet's analysis of Genet's prose fiction, it is possible to see that it is by no means condemned although it 'ape[s] and exaggerates the "masculine" and "feminine" of heterosexual society' (p. 19). This is because Millet expertly discerns (in a similar way to her contemporary Philip Thody) an ironic position both in the prose fiction and the way in which it can be interpreted. This irony comes about because 'masculine' and 'feminine' in Genet's texts are freed from biological predetermination.<sup>32</sup> As a consequence, what Millet calls the 'homosexual community' (p. 19) in Genet's texts allows her to analyse the power structures which underlie patriarchy. At the end of her analysis of the prose fiction Millet suggests that 'the homosexual code becomes a satire on the heterosexual one' (p. 19).

Although Millet's approach is far from my own, I admire it because her enquiry centres, not on how realistic ('true to life') the representation of homosexual communities in Genet's prose fiction is, but on this representation as a paradigm for patriarchy as a whole. Millet is not trying to measure the depiction of the 'tantes' in Montmartre in *Notre-Dame* against a putative notion of historical reality (or against the biography of Jean Genet (1910-1986)); instead she examines the structures of submission and domination that inform the fictional representation of the milieu in the text. Feminist criticism is most impressive when, as in the cases of Cixous and Millet (rather than in the case of the specific examples of female spaces given by Mary Ann Frese Witt), it is freed from biological predetermination (the very moment of overcoming gender distinctions is liberating as far as the broader critical relevance of the argumentation is concerned).

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Similar conclusions are offered at the end of the theses of B. Klausmann-Molter (1986) and W. Thompson (1989) from whom I quote: 'Finally we see how the entire notion of a male/female, masculine/feminine dichotomy is put into question, as women may be strong and authoritative, even masculine [sic], while men may be effeminate, transvestites, may even be referred to using the feminine pronoun "elle". In the world created by Genet, what in the end is "male", what is "female"?' (*Dissertation Abstracts International* 50/09A p. 2920).

Some of the interpretations of the narrative structure of the five texts studied in this thesis are similar to those in articles and essays which belong to the category of feminist criticism. The main example here is the work of Mary Ann Frese Witt (1989) who argues that there is 'a female principle (primary matriarchal) as the unacknowledged power behind and ultimate destroyer of what appears to be a male-ordered world in Genet's texts' (p. 174). This comment seems reductive in the light of preceding studies by Cixous (1975) and Millet (1969) which have suggested that Genet's prose fiction is bisexual. Consequently, it is a play of differences which is important rather than the ultimate, but hitherto hidden action of an essence or principle. Nevertheless Frese Witt's application of the Kristevan theory of a radically different female conception of time does bring important structures to light. Frese Witt describes (quoting Kristeva's *A Woman's Time*)<sup>33</sup> "'a concept of time that is all-encompassing and infinite like imaginary space" the time of female subjectivity from which male-oriented linear time (subject-verb, beginning-end, history) emerges, seems to describe what I would call the spatial temporality dominant in Genet's narration' (p. 180). Some of the examples of these female spaces are: Mettray (explicitly referred to as a maternal breast in *Miracle*; pp. 254-255), the prison cell and 'La Féria', the brothel in *Querelle*. However, the fictional possibilities of these spaces are not stressed. That is to say that they figure as self-sufficient descriptions rather than as in Camille Naish's analysis where the prison cell is considered in terms of the role that it plays as a narrative frame in *Notre-Dame*. Naish considers it as the place where the first level of the narrative is situated and the place to which it will return. In my own analysis of the narrative frame of *Notre-Dame*, I discuss a process by which the cell both is and is not hermetically sealed, that is the process by which the narrator receives information about the prison which is outside the cell and the world outside the prison at the same time as he creates (see 3.3.2).

The central problem in certain articles of feminist criticism is the construction of a dichotomy between masculine and feminine and the location of the interesting and non-standard aspects of Genet's texts only within the latter category. Millet demonstrated in 1969 how even the early prose fiction can transcend patriarchy by satirising it (as we

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First published as 'Le Temps des femmes', in *Cahiers de recherche de sciences des textes et documents*, 5 (Winter 1979) 5-19. Translated as 'Women's Time' by Alice Jardine and Harry Blake in *Signs*, 7,1 (1981) 13-35.

have already mentioned). Millet's unambiguous praise, however, is reserved for *Les Paravents*, *Les Nègres* and *Le Balcon*. She considers these three plays as 'his most scathing critique of sexual politics' (p. 19).

To provide a sustained account of the methodology and implications of Jacques Derrida's *Glas* (the second text in my sixth category) for the study of Genet's work would need a study of thesis length. It is important to note that there are only a handful of articles and essays which have explored *Glas* (1974) from the perspective of Genet's writing.<sup>34</sup> We have already noted how Derrida's text is partial in the sense that it does not aspire to a totalising representation, analysis or critique of Genet's work, or even of his five texts under consideration here: *Pompes* and especially *Querelle* are referred to in an extremely cursory way. *Glas* is also partial in the sense that it approaches Genet's texts on its own terms and within a philosophical project which goes beyond them, something it shares with *Saint Genet*.

*Glas* has two columns printed side by side on each page. The left hand column discusses Hegel's works and the right hand discusses Genet's. This right column contains hundreds of short quotations from Genet's poems, plays, essays and also from the five works of early prose fiction in the varying proportions that have been mentioned. Derrida's own text is woven around these quotations and longer ones from Walther von Wartburg's etymological dictionary of French, Stéphane Mallarmé's poetry and St. John's gospel.

Following this brief description of what the right hand (Genet) column of *Glas* contains, the reader might expect a digest of what Derrida's text says about the five works which are the subject of this thesis. However, this conception of Derrida's text is reductive: although Derrida uses quotations extensively, they are not part of a close reading approach in which the text can easily be separated from the commentary. Therefore it is necessary to preface any discussion about *Glas* with an exposition of quotation as a technique. It is crucial to stress that Derrida fails only very rarely to use quotation marks when presenting the quotations, so it is not a case of paraphrase or unacknowledged quotation. Derrida's technique is more innovative because it facilitates

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J.M. Todd 'Autobiography and the Case of Signature, Reading Derrida's *Glas*', *Comparative Literature*, 38,1 (1986) 1-19, and J. Simont, 'Saint Genet et *Glas*,' *Les Temps modernes*, 510 (January to March 1989) 113-137.

the build-up of multiple references and undermines the strict division (in this thesis and in the other works of Genet criticism) between quotation and commentary. Derrida's text does this by commenting on and quoting its own 'commentaries' and by arranging quotations in such a way that they comment on each other throughout the entire text.

Another important aspect of quotation as technique in *Glas* is its use of puns which encourage multiple readings and misreadings; this is because puns do not quote verbatim, but modify (or corrupt) an original reference. Jacques Derrida has directly acknowledged the importance of puns in *Glas*.<sup>35</sup> A pun cites part of its original reference and yet it also modifies the meaning of the original fragment, transforming or deforming it into something different from a verbatim quotation.

Both of the aspects of *Glas* mentioned immediately above suggest that it will be difficult to pin down in Derrida's text a unified critical judgement of Genet's early prose fiction. Just as in the case of the repeated (and sometimes unanswered) questions in Hélène Cixous's *Souffles*, *Glas* does not provide a discursive account of Genet's texts. However, we can learn a great deal from Derrida's specific use of the texts and from the wider philosophical questions suggested by his approach. In one sense, Genet's texts are the fuel on which the right hand column of *Glas* runs, but the column moves along leaving its fuel (the quotations) intact because no single authoritative interpretation is constructed from them.

Let us move on to consider briefly a wider philosophical issue which is linked to my own exploration of subjectivity in Genet's texts. This issue stands at the intersection between an elaboration of the specificity of Genet's writing (something which I do) and the extreme undecidability associated with Derrida's techniques of quotation and punning mentioned above. With the term undecidability I am referring to what Derrida calls the 'determined oscillation between possibilities'.<sup>36</sup> One concrete example of this is the homonymic punning connection between 'seing' (usually synonymous with 'signature' in standard French) and 'sein' (breast, a symbol of the mother). The word 'seing' is

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Puns and the suspicion that they arouse in academic discourse figure in Derrida's short essay 'Proverb: "He that would pun..." [would pick a pocket. (Alexander Pope)]' which is published in *Glassary* (pp. 17-20).

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*Limited Inc*, Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 1988; p. 148.



important in *Glas* because it occurs at the beginning of Derrida's text (p. 8) and is the starting point for a 100 page exploration of names and naming, the signature, the name of the mother and flowers ('genêt' means 'broomflower' in French). But how is 'seing' relevant to the present discussion of Genet's early prose fiction as it does not occur to the best of my knowledge in the five texts discussed here? It is important because 'seing', while it can initially be considered as synonymous with 'signature' and thus closely related to the proprietorial and the particular, breaks free from this relation in *Glas*. The scope of the term's reference is widened to include homonyms such as 'sein' and a suggestion that it is problematic to represent.<sup>37</sup> Let us consider the following example:

Le seing ne souffre pas d'être à cet égard illisible. Si du moins lire veut dire déchiffrer un sens ou référer à quelque chose. [...] Le nom propre ne résonne, se perdant aussitôt, qu'à l'instant de son *débris*, où il se casse, se brouille, s'enraye en touchant au seing.<sup>38</sup>

This passage indirectly valorises the illegibility of 'seing' according to a model where reading is associated with deciphering a meaning or referring to something (for example the simple two part relation of 'seing' to signature mentioned above). We should note that this complexity is described in an oblique way which includes two negatives ('ne souffre pas' and 'illisible'). In this *Glas* distinguishes itself from the discursive cast of Genet criticism as a whole. The failure of 'seing' to refer to something else is not a problem here; it is not relegated to the domain of the absent and ineffective in the passage. The 'seing' has effects in the passage itself. These effects are elaborated in the final clause ('en touchant au seing') and are indirect because it is the proper name which touches the 'seing' and not vice versa. However, the 'seing' does have the necessary consistency to affect the proper name. A proper name such as Jean Genet resounds and yet immediately loses itself or is lost ('se perdant') breaking, clouding and jamming itself as it touches the 'seing'. The 'seing' thus stops its movement but makes it send out a final signal (a

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This freeing of 'seing' is similar in structure to my own exploration of subjectivity in Genet's early prose fiction. I consider subjectivity in plural textual terms, related to the narrators and characters of Genet's texts rather than to the subjectivity of Jean Genet (1910-1986) or to the definitions of the term in the *Oxford English Dictionary* which are based on personality and individuality (1.3).

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p. 41b.

resounding) in the manner of a death knell ('glas' in French) or like the echo of a death rattle, heard after its source is no more. Almost every occurrence of 'seing' in *Glas* also refers to death and destruction (the implication is that this death is not final and is repeated at each occurrence).

My analysis of *Glas* uses the term 'complexity' to describe the range of meanings associated with the word 'seing'. In Derrida's text complexity espouses characteristics which are traditionally thought of as negative, such as illegibility. In the case of 'seing' illegibility is a failure of a certain type of reading: the quotation from *Glas* above presented an intersection between the proper name (the locus of the particular and the proprietorial *par excellence*) and 'seing'; however, the proper name resounded only at the instant of its fragmentation and annihilation (which Derrida calls its '*débris*'). To conclude the present discussion of *Glas*, the complexity of 'seing' is associated with an engagement with the proper name as well as with annihilation. It is important to be open to such readings when considering subjectivity in Genet's early prose fiction. Passages related to gesture and language consciousness will describe the repeated dislocation of the narrator's and the characters' subjectivities; but they are never totally dissolved.

In conclusion to this section, let us recall that Nathalie Fredette's survey of critical texts on Genet's work was mentioned in complimentary terms at the start of this section (1.4); however, her analysis is less convincing as regards the questions of the current (1990) relationship between writer and work and her assessment of the approach of modern criticism. She writes:

[...] la critique moderne pour sa part, en prônant l'effacement du sujet, a été, dans l'ensemble, gênée par l'emphase lyrique, par l'épanchement, par le subjectivisme trop manifeste de l'oeuvre et par la place indue qu'y occupe son auteur.<sup>39</sup>

I would take issue with Fredette because there is no equivalence of terms between 'the subject' which she states modern criticism seeks to erase and 'the subjectivism' in the text. Subjectivism as a theme is not synonymous with the subject; it is already at one remove from it. My analysis in the present thesis will seek to put the distinction between the writer and the work to one side and concentrate on the representation of the self in language.

It is important to recall that none of the texts above (nor Fredette's selective survey of them) was written in time to benefit from the existence of Edmund White's biography of Genet (1993). Critics are no longer tempted to perform two functions in their writing, elaborating unknown details (or reinterpreting known ones) from the biography of the writer, while also interpreting his work.<sup>40</sup> I suggest that White's biography will draw a line under the second category of criticism which exhibits biographical slippage and a developmental approach. More imaginative approaches to Genet's texts which do not necessarily refer to his life in its detail are necessary now and in the future.

### 1.5 Publication History

One of the ways in which this thesis hopes to make a particular contribution to critical writing on Genet's early prose fiction is by insisting on the specific publication history of these five texts. This is to continue the shift in emphasis in criticism away from the personal history of Jean Genet (1910-1986) initiated by Thody (1968) and independently consolidated by Derrida (1974) and Cixous (1975).

The texts were first published for subscribers from 1943 to 1948. The publication history of the subscribers' editions will be contrasted to the circumstances of the publication of Genet's *Oeuvres complètes* by Gallimard from 1949 to 1953 - I call these texts the public editions.

#### 1.5.1 The Subscribers' Editions (1943 to 1948)

It is important to set this account of the publication history of the subscribers' edition of Genet's early prose fiction within the context of the Second World War and the restrictions and hardships that it caused to every day life in France. It is interesting, how in times of crisis, people adapt by falling back on older systems (as well as developing new ones). Genet's texts were able to be published on account of (literally, in a financial sense) an age-old system which ran parallel to the mainstream, that of patronage.

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This is evinced in the acknowledgements of and references to White in the special numbers of journals devoted to Genet's *oeuvre* which have appeared since the publication of White's biography in 1993. Cf. *L'Esprit Créateur*, 35,1 (Spring 1995) pp. 4 and 84 ; *Europe*, number 808-809, (August-September 1996) 29 and *Yale French Studies, Genet; in the Language of the Enemy*, number 91 (June 1997).

However, even if there had been peace in France in the 1940s, it is certain that no contemporary French publisher would have risked bringing onto the open market texts with sexual content such as that of Genet's early prose fiction (Edmund White notes that Gallimard actually instigated the clandestine publication of *Pompes*; see p. 339). Hence the subscribers to these books did not pay an open market rate for a pre-existing product, instead they invested in the writer's work. They had the impression that each book was made to order for them and owed its existence to their investment. Genet himself was quite happy to intensify the intimate and exclusive relation with his subscribers. He signed forty copies of a collectors' sub-edition of the subscribers' edition of *Querelle* which bore the motif 'Pour les Amis de Querelle' (this edition also included a set of twenty nine unsigned erotic lithographs by Jean Cocteau). The preface announces a further acquisition opportunity for collectors:

Nous allons regrouper ses aventures sous le titre 'Capable du fait'. L'ouvrage fini l'année prochaine au printemps, nous pourrons le vendre à l'automne.<sup>41</sup>

The exclusivity of the subscribers' editions is perpetuated in three other ways: first, by the high quality of the production of these books, secondly, by their limited print runs, thirdly and finally (as a consequence of the first two) by their high price.

All the books were printed in a quarto format on high quality paper. Richard Coe was the first scholar to catalogue and document the physical descriptions of Genet's early prose fiction in meticulous detail.<sup>42</sup> For instance the subscribers' edition of *Miracle* was first published by Marc Barbezat in 1946, printed on single ply Rives paper and in 18 point red and Black Bodoni, with cream boards in a slipcase; some copies were made in the publisher's leather. The print run of the subscribers' edition numbered between 350 and 525 copies (Coe (1969), p. 117). Each copy of *Miracle* cost nine thousand francs, the equivalent of £126 at 1997 prices. If we include the less sumptuous second print runs of the subscribers' editions, I estimate that before the public editions began to appear in 1949 there were approximately 7170 copies of Genet's early prose fiction in existence.

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no page number.

42

R.N. Coe 'Jean Genet; a Check-list of his Works in French, English and German.' *Australian Journal of French Studies* 6,1 (January-April 1969) 113-130.

The high price and exclusivity of these books means that they are unlikely to have been lent widely (and certainly not in any organised way, through libraries for instance). Therefore the total readership of the subscribers' editions is unlikely to have numbered much more than ten thousand.

The subscribers' editions were not books in the legal sense of the word. The law of 19th May 1925 required all printed matter to have a 'dépôt légal' which means that a copy was deposited at the Bibliothèque Nationale. Until 1941 there existed a provision whereby editions with a small print run were exempt. The publishers of the subscribers' editions, Marc Barbezat, Paul Morihien (who was Jean Cocteau's secretary) and Robert Denoël all acted as if this provision was still in force and did not apply for a 'dépôt légal'. Moreover, Paul Morihien and Robert Denoël did not include their own names as publishers in the colophons of the subscribers' editions, using instead conventions which had been associated with the anonymous publication of pornographic texts since the eighteenth century at least.<sup>43</sup>

The publication details of the subscribers' editions are as follows. This list is based on Richard Coe's (1969). The corrections and elaborations are a result of the work done by Albert Dichy.<sup>44</sup>

*Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*, Monte Carlo [Paris], 'aux dépens d'un amateur' [Paul Morihien], no date [1944] [print run of 350, completed in December 1943, but sewn and distributed after the Liberation]; réservé aux souscripteurs.

*Miracle de la rose*, Lyons, Marc Barbezat, 30th March 1946, print run of 475; réservé

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Entry 541 of Guillaume Apollinaire's 1913 catalogue of the *Enfer de la Bibliothèque Nationale* is '*La Foutro-Manie - poème lubrique, à Sardanapolis* [Sardanapalus, the last king of Nineveh is associated with luxurious effeminacy], aux Dépens des Amateurs, 1780 [the date is genuine].

44

Albert Dichy, 'Aventures éditoriales' (*Le Monde* (10th September 1993) 26). There is a minor error in this article. Dichy states that the subscribers' editions were published from 1943 to 1947; it was in fact from 1943 to 1948. I would like to record my gratitude to Albert Dichy and to the Institut Mémoires de l'édition contemporaine for permission to consult and quote from their copies of the subscribers' editions of Genet's early prose fiction.

aux souscripteurs.

*Querelle de Brest*, no place [Paris], no name [Paul Morihien], no date [November-December, 1947] [print run of 525] 'strictement hors commerce'.

*Pompes funèbres*, à Bikini [Paris], 'aux dépens de quelques amateurs' [Paul Morihien], no date [November-December 1947] [print run of 470].

*Journal du voleur*, no place [Geneva], 'aux dépens d'un Ami' [Albert Skira], no date [September-October 1948] [print run of 400, for subscribers only].

It should be noted that all of these books bear the author's name, although only *Miracle* has the name of the publisher. There are four important points here; first, details not included in the original colophons are reproduced here in square brackets. Secondly, the conventions 'Aux dépens d'un Ami' and 'Aux dépens de quelques Amateurs' concealed the name of the publishers. Thirdly, many details such as dates are missing from the colophons of the subscribers' editions. Fourthly, some details are falsified, as exemplified by the spurious place names; Bikini in the case of *Pompes* and the more plausible Monte-Carlo in the case of *Notre-Dame*.

The motivation for this equivocation and dissimulation on the part of Genet's early publishers was undoubtedly the erotic content of these books and this defined the method of their publication in the past.<sup>45</sup> Genet's work is still being read erotically today. For instance the student newspaper at Leeds University (*Leeds Student*) included a photograph of Genet and quotations from *Notre-Dame* (p. 77) in an article on erotic fiction in May 1996.

However, Genet's early prose fiction could not be contained in this faithful relationship of patronage and exclusive artistic production: the five texts had enough philosophical and artistic merits to break out of that relationship - in commercial terms,

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In 1965 Maurice Girodas, the editor of the famous Traveller's Companion series of erotic fiction, chose extracts from *Notre-Dame* for an anthology of erotic fiction: *The Olympia Reader, Selections from 'The Traveller's Companion' Series*. New York, Grove Press, 1965; pp. 306-326.

they were ready for repackaging.

### 1.5.2 The Public Editions (1949 to 1953)

*Journal* was the first work of Genet's early prose fiction which was available to the general public (in 1949). From its title, we can see that Jean Genet (1910-1986) had taken on a role as the thief. The title also posits a clear narrative relation in which the narrator is Jean Genet the thief (we will see in 3.6 that this is not confirmed by the text). So *Journal* and not *Notre-Dame* was Genet's first public text. *Notre-Dame* is more fragmented and the conventional autobiographical element is woven into the fluidity of the narrative persona. The habit of reading Jean Genet for the narrator began with *Journal*.

What are the main aspects of the publication history of the public editions of the texts? They were the first widely available editions distributed through a national retail network. The first print run of each volume of the public editions was of the order of 2500 to 3000 copies. Laurent Boyer, Genet's literary executor at Gallimard, has told me that in the course of eight reprints nearly forty thousand copies of the volume of the *Oeuvres complètes* which contains *Notre-Dame*, *Le Condamné à mort* and *Miracle* have been produced. That figure does not include the reissuing of the revised texts in Gallimard's Collections Soleil, Folio and Biblos.<sup>46</sup> It is worth recalling, by way of comparison, that the total number of copies from all print runs of the five texts in the subscribers' edition was only 7170.

It could be argued that the use of mass production techniques was nothing unusual for a promising work of the post war period published by Gallimard. However, Jean-Paul Sartre's and Simone de Beauvoir's intercession as promoters of Genet's work was an extraordinary factor. Regarding the aims of his *Saint Genet*, Sartre writes: 'retracer en détail l'histoire d'une libération; voilà ce que j'ai voulu' (p. 645). Sartre was justifiably fascinated by the process by which Genet overcame the contingencies of his illegitimate

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The 'Collection Soleil' is a de luxe edition of the *Oeuvres complètes* text. The dates of publication for the three works appearing in the 'Collection Folio' are as follows: *Miracle* in 1977; *Journal* in 1982 and *Notre-Dame* in 1986. The public edition of *Journal* appears in the 'Collection Biblos' (1993) with a reprint of the subscribers' editions of *Pompes* and *Querelle* as they appeared in the 'Collection L'Imaginaire' (in 1978 and 1981 respectively). The 'Collection Biblos' text also has a preface by Philippe Sollers.

birth, his lack of formal education and his isolation from intellectuals and still became a writer. For Sartre, Genet was an exemplary, living embodiment of his theory of history. Genet had realised the possibility of liberation that was open to all human beings and especially to the French in the early years of the Fourth Republic. The French had been liberated and in part had liberated themselves from the Occupation and its limitations of personal freedom and freedom of expression. These new readers of Genet believed that as a thief he had spent much of his adult life including the war years in prison - but that he had liberated himself by writing in prison: he had something in common with them. In short, he was a man of the Liberation.

The publication of the public editions of the texts by Gallimard proceeded without a hitch. Nicholas Harrison in his *Circles of Censorship* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995) has noted that censors are principally concerned with what seduces and subverts, rather than with immutable standards regarding the levels of sexual explicitness and violence in a text.<sup>47</sup> Genet's texts were not censored despite high levels of sexual explicitness because the public had been forewarned because Jean Genet's works of early prose fiction were made a 'special case' by the authorities. The same reasoning which made Genet a special case to whom the laws should not be applied, occurred in his pardon by the President of the Republic Vincent Auriol in 1949. It is probable that the main reason for the non-censorship of the public editions of Genet's early prose fiction was the presidential pardon and the main reason for the presidential pardon was the attestation of the artistic merit of Jean Genet (1910-1986) by Jean-Paul Sartre and Jean Cocteau.<sup>48</sup>

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A concrete example of the unpredictability of the censor in relation to Genet's work was recounted by Philip Thody in his 1967 inaugural lecture at Leeds University 'Four Cases of Literary Censorship'. Thody indicated the importance of historical contingencies regarding the censorship of Genet's plays. In 1957 the authorities in Paris claimed that they could not guarantee the safety of the actors in a forthcoming production of *Le Balcon* and it was cancelled. However, when the French government of 1966 wanted to publicise the death of its Algeria policy they allowed *Les Paravents* to be staged at the Odéon theatre. The run was not cancelled despite violent right-wing protests in what became known as 'la bataille des *Paravents*'.

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'Nous avons décidé d'avoir recours à votre haute autorité pour prendre une mesure exceptionnelle en ce qui concerne un écrivain que nous admirons et respectons tous: Jean Genet. Nous n'ignorons pas que son oeuvre est en marge des lettres et ne saurait courir les rues. Mais l'exemple de Villon et de Verlaine nous décide à vous demander votre aide pour un très grand poète.' Quoted in Jean-Bernard Moraly, *Jean Genet, la vie écrite*,



## 1.6 Excision

Excision is an activity; but it is also the result of that activity: the portion of text which has been removed. In Genet's early prose fiction substantial excisions of approximately sixty five thousand words have occurred; however, to mention the excisions also begs the question as to who performed the activity of excision. It is to an illustration of one important type of excisions made (those concerned with sex and sexuality) and to a justification of my own decision to catalogue the excisions in full in the appendices of this thesis that 1.6.1 (A Concrete Consideration of Excisions) will be devoted. It could be said that the two subsections of 1.6 are in conflict with each other because in 1.6.1 I valorise the excisions in their own right, whereas in 1.6.2 (A Theoretical Consideration of Excision and Excisions), I emphasise both the provisionality of the excisions and the unattributability of the activity of excision. There is a rationale behind this conflict: 1.6.1 is formulating a strategy in the face of a future authoritative edition of Genet's texts<sup>49</sup> and 1.6.2 depends on my own elaboration of the interdependence of language, representation and subjectivity as a new paradigm for understanding Genet's texts and in particular on the possible application of that paradigm outside Genet's corpus.

### 1.6.1 A Concrete Consideration of Excision and Excisions

Although other critics have consistently underplayed their importance, the excisions are important for the sake of completeness.<sup>50</sup> The excisions from the subscribers' editions

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Paris, Éditions de la Différence, 1988; p. 216.

49

Gallimard plans to publish the five early works of prose fiction in the 'Collection La Pléiade' in the year 2000.

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One of the main spurs towards the sustained analysis of excision in the present thesis was the 'Note on Authorship' at the start of Laura Oswald's *Jean Genet and the Semiotics of Performance*. Despite the other strengths of Oswald's book the 'Note' left many questions unanswered. It interpreted the differences between the editions in terms of censorship (attributed neither to Genet nor to an external censor) and made a sweeping judgement about the whole of the excisions without presenting their full diversity as I do in the appendices of this thesis: 'all of the censored passages contain profane language or depict illicit sex acts [...]'. Similarly, Thody (1968) writes: 'The novels were slightly bowdlerised [...] but the essential of the works was conserved' (p. 18). Naish (1978) writes: 'Last but not least, her [Divine's] divinity is explicable in terms of her skilful

of *Notre-Dame*, *Querelle* and *Miracle* are catalogued in this thesis for the first time. The excisions from the subscribers' editions of *Pompes* and *Journal* were listed in two unpublished maîtrise dissertations at the University of Paris IV, but in both cases in a way which did not give a clear impression of their context by means of a comparison between the subscribers' and public editions. Unfortunately, one of the maîtrise dissertations contains occasional omissions and the other includes additional interpretative material; thus both obscure the precise measure of the excisions as *the difference* between the subscribers' and the public editions.<sup>51</sup>

To illustrate how excisions are important in a concrete sense, I will briefly examine those excisions which deal with sex and sexuality in a sustained manner (this subsection was written before I read Leo Bersani's writing about sexuality in *Pompes* in *Homos*).<sup>52</sup> The excisions concerning sex and sexuality are important for the study of

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performances in bed, the most expressive of which have been excised from Gallimard's commercial version of the text' (pp. 81-82). However, Naish does not quote any of the sexually explicit excisions from *Notre-Dame*. Even White (1993) writes: 'He [Genet] had marked up the original editions when Gallimard had decided to reprint, but those changes do not substantially alter the texts' (p. 465).

51

Pierre-Marie Héron, 'La Poétique de Jean Genet dans *Journal du voleur*' (unpublished maîtrise dissertation, University of Paris IV, 1990); Pascale-Marie Barriquand, 'Pompes funèbres de Jean Genet, structure et technique narrative' (unpublished maîtrise dissertation, University of Paris IV, 1986).

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Like his *A Future for Astyanax; Character and Desire in Literature*, (Boston, Toronto Brown and Company, 1976. pp. 286-291) Leo Bersani's *Homos* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1995; pp. 151-181) contains some of the most powerfully argued and insightful writing about *Pompes*. In his recent work he analyses betrayal in the text and in particular 'how [it] is inscribed in homosexual love itself' (p. 157). Referring to p. 163, Bersani writes: '[i]n psychoanalytic terms, the fury of anality (suggested by the image of the attacking rat) reinforces the murderous impulses of orality. But Genet's amorous attack also eliminates differences between him and Jean; rimming is a symbiotic operation. He erases the difference between Jean and himself not only through his fantasies of making a meal of his lover's corpse, but also through his project of disappearing into Jean's body, of being "digested" by Jean from below' (p. 158). The serious reservation about Bersani's analysis concerns his use of the name 'Genet' to indicate both the narrator of *Pompes* and Jean Genet (1910-1986). This is not a merely pedantic objection because it affects his reading of the rimming episode (Bersani himself mentions 'the slight discursive dizziness we experience in the constant references to "Jean" and "Genet" as two' (p. 158); this 'dizziness' is at the centre of my

subjectivity because they exhibit its characteristic bivalency; it is both singular and plural. This is because sexuality relates to psychological and physical make-up and is thus unique to the individual. However, in sexuality the individual also engages with the other so it is the domain of intersubjectivity *par excellence*.

Let us now consider the excisions concerning sex and sexuality. Although I disagree with Laura Oswald's theory that *all* the excisions from the subscribers' editions of Genet's early prose fiction fall under the rubric of sex and sexuality, a significant proportion do indeed fall into that category. While many of these are small scale excisions of a word or two which may be considered as vulgar or taboo,<sup>53</sup> each of the texts contains as many as ten excisions in which sexually explicit language is used in a sustained manner, but in which subjectivity, its limits and intersubjectivity are also at issue.<sup>54</sup> The principal modes of representation of subjectivity with which these sustained excisions deal are as follows:

1. The individuals engaged in sexual acts lose the distinctiveness of their human physical form. They are viewed as a new and unusual entity which is comprised of combinations

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subjectivity-based approach). The episode takes place between Paulo and Hitler in the text and Bersani does not explain his rationale for transposing this episode to Jean Decarnin and Genet. Moreover it is not clear to which Jean Decarnin and Jean Genet he is referring, to the pair which existed in empirical reality or the characters in *Pompes*? I believe that it is to both and my approach examines how this apparent equivalence between them comes about.

53

The following examples in which the underlined words were excised from the subscribers' edition of *Journal* are representative: '[...] comme mon mouchoir taché d'un sperme essuyé en était la preuve' (p. 23); '[...] trouver un mec, il avait encore envie de se faire enculer' (p. 116), and '[in a footnote] une moto, j'ai bandé, j'étais ému' (p. 140).

54

Genet's texts are never merely pornographic in an unimaginative and crude sense. Indeed a concomitant to the erotic reading of Genet's texts that was mentioned as part of the publication history is an undervaluing of the same texts as holding 'a special and superior place in the erotic canon' thus excluding them from the literary mainstream (See J. Weightman, 'The Indiscreet Charms of an Enfant Terrible', *The Times*, (8th July 1993) 37). This reductive view is thankfully less common today than in the forties and fifties.

of their individual elements.<sup>55</sup>

2. There is a specific focus on the body fluids exchanged during the sex act because their congress is also a mixing of individual identity to the point that it is unrecognisable. These excisions usually involve the recycling and repeated exchange of fluids (or simulacra) between individuals.<sup>56</sup>

3. On other occasions a third partner is included in a sex act, not as an equal participant but performing a mediating role between the first two partners.<sup>57</sup>

4. During penetration by the male, the penis gives certain attributes of its owner to the penetrated partner. The penis is therefore a supplanting and transforming presence.<sup>58</sup>

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An example of the first category of excision is: '[...] qui l'avaient de leur verge perforée. Et sans souci de leurs goûts, elle les accouplait: c'étaient un chasseur du Claridge, un boxeur italien, un officier canadien. Elle imagina de beaux monstres michel-angelesques à quatre têtes, quatre bras, quatre sexes enfouis et huit jambes' (*Notre-Dame*, p. 119). Other examples can be found in *Miracle* (p. 385) and *Pompes* (pp. 222-228 (and especially p. 225)).

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An example of the second category of excision is: 'Ce qui sort du nez doit être mouché, puis perdu. Il faut encore que je me cache pour sucer le doigt qui vient d'explorer ma narine. Je ne sais plus si cette phrase, aussitôt dite, fut décisive mais, quand un soir, Villeroy voulut, pour la première fois, selon son expression: "Me bouffer la chatte", il ramena contre le mien son visage mouillé de ma sueur odorante et de son propre foutre qu'il y avait déjà déposé. Alors, je léchai sa moue boueuse et j'enfonçai ma langue dans ses narines, heureux de faire miens les déchets de son corps' (*Miracle*, p. 464). Other examples can be found in *Notre-Dame*, p. 43; *Journal*, p. 46 and *Pompes*, pp. 60-61 and 62.

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An example of the third category of excision is '(C'est Gabriel qui lui fit ce récit [...]). Son frère et lui firent un jour l'amour avec une jeune putain, l'un devant et l'autre derrière. Leurs mouvements s'accordaient. Mais, quand la jeune femme voulut baiser la bouche de celui qui était allongé par-devant elle, elle eut la honte de trouver cette bouche prise par celle du frère. Ils s'étaient rejoints par-dessus la tête de la femme...' (*Notre-Dame*, pp. 194-195). Further examples are found in *Miracle*, p. 378 and *Querelle*, p. 163.

58

An example of the fourth category is: 'Doucement le grand nègre s'allongea sur mon dos. Doucement, mais avec une sûre précision, sa verge me pénétra. Elle ne tremblera pas. Elle n'aura pas les soubresauts précipités de la mienne. Cette présence en moi me comblant au point que j'oublierai de jouir. Le nègre plus immense que la nuit' (*Journal*,

5. Despite the profound engagement with the other which occurs during sexual acts, the individual can also realise his fundamental separation and alienation from the partner particularly at the moment of orgasm. On some occasions this singularity is considered with despair and on others with triumph.<sup>59</sup>

The first three cases concentrate on miscegenation and mediation. In the first the boundaries of the individual are broken, indeed it is not a case of an individual (someone who cannot be divided) in the traditional sense because division and rearrangement takes place. In the second and third the focus is on the mediation between individuals engaged in a sex act. In the second case body fluids are exchanged and re-exchanged and thereby represent the unity of the congress through a mixing of the products from two individuals. This is a paradoxical movement in which one identity is gained through the loss of two individual identities. In the third case the third partner is objectified to perform a similar role to the body fluids in the second case. The fourth and the fifth cases are related; the fourth describes the abolition or forgetting of the self that occurs during penetration by the male. However, the fifth and final case stresses that the abolition or forgetting cannot be taken for granted. In each example the penetrated partner keeps something of himself in reserve. There is nothing absolute about the act of will or the individuality which holds something back (that is to say the individuality can be undermined at a later stage). Nevertheless it *is* a moment of resistance.

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p. 267). Other examples are found in *Notre-Dame*, p. 194; *Querelle*, pp. 190-191 and *Pompes*, p. 183.

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An example of the fifth category is: 'Profondément enfilé par ma queue, il devient autre chose que soi-même, autre chose qu'un ami. C'est une étrange partie de moi qui conserve encore un peu de vie propre. Nous ne formons qu'un seul corps mais il est à deux têtes et chacune d'elles s'exerce à éprouver sa propre volupté. A l'instant qu'elle jouit, cette excroissance de mon corps qui était mon ami devient sans tendresse, s'assombrit. Dans l'obscurité je devine sa dureté et qu'un voile d'ombre s'étend sur son visage crispé par la souffrance et le plaisir. Je sais qu'il sait ce plaisir le tenir de moi, l'attendre de ma main qui le branle mais je sens qu'il n'est plus attentif qu'à sa venue. Si nous sommes reliés par ma queue toutes nos relations amicales sont coupés. Nos bouches qui pourraient les rétablir peut-être ne peuvent se joindre. Il ne cherche qu'à s'empaler d'avantage. Je ne puis le voir car il a murmuré: "Eteins la lumière", mais je sens qu'il est devenu autre, étrange, lointain. C'est quand il jouit par moi que je le sens me haïr' (*Journal*, pp. 121-122). Further examples can be found in *Notre-Dame*, pp. 148 and 163 and *Pompes*, pp. 304-305.

Let us now return to the justification of my decision to catalogue the excisions in a way that allows the differences between the editions to emerge. In the light of the excisions concerning sex and sexuality, one of the main principles of an imminent re-publication of the early prose fiction in the 'Collection La Pléiade' should be a reintegration of the excisions: any excluded from the main body of the text should be reproduced as variants in endnotes. All sexually explicit material should be considered for reinclusion. However, it is most important to reintegrate the passages of two or more sentences in length because, as we have seen, they do not only make direct reference to sex and sexuality, but also to subjectivity and interpersonal relationships as well. However, it must also be possible for the reader of the (partially) reconstituted text to be able to distinguish which portions of the texts were excised; some typographical convention such as italics or underlining could be adopted to convey this. In this manner at least the trace of the activity of excision as performed by Jean Genet (1910-1986) is retained.

If these sustained excisions about sex and sexuality were reinstated in the case of *Querelle*, the reader would understand better the fascination that *Querelle* holds for the other characters in the text. The subscribers' edition has a network of sexual relations which complements the narrative connections between *Querelle* and the other characters in the text. *Querelle* has sex with Nono, Gil, Mario, Joachim (the Armenian) and Mme. Lysiane (and in all but the last case the encounters are described in great detail). Without this sexual network the reader has less of a sense of *Querelle* as the emotional linchpin of the text because in the subscribers' edition he leaves each of his partners with a physical memory of himself. There is exactly the same network (without the fascination and physical memory) associated with Divine in the subscribers' edition of *Notre-Dame*.

### 1.6.2 A Theoretical Consideration of Excision and Excisions

The theoretical consideration of excision and excisions elaborates the provisionality of the excisions and the unattributability of the activity of excision; however, its starting point is situated clearly within the domain of the concrete. This is because there is a general consensus among critics that the excisions were made by Jean Genet (1910-1986). Although, to the best of my knowledge, there is no record of any direct commentary by Jean Genet (1910-1986) on the activity of excision or on the excisions themselves, Edmund White notes that he has seen a complete set of the proofs of *Journal*, *Querelle* and *Pompes* corrected in Genet's hand (cf. White, p. 764). However, notwithstanding

this, excision still confounds forensic speculation as to *why* the excisions were made. It is impossible to provide a verifiable explanation for individual excisions, just as it is impossible to discern a logic which dictated the activity of excision in an individual text taken as a whole. And it is precisely this ability of excision to confound logical analysis seeking to reconstruct intention which I will focus on in this subsection.

However, let us first briefly criticise an interpretation of the excisions which attempts to reconstruct intention. Bernard Frechtman, Genet's American translator, describes the differences between the subscribers' and public editions of Genet's early prose fiction as a meliorative revision performed by Jean Genet (1910-1986). Frechtman writes:

The cuts and changes which he [Genet] made were dictated solely by artistic considerations and not by prudence. A comparison of the text of the Gallimard edition and those of the earlier editions would show that the passages which were dropped do not exceed in violence and frankness others which were retained. This holds for *Our Lady of the Flowers* as for the other works. Genet revised but did not censor his books.<sup>60</sup>

Frechtman's final assertion is technically true; however, having actually performed the comparison to which he refers, I would add that the excisions are so frequent and substantial that there *is* a difference, for instance in the degree of 'frankness' between the subscribers' and public editions of each text considered as a whole. However, I would suggest that the ability of excision to confound logical analysis only allows us to make general comments on the degree of difference between the editions and not assertions. Therefore, I cannot categorically assert that the primary motivation for the excisions was self-censorship. Frechtman's analysis is a speculative interpretation and has no claim to absolute authority.

Pursuing the theoretical issue, which concerns how excision confounds the reconstructive analysis of intention, it is possible to draw a parallel between this interpretation of excision and the concept of subjectivity in the present thesis which is different from that outlined in the previous subsection (1.6.1). We have seen in this chapter, how this thesis questions the validity of those critical approaches which seek to equate the narrator of Genet's texts with Jean Genet (1910-1986). Excision presents us with a complementary case which is in harmony with my approach emphasising more

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'Genet Censored?' in *New Statesman*, 67, 1725 (3 April 1964) 520.

pluralistic interpretations of subjectivity which take account of the language in which it is mediated and the fact that difficulties of mediation can cause the representation of subjectivity to be incomplete. Excision as an activity is difficult to attribute completely to Jean Genet (1910-1986). This does not necessarily mean that I am implicating another person in a putative revision or censorship of the subscribers' editions of Genet's texts, but I argue that it is impossible for the critic to construct a unitary consciousness behind the activity of excision, whose acts are rational and accessible to forensic logic. Put in another way, if we attribute - as Frechtman does - the excision to an individual he is likely to be as diffuse as the narrator of any one of Genet's texts, rather than as unitary and unequivocal as Frechtman's 'Genet' (the 'Genet' for whom Frechtman speaks in the quotation above).

### 1.7 Subjectivity in the Second and Third Chapters

This introduction has attempted to lay the conceptual and historical basis for the analyses of gesture and language consciousness which follow. The second chapter is entitled 'Gesture' and analyses the concept of gesture by means of the guide-word 'geste' which is used in a similar way in all five works of Genet's early prose fiction. Such an examination of a single word throughout the five texts will have a synthesising force. After critically reviewing sociological approaches to human movement which consider it as an alternative language, I analyse how gesture is mediated by language in these literary texts. The most important consequence of this mediation is that gestures are only partially represented in visual terms and not necessarily dependent on one character. This incomplete visual representation and independence shifts the reader's attention to the language in which the gesture is interpreted. Radical representations of the self occur when interpretation is intermeshed with the plurality of the self in Genet's texts; for instance there is frequently a shift in a third person singular narration to allow the character to describe his own gesture in the first person singular using a reflexive verb and quotation marks. I argue that this is not a narrator's strategy, but an acknowledgement that one narrative centre is not sufficient and an attempt (however partial) to create a rival subjectivity and vocabulary. It is an attempt to transcend singular subjectivity.

The third chapter, entitled Language Consciousness, concerns references by the narrator to the production and reception of a passage, section or the whole text. I use passages which contain such references to analyse the representation of the narrator and



the processes of interpretation because in language consciousness, language intersects with forms of subjectivity. The narrator and the language vary from attempts at metalingual commentary by a transcendental self, to the devolution of interpretative authority to characters in a text (thus eroding the functional distinction between narrators and characters) and even to the undermining of previously affirmed discursive aims. For instance, in *Pompes* the narrator's initial aim of commemorating Jean D., by means of historical references to the Second World War during which his death occurred, is partially undermined by quasi-autobiographical and poetic modes.

In contrast to the chapter on gesture, the chapter on language consciousness conducts its analysis primarily within the context of the individual work. This is because the concept of language consciousness helps to elucidate the works' basic structures (for example their narrative frames). Structure has been one of the points emphasised because previous studies have tended to ignore the often initially clear organisation of the individual text, preferring to stress the anarchic disaggregation of structure and the non-linear plot full of interpolations (with the exception of Camille Naish (1978) discussed in 1.4). Therefore the third chapter acts to counterbalance the synthesising force of the analysis of gesture in the second. While it may be argued that the thesis increases its specific focus from the second to the third chapters, I would also suggest that this structure seeks to maintain an equilibrium between the competing forces of gesture and language consciousness. This is because if there is too much emphasis placed on the individual narrative constellations of each work, the thesis runs the risk of becoming fragmented, and if, on the other hand, there is too much emphasis on the occurrence of a single word, the five individual texts in the corpus will appear to melt into a single amorphous mass of words.

## 2.0 GESTURE

### 2.1 Introduction

#### 2.1.1 Overview of the Second Chapter

The introduction to this chapter begins by clarifying the most important premise regarding the use of the concept of gesture in the present thesis; this premise emerges when gestures in prose are distinguished from gestures in empirical reality (2.1.2). The fundamental difference concerns the mediating role of language in the case of gestures in prose. The next subsection (2.1.3) evaluates previous critical approaches to gesture beginning with sociological approaches which consider gesture as an alternative language; they are farthest removed from my own analysis. The subsection then considers Honoré de Balzac's *Théorie de la démarche* (1833) which remains convinced of the indexical value of gesture. Finally the subsection moves on to the previous discussions of gesture in Genet's texts and their limitations which arise from insufficient attention to the range of the term 'geste' in Genet's texts. The following subsection (2.1.4) introduces 'geste' as the guide-word for my own analysis of gesture in Genet's early prose fiction and also indicates the advantages and limitations of such a technique. The final subsection of the introduction (2.1.5) provides a commentary on a selection of representative examples of the word 'geste' in Genet's texts.

Shifts in Narrative Authority and the Naming, Interpretation and Description of Gesture (2.2), takes the analysis of the use of 'geste' one important stage further by bringing in two elements and analysing the relationships between them. The first is: subjectivity, or rather, the subjectivities of the narrator, character and ideal reader. The second element is different forms of language which give meaning to gestures (naming, interpretation and description). The task of the section is to examine, by means of representative examples (2.2.2), whether there is a shift in the representation of the subjectivity of either narrator, character or ideal reader from when the gesture is performed to when it is named, interpreted or described. In addition, can different types of shifts be attributed to naming (simple marking of the gesture), interpretation (relating the gesture to the wider narrative context and/or to domains which do not concern human movement) and description (a more detailed elaboration of the gesture, frequently in visual terms)?

The word 'geste' is used with higher frequency with reference to characters than

in any other domain; hence the section on Gesture and Character (2.3) is the core of the second chapter. The concept of a character in a literary text shares many aspects in common with more traditional notions of subjectivity (as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1.3). For instance it implies a globalising, generalising concept of a given individual. The traditional notion of gestures within this received concept of character is that they *belong* to a character. Gestures which are possessed by character in this way are required to be visually distinctive. However, the occurrences of the term 'geste' in Genet's early prose fiction demand a different conceptual framework: because gestures are not completely defined in visual terms, it is difficult to attribute them to a single character in an unproblematic way. There is no visually distinctive element of gesture which consolidates character in a straightforward manner. The importance of the different ways in which language conveys the meaning of gesture in prose makes the term 'geste' in Genet's early prose fiction an ideal means to investigate further the relationship between forms of subjectivity and forms of language

As far as the intervening subsections are concerned, Narrative Mediation of Gesture and Character (2.3.2) examines a passage in which the narrator refers to the relation between gestures and the representation of characters. The following two subsections, Gestural Models (2.3.3) and The Double Gesture (2.3.4), are linked thematically because the gestural passages that fall into these categories present gesture as visualisable. However, it will be seen that notwithstanding this, the gestures in these subsections are not linked absolutely to a particular character. 'Gesticulation' (2.3.5) serves as a transition because on one hand it gives emphasis to the gesture in a specific context in common with Gestural Models and The Double Gesture, while on the other hand it uses a new and original turn of language to extend the range and the significance of gesture outside the boundaries of the term which have been valid thus far. The final two subsections The Concentration of Gesture (2.3.6) and Gesture and 'la mise à mort' (2.3.7) are also linked thematically because they both attempt to connect gestures with attributes which are conventionally considered to be outside their semantic range. The first concerns the connection between gesture and the language of weight and especially density. The second deals with the brevity of gestures connected with the death of a character as a representation of absolute power.

In the conclusions of the chapter (2.4) I review the diversity of the types of language which are associated with gesture in Genet's early prose fiction. Gesture is so important for the question of subjectivity which is at the centre of the present thesis

because it foregrounds cases where representation is not straightforward, where the connection between signifier and signified is problematised. It is a remarkable characteristic of these cases of problematic representation that singular subjectivity is undermined or at least temporarily put into question at the same time. Therefore, the writing of the term 'geste' in Genet's early prose fiction gives us a foretaste of the theoretical implications, for this thesis, of subjectivity in Genet's early prose fiction. These implications concern the different modes of the interdependence of three concepts: plural subjectivity, the problematisation of representation and the foregrounding and modification of language (in terms of semantics or genre).

### 2.1.2 Vision, Human Movement and Language

When the subject perceives human movement in the empirical world it is primarily the faculty of sight which is active. It is the subject's eyes which are mainly responsible for the perception of the velocity and form of the movement. However, there is a fundamental distinction between the perception of human movement in the direct visual spectacle of the performing arts such as drama and dance and the indirect experience of imagining human movement when it is described in words - when the subject composes a moving picture for the mind's eye. Language is thus the key to the difference between the genres. In the case of poetry and prose which the subject experiences and understands by means of the text, the representation of human movement is mediated by language.<sup>1</sup> The present discussion of human movement in Jean Genet's early prose fiction acknowledges this mediation by language as a fundamental principle.

It follows that in Genet's early prose fiction, language and human movement cannot be completely separated and that therefore human movement is not an 'alternative language' because in prose, it *always* has a relation to language (I will go on to evaluate critically sociological approaches to gesture which make such a separation). Therefore the simplest gesture can be drawn out by description which can relate its components and

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It might be postulated that the reader of the theatrical text is in an exceptional situation, and the reader of the stage direction even more so, because the latter is faced with language which, conventionally, is pared down to represent movements in the theatrical space. Notwithstanding this, the human movement in the stage direction, though it may exist in a linguistic form and register which is reserved for such a purpose, is still not experienced directly but is represented in language.

its development in great detail. In addition, non-visual interpretation frequently assigns moral or aesthetic attributes to gesture.

However, it is equally the case that the visual component associated with human movement in empirical reality cannot (and should not) be evacuated from representations of movement in language because, even if the movement is not explicitly described, the reader still imagines and understands the representation in terms of human movement. As we will see, this visual component is often only partially described in Genet's texts; that is to say that the text does not give the reader enough material for a perfect visual reconstruction of the movement in his or her mind's eye. Therefore human movement in Genet's early prose fiction is sometimes translucent, in shadow, or partially obscured, but it is never invisible. As a consequence, it is possible to put forward this initial formulation: in Genet's texts human movement is more and less than language.<sup>2</sup> The main task of the present chapter is an elaboration of this form of words.

The use of the word 'geste' in Genet's texts is important for the study of subjectivity (of narrators and characters) because it problematises straightforward, visually-based representations of human movement by drawing attention to the signifying structures of language. It thus goes beyond a specular relationship between reflected object and reflection to integrate information about the mirror which creates the reflection and the light which transmits it.

### 2.1.3 Survey and Critique of Previous Approaches to Gesture

This subsection first presents a brief critical evaluation of previous analyses of human movement in the domains of anthropology, sociology and semiology. Secondly, it moves on to a more general discussion of gesture in prose (Honoré de Balzac's *Théorie de la démarche* of 1833). Thirdly and finally there is a detailed evaluation of previous approaches to gesture in Genet's prose fiction (concentrating on Jean-Paul Sartre's *Saint Genet, comédien et martyr*).

Previous general theorisations of human movement which mention gesture

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I am grateful to Nicholas J. White for this formulation and for the reference to the article by Sonya Stephens and Rosemary Lloyd; 'Promises, Promises: The Language of Gesture in Baudelaire's *Petits poèmes en prose*', *Modern Language Review*, 88, 1 (January 1993) 74-83.

maintain a distinction between movement and language because they tend to take their source material from empirical reality. The theorisations originate in the fields of physical and cultural anthropology, sociology and semiology,<sup>3</sup> and hybrid disciplines such as socio-linguistics.<sup>4</sup>

Let us first give an example of the first type. The third part of 'Fragments for a History of the Human Body' in *Zone* (M. Feher (ed), New York, MIT Press, 1989) includes an annotated general biography of gesture which asserts the importance of Marcel Mauss's *Les Techniques du corps*<sup>5</sup> as one of the founding texts of the theorisation

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Kendon A. (ed.), *Non verbal Communication, Interaction and Gesture*, Selections from *Semiotica*, The Hague, Mouton, 1981. Fernando Poyatos in his essay, 'Forms and Functions of Non verbal Communication in the Novel; a New Perspective of the Author-Character-Reader Relationship.' (pp. 106-149) not only separates gesture from language but then goes on to compare gesture unfavourably with language: 'the repertoire of non verbal communication symbols is much more limited than the one symbolizing verbal language, that is, what traditionally - but perhaps not one hundred percent accurately - we call words' (p. 109).

4

Socio-linguistics includes the subdisciplines of proxemics (the study of the spaces that interlocutors leave between each other when communicating), kinesics (the study of the - principally hand - gestures that accompany verbal communication). Norbert Freedman in 'Toward a Mathematization of Kinetic Behavior; a Review of Paul Bouissac's *La Mesure des gestes*' (see above Kendon A., (ed.) pp. 151-164) evaluates Bouissac's aims in these terms: 'His overall goal is to arrive at a model for the quantitative and objective segmentation and representation of corporal sequences. His ideal model strives for the mathematization of body movements as construed in a volume of three dimensional space so that behavioral sequences can be delineated as successive volumes.' Clearly Bouissac's attempt to circumvent words in favour of mathematics represents a scientific approach to gesture which is almost diametrically opposed to my understanding of the representation of gesture in Genet's texts. This is not to condemn Bouissac's theorisation nor Freedman's integration of it into the broad church of semiotics, but to indicate once again that existing theorisations of gesture are of limited value in the present chapter. (Bouissac's work was originally published in *Approaches to Semiotics*, paperback series 3, The Hague, Mouton, 1973).

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Mauss M., 'Les techniques du corps' *Journal de psychologie*, volume 32, numbers 3 and 4, 1936. (also available in Mauss, *Sociology and Psychology; Essays*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, pp. 95-123). Another title which shares this broad approach is Jousse M., *L'Anthropologie du geste*, in three volumes, Paris, Gallimard, 1974 (first published: Paris, Resma, 1969).

of human movement:

The seminal article by which half a century of social-science research on the body has been influenced. Every society has its way of sitting and walking, standing and swimming. Polynesians do not swim like us, and my generation does not swim like that of today. As obvious and central as these facts are, ethnology has treated them under the rubric 'varia'. When writing this article Mauss complained that his colleagues treated him as an outsider, because he made this congeries of observations into the object of his discipline.<sup>6</sup>

We can see that Mauss's work on human movement has made a contribution to the way that we understand gestures in other cultures and their relation to our own. Mauss's influence is still clearly discernable in cultural anthropology today.<sup>7</sup> However, the systematisation, classification and contextualisation of human movements and the subsequent comparison of these systems is not relevant to Genet's early prose fiction because the separation between language and gesture which prevails in the direct visual experience of gestures in empirical reality (and in the theatre and dance) does not apply to them. This is because the language in which these human movements are mediated is generally not the main issue in anthropological, sociological and semiological texts.

Since late twentieth-century theorisations of gesture are based on human movements in empirical reality, let us see if there is a writer or theorist who has established a conceptual framework for the analysis of the language of gesture in prose (of 'geste' and related terms) which might be relevant to Genet's early prose fiction. One possible candidate is Giorgio Agamben for whom gesture is associated with pure mediation.<sup>8</sup> I have not been able to trace any published work by him on this subject and

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*Zone*, volume 5, pp. 562-3.

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Cf. Bremmer J. and Roodenburg H., *A Cultural History of Gesture from Antiquity to the Present Day*, Cambridge, The Polity Press, 1991. 'But most modern writing on the subject starts from the assumption that gesture is not a universal language, but is the product of social and cultural differences [...] It was given classic expression in 1935 by the anthropologist Marcel Mauss in his essay on 'The Techniques of the Body.': from the Introduction by Keith Thomas (p. 3).

8

'Gesture as Pure Mediation' was the title of a lecture that Agamben gave on 29th November 1995 at the Slade Centre for the History and Theory of Art, at University College London.

my knowledge of his ideas on gesture come from a single lecture that he gave on the subject. Agamben uses gesture in a looser way than my own approach which is grounded in the specificity of the use of the word 'geste' in Genet's early prose fiction. He is more interested in using gesture to develop his concept of pure mediation, rather than a specific investigation of gestures in the empirical or the textual domains.

Agamben focuses on how gestures can 'open aesthetic and ethical dimensions' because a gesture 'shows itself as a gesture, detaching itself from its end', that is to say from language used for communication. He gives the concrete example of the difference between dance and walking from point A to point B which is goal-oriented. My approach has taught us to be sceptical of any link made between gestures and visibility and this also applies to Agamben's use of the phrase 'shows itself' here. This 'show[ing]' should not be associated with objectivity or intrinsic purity (Agamben does this) because gestures, in the case of Genet's texts at least, are always linked to language. The mediation (and it is impure) is in the language. However, the part of Agamben's analysis which is most relevant to the present approach (which is sensitive to the range of the term 'geste' in Genet's early prose fiction) occurs when he broadens his concept of pure mediation to include poetic language. He does this by reproducing the structure of gesture (which for him is pure mediation because it is detached from teleology) in the realm of language. Following this he asks the following question: 'how does language say itself without becoming a metalanguage'. Agamben is interested in a type of language which is detached from pragmatic communication. He consolidates his concept with a quotation from Hölderlin who calls tragic poetry a machine - a *machiné* - to show the pure word 'im Mittel seines Erscheinens'. This is a valorisation of language which is still pregnant because it has not yet been carried to term and because it has not been expended by being used pragmatically. This valorisation has much in common with occurrences of the word 'geste' in Genet's texts which are difficult to pass over in a spirit of pragmatic communication in order to move on to the next passage of text. They are complex knots of incomplete visual representation, shifting subjectivity (of the narrator, character or ideal reader) and focus on language as the agent which mediates all this.

We have to look back to the nineteenth century and to Honoré de Balzac to find a writer who discusses gesture in a sustained manner. The people in motion along the



Parisian boulevards, about whom Balzac writes in his *Théorie de la démarche*<sup>9</sup> are clearly subjects, in the scientific sense, but it remains to be seen whether Balzac will refer to the way that language mediates gesture.

I will use Balzac's text in a pragmatic way, foregrounding the literary aspects of his analysis of gesture but questioning two assumptions; first, that gestures reveal the truth about the individual who performs them and, secondly, that Balzac is able to interpret gestures with absolute authority. The method and conclusions of Balzac's theory are not directly relevant to the present chapter; this is because they primarily concern human movements in empirical reality. In order to get an idea why Balzac's method falls outside the scope of the present thesis, let us consider his statement of aims:

Je résolu de constater simplement les effets produits en dehors de l'homme par ses mouvements, de quelque nature qu'ils fussent, de les noter, de les classer; puis l'analyse achevée, de rechercher les lois du beau idéal en fait de mouvement, et d'en rédiger un code pour les personnes curieuses de donner une bonne idée d'elles-mêmes, de leurs moeurs, de leurs habitudes: la démarche étant, selon moi, le prodrome exact de la pensée et de la vie.<sup>10</sup>

Here, in a single passage, we have many of the elements of an outmoded nineteenth-century scientific theorisation of gesture. On the basis of this passage, we could justifiably term Balzac a semiologist of gesture *avant la lettre*: his method, in common with his twentieth-century counterparts, is primarily based on observation of human movement in empirical reality. The aim of Balzac's theory is to instruct by means of codified laws. Earlier in the text he invokes a comparison between gait and physiognomy in the following aphorism: 'La démarche est la physionomie du corps' (p. 31) and he also writes at an earlier point: 'il me parut impossible de faire mentir le mouvement' (p. 17). Thus, according to Balzac, gait and movement have a type of absolute authority. However, this passage does more than confirm Balzac's concept of the objectivity of gesture, because Balzac also puts the laws of ideal beauty in movement to practical use and it is at this point that a second type of authority is introduced: Balzac is also implying

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The work was first published in *l'Europe littéraire* in 1833. It is reprinted in the second volume of *OEuvres diverses* in the *OEuvres complètes*; pp. 1-63 (Paris, 'La société d'éditions littéraires et artistiques, 1855).

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pp. 23-24.

that certain 'personnes curieuses de donner une bonne idée d'elles-mêmes' will be able to see and understand their own movement; consequently (and this is not stated explicitly, although the implication is there) these people will also be able to change the way that their gestures appear to others. Therefore gesture can be used in a pragmatic way. In the above passage Balzac offers certain curious people the opportunity to give a good impression of themselves. However, to succeed they must first submit themselves to the authority of Balzac the writer who sets himself as the supreme interpreter and theoriser of gait. Subsequently, however, these readers, their curiosity satisfied by the codified system of the law of the ideal beauty in movement, are able to take a more active, even authorial role because they will be able to compose the interpretation of their own gestures. Therefore Balzac is proposing a second type of authority which is indirect.

In contrast, interpreters of the term 'geste' in Genet's texts do not perform with absolute authority. Furthermore, Genet's texts contain neither Balzac's type of indirect authority nor practical advice about gesture for the reader because they deal with represented gestures.<sup>11</sup> In addition, it is evident that the narrator in Genet's texts does not take his authority as an interpreter of gesture for granted (unlike the narrator of *Théorie de la démarche*) because on some occasions - approximately five in each text - the narrator explicitly signals that his interpretation of a gesture is an authoritative one, for example:

Le surveillant, qui ouvrit la porte, le fit avec solennité, avec une sorte de tendresse. Sentiment qui fut indiscernable dans son geste, seulement je sais qu'il

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There is one instance of the narrator of *Miracle* modifying his gestures *ex post facto* in order to give a more favourable impression of himself, but, here the modification relates to a specific gesture made by the narrator and does not have any general relevance as in Balzac's case: 'Quand s'avantait vers moi, en guerre, un marle, la peur des coups, la peur physique me faisait me reculer et me plier en deux. C'était un geste si naturel que je ne pus jamais l'éviter, mais ma volonté m'en fit changer la signification. En peu de temps fut prise l'habitude, quand je me courbais en reculant, de poser mes deux mains sur mes cuisses ou mes genoux fléchis, dans la position de l'homme qui va bondir, position dont, aussitôt que prise, je ressentais la vertu. J'eus la vigueur qu'il fallait et mon visage devint méchant. Ce n'était plus par un geste de frousse que j'avais été plié, mais par une manoeuvre tactique' (p. 162). The term 'geste' and the term 'position' indicate that the immobility suggested by the second term can co-exist with a reference to 'geste' describing the narrator's movement. Therefore there is no absolute link between gesture and movement.

fut, ce gâfe, soudainement attendri, prêt à fondre en larmes.<sup>12</sup>

This extract begins with the narrator's description (in the third person singular) of the prison warden's initial gesture. The description is neutral in terms of authority because the third person singular is by far the dominant mode of narration in *Miracle*. From this mode the narration shifts to the first person singular at the point where the affirmation of authority comes: 'je sais qu'il fut, [...]'. The above passage comes at a key moment: Harcamone has been condemned to execution and is being led away. The narrator asserts his authority because it is vital for the narrative to elicit the reader's sympathy for Harcamone. Therefore the narrator uses the first person singular to assert authority in respect of an interpretation of a gesture which is difficult for the reader to believe - the readiness of the hitherto anonymous and characterless warden to cry. The narrator asserts authority, but he is asking too much of the reader's credibility. The narrator is deliberately exaggerating. It is difficult for the reader to believe that a warden is moved by Harcamone's fate because his character has not been elaborated other than in this episode. Consequently, the narrator's exaggeration of the interpretation of the warden's gesture provides a model for the reaction of the reader to Harcamone's situation. This type of authority is not the norm as in Balzac's text, but a strategy which proposes that if the warden is moved then the reader should definitely be moved. Thus the specific context and detail of the interpretation is less important than the rhetorical function of the authoritative tone used in the interpretation of gesture which attempts to elicit the reader's sympathy.

Interpretations of gesture in Genet's early prose fiction have a greater variety of tone in comparison to Balzac's *Théorie de la démarche*. This variety allows for a modulation of narrative authority through the use of different personal pronouns which relate to different degrees of narrative authority.<sup>13</sup> This modulation ranges from

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*Miracle*, p. 272.

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There appears to be no pre-ordained pattern in the shifts of personal pronouns. If the narration is principally in the third person then shifts in authority will be signalled in the first person singular (as in the case above). However, if the narration is mainly in the first person singular, as in *Journal*, then shifts of authority are signalled by a move to the third person singular. For example: 'le soir, un homme se retournait-il sur mon passage, Stilitano subtilement s'introduisait en moi, il me musclait, il assouplissait ma démarche,

assertions of authority as in the sentences that we have been considering to an abdication of authority as in the second quotation of gesture from *Querelle* (p. 80) in subsection 2.1.5: '[...] l'on ne peut dire que [...]'. Such a direct abdication of narrative authority in the interpretation of gesture is unknown in Balzac's text. In *Théorie de la démarche* the tone of authority is constant:

Donc, cette science est à moi! Le premier, j'y plante la hampe de mon pennon, comme Pizarre, en criant: *Ceci est au roi d'Espagne!* quand il mit le pied sur l'Amérique.<sup>14</sup>

In this passage, Balzac, the self-proclaimed discoverer of the unknown continent of gesture casts himself as the performer of a textual gesture. The injunctions 'Continuez' (p. 11) and 'Arrêtons-nous' (p. 53) belong to the same order where the progress - in the etymological sense of 'moving forward' - of the theory is made to continue and is finally brought to a halt.

The essential difference between Genet's and Balzac's texts and the source of complexity in Genet's early prose fiction is that they put forward, but also put into question, the authority of narration in a much more overt and more self-conscious way than *Théorie de la démarche*. The interpretation of the word 'geste' in Genet's texts can lead to a questioning of narrative authority.

Let us now move on to evaluate critical approaches to gesture in Genet's texts. Considering the frequency of the term 'geste' and the intimacy which characterises the representation of space in Genet's texts, it is remarkable that gesture has been so sparingly analysed and evaluated in works of Genet Criticism. Indeed, there has been only one analysis of gesture in Genet's early prose fiction which might claim to call itself 'sustained'; it is Jean-Paul Sartre's twenty-six page discussion in *Saint Genet*. Apart from Sartre (and Coe (1968) whose discussion of gesture is profoundly influenced by the philosopher's) there are two other published discussions of gesture which are worth mentioning. The first that I will analyse - by Jean-Marie Magnan (1966) - is representative of a superficial analysis; the second - by Claude Bonnefoy (1965) - is hardly any more sustained, but contains some interesting findings.

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il épaississait mes gestes, il me colorait presque. Il agissait' (*Journal*, p. 205).

In his *Essai sur Jean Genet* (1966) Magnan devotes two pages to a subsection that he entitles 'le génie du geste'. Magnan's technique consists of binding together a tissue of quotations (without page references) in an attempt to make a discursive work of literary criticism from Genet's early prose fiction with the minimum of analysis. Despite the biographical slippage in his discussion (for instance, Gil's gestures in *Querelle* are said to correspond to Jean Genet's own) and his apparent confusion between disguise and gesture in the following extract, Magnan also usefully raises the possibility of the fluidity of character in Genet's texts which he backs up with quotations from Sartre and Proust. This extract analyses the episode in *Querelle* in which Gil dons Querelle's sailor's uniform to rob Seblon and is subsequently pursued. Magnan writes:

Talonné, il fait moins gratuitement, avec une nécessité qui confère son prix, l'expérience que Sartre consigne: "Il n'y a que des âmes momentanées." Celle qui demeure le plus longtemps ou qui revient le plus souvent nous l'appelons *notre* âme et nous nous étonnons, après nos longs voyages, de la retrouver. Cet étonnement que Genet cultive, Proust l'a éprouvé aussi et il s'est souvent demandé comment "après un long sommeil de plomb... cherchant sa pensée, sa personnalité comme on cherche un objet perdu, on finit par trouver son propre moi plutôt que tout autre."<sup>15</sup>

Magnan's formulation 'âmes momentanées' in this passage refers to a certain type of plural subjectivity dependent on time and composed of a series of singular entities. In this formulation, a singular subjectivity does the searching and a singular subjectivity is what is found. Another way of approaching the question is to argue that the starting point concerns a narrator who is different from a singular subject in empirical reality. As a consequence, the plurality found in the text is a plurality of fractions and of degrees which is played out in the language of the texts. It is impossible to say whether Magnan had an inkling of this interpretation of Genet's texts because the quotation above marks both the beginning and the end of his treatment of gesture.

As we have seen in 1.4, despite its limited scope, Claude Bonnefoy's *Jean Genet* (1965) has the unique merit among critical works from the 1960s of attempting to privilege an analysis of Genet's literary language over biographical concerns. Bonnefoy's reference to gesture in Genet's text occurs on a single page; however, the expression

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p. 142.

'osmose' (p. 55)<sup>16</sup> that he uses to describe the process of the mutual transfer of gesture between characters is indeed felicitous because it is a proportional transfer which operates by degrees rather than by transposition or metamorphosis. The implication of Bonnefoy's expression is that, being exchangeable, gestures gain importance for themselves in contrast to the attributes associated with the characters. With Bonnefoy, readers can trace the development and mutual interaction of the attributes of gestures, rather than simply reading the descriptions of the static characters or archetypes in Daviron (1989-1990) and Magnan (1966). Thus gesture increases in importance in proportion to an increase in its fluidity and ambiguity.

As we have seen in 2.1.2 gesture in Genet's texts is not recoverable from the language which represents it. It is for this reason that I have avoided mentioning the range of gestures in the texts under discussion in the present introduction because to do so is to resurrect the distinction between gesture and language which is not applicable to gesture in any literary text. It is to separate human movement and the language which represents it and then privilege movement for the purposes of a typology. There are many possible elements in potential typologies, for example: everyday gestures, ritualised and religious gestures, as well as possible gestural archetypes based around individual characters or a gestural sociolect centred around social or occupational groups (for example: sailors, pimps and thieves). However, at bottom, all these typologies will be shown to be inadequate (2.3)<sup>17</sup> because they overvalue the visual component of gesture and undervalue its representation in language.

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Genet does not use the word 'osmose'; however, there are parallels between osmosis and the exchange between self-sufficient categories: 'La trahison, le vol et l'homosexualité sont les sujets essentiels de ce livre. Un rapport existe entre eux, sinon apparent toujours, du moins me semble-t-il reconnaître une sorte d'échange vasculaire entre mon goût pour la trahison, le vol, et mes amours' (p. 193). Cf. the word: 'oscillation': '*il existe un étroit rapport entre les fleurs et les bagnards. La fragilité, la délicatesse des premières sont de même nature que la brutale insensibilité des autres*' (p. 1); a footnote relating to this passage states: 'Mon émoi c'est l'oscillation des unes aux autres'.

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Similarly, in my discussion of the connection between the gesture and violent death and murder in Genet's texts (2.3.7), I concentrate not on the type of movement which ends in death (stabbing, cutting of the throat, shooting) but on the wider context in which such gestures are pre-empted by the narrative and more specifically on what impression the tone and rhythm and choice of words are attempting to convey.

In her *Les Caractères chez Jean Genet* (mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail UFR de Lettres Modernes, 1989-90), Caroline Daviron attempts a partial classification of gestures in Genet's early prose fiction. Daviron isolates character archetypes such as the pimp ('le mac') and then briefly (pp. 40-44) discusses 'quatre gestes naturels au mac: pisser, fumer, remonter son froc et gestes de drame, de violence' (p. 40). I feel that the title of the last category ('gestes de drame et de violence') implicitly acknowledges the limits of Daviron's own classification because, for example, tragic gestures ('gestes de drame') are by no means the preserve of the 'mac'; they are not even the preserve of the male. I quote:

Le Président fit avec ses belles mains le geste que les tragédiennes font avec leurs beaux bras. Trois frissons subtils agitèrent sa robe rouge, comme un rideau de théâtre, comme si à son pan, vers le mollet, se fussent accrochées les griffes désespérées d'un petit chat agonisant dont les muscles de la patte auraient été crispés par trois petites secousses de mort.<sup>18</sup>

In the passage above the 'geste que les tragédiennes font' even transcends the category of *human* movement because a comparison with an animal is invoked. Daviron's invocation of archetypes thus simplifies the complex metaphors which are part of gesture.

The most sustained analysis of gesture in relation to Genet's texts deserves the most detailed evaluation. This analysis is twenty-six pages long and is found in Sartre's *Saint Genet, comédien et martyr* (pp. 411-437). The second section of the first chapter ('Étrange enfer de la beauté...') of the third book ('Deuxième métamorphose: l'esthète') of *Saint Genet* is devoted to gesture.

The present critique of Sartre's study which is focused on a single aspect (gesture) cannot do justice to the breadth and depth of his project to write: 'l'histoire d'une libération' (p. 643). This breadth and depth is testified to by the fact that articles, essays and theses about *Saint Genet* (both expository and critical) form one of the largest potential subdivisions of the bibliography of this thesis.<sup>19</sup> However, leaving this caveat

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*Notre-Dame*, pp. 349-350.

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References to the most important texts are: R.N. Coe (1968) and *The Theatre of Jean Genet, a Casebook*, New York, The Grove Press, 1970; C.-E. Mease, 'Genet and the Phenomenology of Criticism', unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1983, abstract in *Dissertation Abstracts*, 43 (1982-83), 3459A (pp. 78-132 and especially 92-96); R.D. Laing, *The Self and Others, Further Studies on Sanity and Madness*

aside, my evaluation of Sartre's writing on gesture still has to balance conflicting demands. The first is to retain the focus on gesture in Genet's texts while providing an exposition of enough of the context of Sartre's argumentation to fulfil my intention (stated in the introduction) to write against *Saint Genet* (by at least taking up a position in relation to its aims, methodology and conclusions). This is difficult because Sartre's discussion of gesture is not easy to separate from the structure of the argument in *Saint Genet* and from the evolution of its main protagonist ('Genet'), who becomes a thief then an aesthete and, finally, a writer. Secondly, it also presents problems because Sartre's study is such a formidable piece of argumentation; there are many specific points where I agree with it, despite the selective use of biography in its construction.

I hope to address these conflicting demands in the following ways: first, by means of a detailed focus on the examples of the word 'geste' that Sartre takes from Genet's text (there are only three, indicating that his analysis is not based on examples of 'geste' in Genet's texts): secondly, by analysing how the word 'geste' is used within the structure of Sartre's study. The first approach is a piece of comparative textual analysis and the second is an analysis of the rhetoric of *Saint Genet* in terms of 'geste'.

Although there are only three quotations from Genet's texts in Sartre's study which include the word 'geste' (and one of them is simply mentioned in passing), the term abounds in the third book of *Saint Genet*, thus indicating that Sartre appropriates 'geste' as part of his own rhetoric (which will be examined shortly). Now let us look at

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*Genet/Sartre*, London, Tavistock Publications, 1961 (pp. 179-182); L.A.C. Dobrez, 'Jean Genet, Solitude and the Sartrean Look', *The Southern Review*, 10 (1977) 174-186; 'The Image and the Revolutionary, Sartrean Relations in Work of Jean Genet', *Southern Review*, 11 (1978) 57-71; L.D. Nordstrom, 'Sartre and Evil, a Study of Saint Genet' unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Columbia, 1973; abstract in *Dissertation Abstracts*, 37 (1976-77), 3697A; J.-I. Yoon, 'Saint-Genet, comédien et martyr, de la préface à la critique littéraire', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Paris X, 1991 (Order number 91PA100014); C. Howells, *Sartre's Theory of Literature*, London, Modern Humanities Research Association, 1979 and 'Derrida and Sartre: Hegel's Death Knell' in *Derrida and Deconstruction*, (ed H.J. Silverman), New York and London, Routledge, 1989 and 'Sartre and the Language of Poetry' in *Philosophers' Poets* (ed. David Wood), New York and London, Routledge, 1990). The following articles demonstrate a more critical approach to the methodology of *Saint Genet*: C. Davis (1994); J. Simont, 'Saint Genet et Glas', *Les Temps modernes*, 510 (January-March 1989) 113-137; B. Sichère, 'L'Athéologie de Jean Genet' *L'Infini*, 16 (Autumn 1986) 27-37 and *L'Infini*, 17 (Winter 1987) 102-128; J. Guicharnaud, 'An Existential Analysis of Genet' *Yale Review*, 53 (1963-64) 435-440; N. Fredette (1990) and A. Dobson (1993) pp. 138-149.



the textual analysis of passages in *Saint Genet*. The first example is a passing reference to the killing of Sonia by Clément Village. Here the killer recounts the events to the narrator of *Notre-Dame*. Sartre writes: 'Genet joue allègrement sur deux tableaux: le plus grand crime dans le premier système sera le plus beau geste dans le second; l'acte abominable de l'assassin c'est en même temps le geste tragique du sacrificateur' (p. 418). As this is a passing reference which does not concern the specific use of gesture in this passage nor human movement in general, I shall reserve my own detailed analysis of this passage until 2.3.7 which is devoted to the relationship between gesture and killing in Genet's texts. At this stage I will simply point out that the passage contains the basis of Sartre's approach to gesture which consists of two systems working in parallel. The first system reads the gesture in the text as if it were an act in empirical reality and condemns it. The second system, in which fatality plays a role in the killing, is then integrated into an ordained pattern of sacrifice. This dual system will be analysed in greater depth later, especially in terms of how what seems to be a binary opposite of an act in one system is brought closer by Sartre to the fictional construction of gesture in the second.

The second example of a textual analysis of gesture from *Saint Genet* concerns the first description of Robert in *Journal*. I quote first from Genet's text:

S'il n'avait pas craché dans ses deux mains pour tourner un treuil je n'eusse pas remarqué un garçon. Ce geste que font les travailleurs, me donna un tel vertige que je crus tomber en chute libre jusqu'à une époque - ou une région de moi-même - depuis longtemps oublié. Mon coeur se réveillant, mon corps fut d'un coup désengourdi. Avec une précision et une rapidité folle j'enregistrai le garçon: son geste, ses cheveux, son coup de reins, sa cambrure, le manège de chevaux de bois sur lequel il travaillait, leur mouvement et la musique, la fête foraine, la ville d'Anvers le contenant, la Terre tournant avec précaution, l'Univers contenant un si précieux fardeau, et moi-même là, effrayé de posséder le monde et de me savoir le posséder.<sup>20</sup>

Sartre quotes the portion of the extract from 'Mon coeur se réveillant [...] ' to 'et de me savoir le posséder.' We should note that Sartre misquotes the final words as : 'effrayé de posséder le monde et de me posséder' (p. 419).<sup>21</sup> Sartre introduces his analysis with

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pp. 153-154.

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This is not the only example of Sartre misquoting Genet's texts. Others in that portion of *Saint Genet* which discusses gesture are found on p. 424 'elle arrache son bridge', p. 425 'Je suis reine' (*Notre-Dame* reads: 'je serai reine, quand même' p. 213). There is

the following phrase:

Mais parfois, en prison, dans quelque cour des Miracles, n'importe où, l'agencement des objets les plus vulgaires le frappe, Genet s'enfonce, il se noie, l'apparence se referme sur lui: il a *éprouvé* la Beauté. Rappelons-nous sa rencontre d'Anvers [...].<sup>22</sup>

Sartre then begins his analysis of the extract with the question of possession: 'Cette possession est imaginaire: comment ce paria pourrait-il posséder l'univers si celui-ci ne s'était changé en apparence pour provoquer une apparence de possession' (p. 419). Following this, Sartre then analyses how the gesture is a source of an inversion of values: 'Le temps s'invertit: le coup de marteau n'est pas donné *pour monter le manège*, mais la foire, les gains futurs que le forain escompte, le manège, tout cela n'existe que pour provoquer le coup du marteau.' From the outset, in the phrase which introduces Sartre's analysis, we can see the strengths and weaknesses of that analysis. The forcefulness of Sartre's writing is evinced by the introductory phrase. Sartre describes the actions of a man called 'Genet' in concrete and active terms ('Genet s'enfonce, il se noie'). However, the actions that he attributes to 'Genet' here, are as imaginary as the appearance that 'Genet' embraces so forcefully in Sartre's interpretation. These actions have no *situation* (to use the Sartrean term). Rather, Sartre's descriptions of 'Genet's' actions have a discursive function and introduce the textual analysis of a passage from *Journal*: they are Sartre's interpretation performed in advance.

Let us now move on to the start of Sartre's analysis in which the possession of the world by 'Genet' is affirmed as imaginary, that is to say it is an illusion. However, Sartre expresses his notion of the imaginary at the start of the section on gesture in the following terms: 'Il peut [...] y avoir une causalité de l'imaginaire. Le néant, sans cesser d'être néant, peut produire des effets réels' (p. 411). Therefore the imaginary is never divorced from the real in Genet's case. It will be seen that the whole of the third book

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another example of misquotation where Sartre writes provocatively: '"L'art, dit Genet, de vous faire bouffer de la merde. Cette beauté n'est pas facile; elle exige une tension de toute instant, un effort soutenu pour faire tenir ensemble ces deux termes - ordure et joyau [...]"' (p. 433); this does not correspond to the original passage in *Pompes*: 'La poésie ou l'art d'utiliser les restes. D'utiliser la merde et de vous la faire bouffer' (p. 190). Colin Davis (1994) cites another example on pp. 52-54.

of *Saint Genet*, with gesture at its centre, is the mid-point of Sartre's argument in terms of the structure of his whole text. Therefore Sartre's interpretation of the term 'geste' also plays a pivotal role linking Non-Being and Being; this link also mirrors the evolution of 'Genet' from someone who conformed to his *pour autrui* to a writer in his own right.

Let us now move on to consider the start of Sartre's analysis of the passage from *Journal*. Sartre dismisses the possession that is affirmed in the passage. Once again, Sartre's analysis is forceful and direct, his 'Genet' cannot possess anything because the verb 'possesses' is valid only in a world from which 'Genet' is excluded. This means that 'Genet' is concerned with the simulacrum of possession, which follows the usual structures of possession in the real world, but possesses illusion rather than something concrete. However, I suggest that possession in the passage from *Journal* should not be judged against the real world at all. Sartre undervalues the focus of the passage which is Robert's gesture of spitting in his hands *in anticipation of* turning the winch (this is found at the start of the extract in *Journal*, but it is not quoted by Sartre). The anticipated turning movement imposes its own structure on the text: circularity. The narrator does not describe at any point why the gesture moves him in such a profound way. However, the extract focuses on the anticipation of seeing movement, which is then translated into the narrator being moved (in an emotional sense). The emotional movement is at once liberating and terrifying. The whole of the experience is an oscillation between a loss of consciousness through fear and an intensification of movement in the narrator's emotions. This is indicated in oppositional pairings between 'vertige' on the one hand, and 'mon coeur se réveillant' and 'mon corps [...] désengourdi' on the other. The oscillation is also reproduced in the pairing of the two adverbial phrases which follow the neutral verb 'enregistrer': 'Avec une précision' and '[avec] une rapidité folle' - the first suggesting intensification and the second a loss of control. And, finally, when the narrator possesses the world, he also describes his emotional state as: 'effrayé'. Furthermore, it could be suggested that the oscillation between, on one hand, the intensification of perception and dizziness and, on the other, a loss of control, is reproduced in the two types of circular movement represented in the extract. First there is the regular circular movement of the fairground ride and the earth ('le manège de chevaux de bois sur lequel il travaillait, leur mouvement, et la musique, la fête foraine, la ville d'Anvers les contenant, la Terre tournant avec précaution, l'Univers conservant [...]); this regularity is emphasised by the verbs 'contenir' and 'conserver', yet it is simultaneously opposed to the eccentric movement outwards from roundabout to fair, to Antwerp, to the Earth and finally to the

Universe. We should also recall that the whole experience is cranked up by Robert: 'S'il n'avait pas craché dans ses deux mains pour tourner un treuil [...]'. The narrator is describing a *coup de foudre*.

With the third example, we come to Sartre's analysis of an extraordinary gesture from *Notre-Dame* performed by Divine. It takes place among the 'tantes' at the brasserie Graff in Montmartre. The analysis of this scene, the gesture and the objects involved, represents by far the most sustained discussion of an individual gesture in *Saint Genet*: including digressions, it occupies eight pages (pp. 423-431).

Let us first quote at length the relevant passage from *Notre-Dame*:

Divine rit aux éclats. La couronne de perles tombe à terre et se brise. Condoléances auxquelles la joie méchante donne des richesses de tonalité: 'La Divine est découronnée!... [...] Les petites perles roulent dans la sciure semée sur le plancher où elles sont semblables aux perles de verre que les colporteurs vendent peu de chose aux enfants, et celles-ci sont pareilles aux perles de verre que nous enfilons chaque jour dans des kilomètres de fil de laiton, avec quoi, en d'autres cellules, on tresse des couronnes mortuaires pareilles à celles qui jonchaient le cimetière de mon enfance [...]. Dans le cabaret, toutes les tantes sont soudain agenouillées. Seuls, les hommes s'érigent droits. Alors, Divine pousse un rire en cascade stridente. Tout le monde est attentif: c'est son signal. De sa bouche ouverte, elle arrache son dentier, le pose sur son crâne et, le coeur dans la gorge mais victorieuse, elle s'écrie d'une voix changée, et les lèvres rentrées dans la bouche: - Eh bien, merde, mesdames, je serai reine quand même. Quand j'ai dit que Divine était faite d'une eau pure, j'aurais dû préciser qu'elle était taillée dans des larmes. Mais faire son geste était peu de chose à côté de la grandeur qu'il lui fallut pour accomplir celui-ci: retirer de dessus ses cheveux le bridge et le rentrer dans la bouche et l'y accrocher. Ce n'était pas rien pour elle de parodier un couronnement royal.<sup>23</sup>

In his contextualising of Divine's gesture (pp. 423-424), Sartre weaves together extracts which come from other parts of the text than the passage quoted here. For instance, the phrase: 'Divine entra vers deux heures du matin chez Graff à Montmartre [...]' (p. 423) is found much earlier in Genet's text (p. 37) than the extract above (pp. 212-214). Sartre needs to put Divine's gesture into a wider context than Graff's in Montmartre, because for him the essential point about the gesture is that it is a performance which is intended to have an effect on others. For Sartre, Divine's is a public gesture. As they affect others, Sartre calls such gestures 'actes'; thus, '[s]es actes s'échappent d'elle et vont s'emparer des autres, ils les possèdent, ce sont des incubes, des succubes [...]' (p. 424).

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pp. 212-214.

The use of the term 'acte' to describe what Sartre also calls a gesture is indicative of the way in which gesture can impinge on Being and on the real world. Of course, the real world in a concrete and empirical sense is one of the areas that Sartre addresses in his analysis of Genet's writing in *Saint Genet*. However, here it is more a case of Sartre seeing Divine's gesture as relevant outside the particular scene in which it occurs. In his reference to incubi and succubi, Sartre is referring to gestural osmosis (that I develop using Bonnefoy's term), but does not discuss it in depth or refer to any other examples. Sartre returns (p. 425) to Divine's situation before her pearls fall to the floor and focuses on the pretence that is an integral part of the existence of the transvestite. However, for Sartre, Divine is not a character in *Notre-Dame* who must be considered independently and as a narrative creation; for Sartre '[...] Divine c'est Genet lui-même, puisqu'elle figure l'horrible déchéance pédérastique qu'il redoute [...]' (p. 425). Then, however, in a characteristic move, Sartre goes on to question whether '[...] nous ne sommes pas si différents d'elle: sommes-nous magistrats, députés, médecins ou jouons-nous à l'être?' (p. 425).

It is by means of Sartre's stress here on the ontological implications of gesture that it is possible briefly to examine the role of Sartre's analysis of gesture within *Saint Genet*. These implications emerge from his textual analyses. On one point I am in total agreement with Sartre: the writing about gesture in Genet's text is writing about transformation (although, for me, this transformation concerns plural subjectivity *and* language rather than ontology alone). This is why 'geste' is the middle term in a tripartite chapter division in *Saint Genet* which starts with 'l'image' and ends with 'le mot'. These three terms also represent a progressive concretisation of the intentions of 'Genet's' writing: 'le mot' means language in Sartre's schema. Hence gesture is considered as a privileged way to reach the goal of 'making language' (later described as writing) which is so important in *Saint Genet*. Sartre's notion of language as the goal of gesture is at odds with my own which sees gesture and language as perpetually connected because language mediates gesture in prose fiction.

At the start of the section entitled 'Le Mot' Sartre states that: 'Genet tentait d'irréaliser les choses par des gestes: c'était se donner trop de mal; il suffisait de parler: car la parole est geste et le mot est chose' (p. 437). There is a problem in Sartre's argumentation at this point. It concerns the use of Genet's texts and the attribution of gestures to Jean Genet (1910-1986). Although Sartre had stressed in the section on gesture that it was impossible to derealise objects by gestures, he now attributes this

desire to derealise to his protagonist 'Genet' in the past. Sartre's strategy focuses on how speech ('la parole') comes to provide a linguistic alternative to gesture in the present (that is the stage that 'Genet' has reached in his development at that point in Sartre's analysis; Sartre has not yet moved on to Genet's 'future' as a writer). I would argue that this strategy caricatures and distorts the subtleties in Sartre's own gesture section. Moreover, it is unclear what Sartre is referring to when he states that 'Genet' was attempting to derealise, when it was enough to speak. The only examples of 'Genet's' gestures that Sartre gives us in this part of *Saint Genet* are from the five works of early prose fiction (except for a passing reference to Genet's film, *Un Chant d'amour*). It does not make sense to isolate two different elements of Genet's texts (passages which include 'geste' on one hand, and direct spoken utterances which do not and then ascribe to them different language uses. They are both extracts from a narrative and any distinctions between them must be made in the context of the individual work (as in the case of language consciousness in the next chapter). It is not a case of one or some of them being (an) attempt(s) to derealise and the other being speech ('parole'): *both* are mediated by language.

The second aspect of the problem with Sartre's argumentation is his concept of language and this emerges when we examine the phrases: 'La parole est geste' and 'le mot est chose' which are subtitles in the section on 'le mot'. In this quotation Sartre begins to concentrate on the intersection between language and gesture (he calls the intersection: 'le geste verbal'). The utterances that Sartre focuses on frequently have no relation to human movement whatsoever but draw attention to themselves as utterances in the same way as language conscious passages which will be the subject of the third chapter. Sartre states: '[...] quand Divine s'écrie: "Je suis la Toute-Folle", elle se désigne et se maquille autant que si elle posait un dentier sur son crâne' p. 437). This second aspect of the problem concerns Sartre's concept of language at the time when he was writing *Saint Genet* (1949-1952). The problem will appear more clearly if we examine how Sartre elaborates verbal gestures:

Dès lors Genet prendra l'habitude de faire l'économie du geste et de le remplacer par son équivalent verbal: la phrase. Et, puisque le geste esthétique avait pour fonction de convertir une réalité sordide en luxueuse apparence, le geste verbal sera un jugement catégorique du type "x est y" dans lequel le sujet sera régulièrement choisi parmi les termes du système "misère" et l'attribut parmi ceux

du système "luxe".<sup>24</sup>

This analysis indicates that Sartre's view of the verbal gesture (and also of language) is rather mechanistic. What Sartre is describing here is a division of language into a dualist system; following this, according to Sartre, terms in Genet's writing are frequently inverted: the base term (in a moral sense) is referred to with an elevated attribute. However, it is one thing to note the use of inversion in Genet's writing and quite another to ascribe it to a personalised, derealising function of pederastic aestheticism ('l'office irréalisant de l'esthétisme pédérastique'). Christina Howells (1979) has pointed out that Sartre's ideas of language underwent significant modification throughout his creative life and in particular in the period from the publication of *Saint Genet* in 1952, to the appearance of the third volume of *L'idiot de famille* in 1972 (pp. 170-219). Howells argues that Sartre becomes more aware of the alienation of language. Alienation is what happens when language is articulated and becomes part of history and the *en soi*, when it becomes 'formally immutable but vulnerable to the interpretation of others' (p. 175). Another aspect of alienation in Sartre's ideas about language is the increasing importance for him of 'la part du diable' that is the proportion of unintended meaning that can accompany each utterance or phrase. 'La part du diable' in fact represents a (growing) realisation on Sartre's part that meanings are not only to be understood in terms of the originator of the words and his or her free act of choosing to give meaning to them. Thus the receiver of meaning, the addressee or the reader are also implicated in the act of communication. However, as we can see from Sartre's analysis above, he did not return to *Saint Genet* to revise his writing about language. And therefore the writing about language in Sartre's study remains tied to a reductive version of the biography of Jean Genet.

For the sake of completeness it is necessary to include a note on Richard Coe's discussion of gesture. Coe (1968) is the only critic writing in English to have made more than passing references to gesture in Genet's texts.<sup>25</sup> However, my discussion of Coe

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p. 439.

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Cf. Coe (1968), pp.; - cursory references are in parenthesis - 41, 43-46, (47-48), (53), 70-71, (89), (92-93), (106), (113), 121, (124-125), 137, (142), 184, 217, 221.

is an addendum to the analysis of *Saint Genet* because Coe discusses gesture with Sartre's terminology: 'Writing, in fact, is an *act* - no different from other acts in an existential view of the universe: a free choice [...] for whose repercussions from now until the end of time he who acts has absolute responsibility. [...] the act of writing is the first act-in-reality that he had achieved' (*The Vision of Jean Genet*, p. 121). This quotation recalls Sartre's '[...] écrire est un acte, non un geste [...]' (p. 446), but does not acknowledge it. Coe mentions gesture within his individual discussions of each text (an approach I avoid). I would suggest that the fragmented discussion of gesture in Coe (1968) is a consequence of the broad range of his study. Its index continues to be useful for an overview of over two hundred themes in Genet's *oeuvre*. However, it is also my contention that Coe adds nothing to Sartre's account of gesture. On those occasions, for example, where Coe brings in a suggestive link between gesture and stasis (in the form of statues and sculpture), the link is obscured because it is discussed as 'gesture *out of time*'. That is to say immobile, just like a film projection in freeze frame. Coe does not elaborate (as I do) either the frequent dissociation in Genet's texts of gesture and completely visualisable descriptions of human movement (2.1.2), or the concentration of gesture (2.3.6) and its association with weight and density, qualities which may at first seem alien to gesture.

Once again, as with the quotation from Coe (1968) above, all one can extract from the following citation is an inkling that Coe understood that the word 'geste' is associated with writing about transformation; it is possible to say this because of Coe's emphasis on the word '*different*': 'A gesture cannot be spontaneous, it must have a cause, an origin; but once it has come into being, then it can discard its origins, and become symbolic of some totally *different* psychological motivation, which might have expressed itself in the same symbolic gesture' (p. 45). By ascribing 'being' to gestures, Coe tends to neglect the mediating role of language in the case of gestures in prose fiction. The links between gesture and stasis and gesture and transformation which are briefly touched on by Coe can be fruitfully elaborated only within an approach which takes into account the complex ways in which language mediates gesture. As far as the question of gesture and being is concerned, it is possible to analyse their interaction, but it must be acknowledged that being is *represented* in the texts considered here and is therefore best considered at one remove, as subjectivity (provided that we do not consider this subjectivity as one-dimensional).



#### 2.1.4 'geste' and 'gestes'

In this subsection I present the specific usage of the term 'geste' (and its plural 'gestes') in Genet's early prose fiction. These terms give this second chapter a concentrated focus. 'Geste' has advantages over the more general term 'human movement' because the term is found in both editions of all five of Genet's texts (there are seventy eight occurrences of the word 'geste' in the variants and excisions). Most importantly, however, 'geste' imposes itself as a guide-word because of its remarkably high frequency in all of the texts under consideration.<sup>26</sup> I have not yet read another work of fiction which displays the term 'geste' with the same degree of frequency as Genet's early prose fiction.

There are, however, two caveats regarding the use of 'geste' as a guide-word. First, if 'geste' becomes an automatic indicator of significance within the texts, the scope of the present chapter will be limited to a mechanical searching for examples which include it. To avoid this danger I include other representations of human movement in my discussion even if they do not contain the word 'geste'.<sup>27</sup>

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In order to convey an impression of the frequency of the word 'geste', the following figures refer to the number of times that the term occurs in the first one hundred pages of Genet's texts: *Pompes*, 55; *Querelle*, 44; *Notre-Dame*, 44; *Miracle*, 30 and *Journal*, 19 (here, the numbers refer to the 'Collection Folio' editions, except in the case of *Pompes* and *Querelle* where the 'Collection L'imaginaire' editions were used).

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Examples of each of the other words whose use is similar to 'geste' are 'mouvement': 'Grec, il [Mignon] entra chez la mort en marchant sur l'air pur [...]. A son passage - cela se révéla par un imperceptible mouvement du buste - [...]' (*Notre-Dame*, p. 23); 'tics' and 'manières': 'J'aimais un homme au point d'entrer dans sa peau, ses manières, et devins très apte à découvrir chez les autres ces tics que l'on vole à celui qu'on aime' (*Miracle*, p. 179); 'poses': '[...] les jours suivants, presque inconsciemment, parce qu'il [Gil] sentait autour de lui le désir du maçon, quelques gestes de coquetterie lui échappèrent. Il exagéra les poses aguichants [...] il cambra les reins [...] Il voyait le regard de Théo capter chacun de ces gestes aigus [...]' (*Querelle*, p. 94) and 'postures': 'Malicieusement Querelle cherchait à l'exacerber; avec un naturel étonnant il trouvait les poses les plus suggestives; soit qu'il s'appuyât contre le chambranle, un bras soulevé pour montre son aisselle, [...] soit qu'il prît pour répondre à l'officier une posture plus audacieuse encore et qu'à son appel, il s'avancât, les mains dans les poches tendant l'étoffe de la braguette sur la verge et les couilles, le ventre insolent' (*Querelle*, p. 106), and finally 'acte' which can be a near-synonym of 'geste' without the Sartrean association with empirical reality: 'Ses genuflexions et ses gestes se firent la copie fidèle de ceux qu'exécutait la soeur d'Alberto sur ce prie-Dieu chaque dimanche. Il se parait de leur beauté. Ainsi, les actes n'ont-ils de valeur esthétique et morale que dans la mesure où ceux qui les accomplissent sont doués de puissance' (*Notre-Dame*, p. 180).

The second caveat is that, unsurprisingly, not every single occurrence of the word 'geste' is relevant to my approach. In the first place, referring to a human movement with the term 'geste' raises it out of the ordinary, out of the domain of human movements which are means to ends (Sartre understood this very well). Calling a movement a gesture ups the stakes because the term puts the movement within a frame which draws attention to it as a possible bearer of significance. This is because readers have a tendency to imagine gesture in visual terms according to human movements made themselves or which they have seen others make. It is important to note, however, that within the whole range of examples of the word 'geste' in Genet's texts, the framing effect of the term is sometimes indeed only one-dimensional, as in the following sentence: 'Mario fit un geste d'agacement. Sa bouche se crispa. "Tu n'penses pas qu'j'ai les jetons, des fois?"' (*Querelle*, p. 47). Here the gesture is quickly passed over, the gesture is not described visually (the reader might presume that Mario makes the gesture with his hand); however, the text does not return to the gesture and make the lack of clear visualisability an issue (as in so many cases in this chapter), nor is a second voice introduced to interpret the gesture (this would give a second linguistic perspective on it): it is enough to assume that the gesture is an expression of Mario's feelings. In this case the gesture merely takes place somewhere in front of the reader: it is noted, but it is not situated more precisely in space. Precise situating of this sort would occur if it were performed by one character and viewed by another, or by several others.

Let us now look at the wider context in which references to gesture are found in Genet's early prose fiction. Its importance is increased due to the small-scale representation of space in these texts. Let us first consider an example of our visual perception of the empirical world: a hand gesture made by a person viewed from afar in an isolated landscape is less likely to be significant because it is less likely to be seen or its parts distinguished. Genet's texts present the opposite case; they are remarkable for the proximity of characters in enclosed spaces. The characters and the narrator are in sight of each other and very frequently within touching distance. Making gestures and seeing gestures being made becomes particularly important in environments such as these. Thus, despite the setting of significant parts of three of the texts in towns (indeed *Notre-Dame* and *Pompes* take place in Paris), the reader never has the sense of a cityscape or of a panoramic view. The action takes place between people (narrator and characters) on

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a local level and in enclosed spaces which are sparingly sketched: for example, cells, stairwells, attics, ships' cabins, bars, brothels and bedrooms. Even the Parisian rooftops in *Pompes* are enclosed in the sense that they are surrounded by the Free French Forces. The representation of space on a small scale also means that the reader has a sense of intimacy and complicity with the characters and the narrator and this further increases the importance of gesture.

### 2.1.5 Examples of Gesture

The three examples of gesture in Genet's early prose fiction which follow are intended to illustrate representative characteristics of gesture. The first example is taken from *Pompes* where Erik, the German soldier, narrates his movements in the first person:

Ma main gauche ébaucha un très subtil geste pour saisir à terre le calot tombé.<sup>28</sup>

This example has been chosen for its simplicity and because it also illustrates a key aspect of the relation between gesture and language in Genet's early prose fiction. Frequently the clause, sentence or passage which contains the word 'geste' does not include a description of a movement. Indeed, one of the surprising findings of the present chapter is that passages which include the word 'geste' frequently do not describe human movement in detail. In the passage above, the character interprets the quality of his own gesture using the term 'subtil' without directly describing it in terms of motion. Thus, it is possible to understand the subtlety of the gesture in linguistic terms as the difference between the phrase 'saisir à terre' and the more prosaic 'ramasser'. That is the difference between two types of language, between a circumlocution and a simple verb, between a more poetic and a more prosaic discourse. However, the above quotation has another characteristic which concentrates the relationship between language and gesture in the difference in register between 'saisir à terre' and 'ramasser'. The verb 'ébaucha' in the extract above stresses the tentative nature of the gesture, indeed the second verbal phrase 'pour saisir à terre' with its infinitive form does not indicate whether Erik completed the action of picking up the fallen forage cap or just made an incomplete gesture to do so.<sup>29</sup>

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p. 121.

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If the completion of the action was important one might expect the following formulation: 'et saisit à terre le calot tombé.'

Erik's gesture may be 'very subtle' but it is also partially obscured in terms of human movement despite the use of a descriptive unit as precise as 'subtil' accompanied by an intensifier. In sum, then, this extract foregrounds the variation of register in the interpretation of the gesture and does not simply present a visual description of it.

Let us move on to the second example from *Querelle* which concerns the naming of Lieutenant Seblon's gesture:

[...] le lieutenant voulut endosser sa capote de drap bleu mais dans son geste, il mit tant de coquetterie, vite et maladroitement corrigée que l'on ne peut dire qu'il l'endossa tant le mot est fort - et lui-même spontanément nomma son geste "s'envelopper".<sup>30</sup>

In Genet's texts gesture is frequently a representation of human movement which draws attention to itself and thereby to the signifying system of language which represents it. In the extract above, the performer of the gesture - Lieutenant Seblon - draws attention to the language which he uses to describe the gesture that he has made. Thus, in the passage above, it is the interpretation (literally, the naming - 'nommer') of the gesture itself which is at stake. The passage first presents a neutral interpretation of the gesture that Lieutenant Seblon is to perform in the transitive verbal phrase: 'voulut endosser sa capote'. The verb 'endosser' implies that the performer of the gesture intends to put the greatcoat on a specific part of his body in a conventional manner. However, the reference to gesture in this case brings the verb 'endosser' into question; literally, 'l'on ne peut dire que [...]' (one cannot say that). Then, the performer of the gesture himself interprets his own gesture and chooses a reflexive verb which relates back to himself as subject. In the rest of this chapter and especially in its conclusion, I will argue that passages of this sort are not part of a narrator's strategy to create a temporary textual effect of independence for a character within the narrative, but that they indicate that one narrative centre is not sufficient and that they attempt (however partially) to create a rival subjectivity and vocabulary. Passages of this sort are attempting to transcend singular subjectivity.

The third example of gesture comes from *Pompes* and it concerns a movement of aiming a revolver to shoot dead a French boy. In this case the whole of the 'slow' and 'solemn' gesture is described visually, so the mediation of language draws the gesture

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p. 80.

out. Here Erik is speaking in the first person singular, but no sooner has he given the gesture attributes, than the arm-with-weapon ('le bras armé') becomes personified in its own right:

Pour viser [...]; il suffit de quelques millimètres dans l'inclinaison nouvelle. Pourtant ma main pour y arriver décrivit un geste lent, solennel. Le bras armé, vêtu de noir, s'écarta immensément de moi, porta la main dans la nuit, passa derrière le tertre dominé par l'enfant, le contourna, enveloppa le gosse plusieurs fois, se replia, revint en arrière, passa derrière moi qu'il noua à l'enfant relié toujours à moi par la colonne de ténèbres, puis le bras, toujours plus long et plus souple, enferma la campagne, saisit la nuit, la tassa, la boucla dans ce mouvement lent mais souverain d'encerclement de l'instant pour en faire un bloc écoeurant traversé par le rayon bleu du regard d'Erik de plus en plus humain. Le bras décrivit encore quelques boucles, saisissant, étranglant tout ce qu'il rencontrait de vivant, et il ramena devant moi à la hauteur de la ceinture, un peu plus haut, et légèrement plus à droite, le revolver décidé.<sup>31</sup>

There is a clear contrast between the minimal movement in physical space 'il suffit de quelques millimètres...' with which the passage begins and the sheer scale of the prodigious, enveloping gesture of taking aim. The gesture has its own structure with variations in the narrative point of view from which it is described. Thus although the passage begins in the first person, it is immediately made impersonal 'le bras [...] s'écarta immensément de moi', then, just before the arm making the gesture returns to Erik, the third person singular of the main narrative is re-employed ('le rayon bleu du regard d'Erik'). The passage ends with a reference to the first person singular and the impersonal anthropomorphism of the phrase 'le revolver décidé'. In this passage the gesture is isolated from a type of logic in which movements are willed by a clearly defined individual, hence both the fragmentation of the body making the gesture ('le bras armé, vêtu de noir, s'écarta immensément de moi, porta la main dans la nuit') and the fluctuation in narrative point of view from which the gesture is described. Hence, visual description too can be associated with a complex or plural representation of subjectivity.

Let us now look at elements that the examples of gesture quoted above have in common. All three examples contain shifts in the narrative point of view and in the representation of subjectivity. In the first example, the shift to the first person singular from the third person singular occurs before the gestural passage. However, this has the effect of giving the description of the gesture of picking up the fallen cap more authority

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pp. 121-2.

because the same person who makes the gesture goes on to describe it. However, shifts in narrative point of view are not always signalled by a variation in the personal pronoun, as in the case of Seblon's enveloping gesture above. Indeed, the extract from *Querelle* maintains the third person singular to narrate Lieutenant Seblon's gestures, but we have seen that the type of language used changes (inverted commas and a reflexive verb are used), thereby enacting in language the way in which Seblon would potentially name his own gesture. In this way the extract which is taken from the main body of the text approaches the first person narrative of the Lieutenant's private notebook (which is printed in inverted commas in the subscribers' edition of the text).

## 2.2 Shifts in Narrative Authority and the Naming, Interpretation and Description of Gesture

### 2.2.1 Introduction

Gesture is not completely dependent on its visual component and, therefore, what is important in the relationship between gesture and language is the language in which gesture is named, interpreted or described. These three aspects are the key to the way in which gesture creates meaning in a given case. The present section will take two examples. In the first, the narrator interprets his own gesture and modifies his subjectivity in the process. In the second, the narrator's claims to be able to interpret the gesture of a character infallibly are undermined.

I proceed by examining the interpretation, description and naming of gestures in the text, asking first, whether there is an interpretation, naming or description of the gesture and secondly, if so, by whom and at what point in the text this event or a combination of these events occurs? Thirdly and finally, I ask whether any of these events accompany a temporary shift in the relationship of forces between character, narrator and reader in the passage containing the term 'geste'. That is to say within a mainly third person narrative (such as *Notre-Dame*), does it remain the case that the mediation of a character's gesture is directly traceable to the narrator alone; or is it possible that the mediation is transparent or made by the character her or himself?

### 2.2.2 Analysis of Examples

Let us begin with the following extract from *Miracle*:

[...] et, lorsque je vis mes scènes intérieures, j'ai l'ivresse de les vivre toujours

à cheval, sur un cheval allant au galop et qui se cabre. Je suis cavalier. C'est depuis que je connais Bulkaen que je vis à cheval, et j'entre à cheval dans la vie des autres comme un grand d'Espagne dans la cathédrale de Séville. Mes cuisses serrent des flancs, j'éperonne une monture, ma main se crispe sur des rênes.

Non que cela se passe tout à fait ainsi, c'est-à-dire que je me sache vraiment à cheval, mais plutôt je fais les gestes et j'ai l'âme d'un homme qui est à cheval: ma main se crispe, ma tête se relève, ma voix est arrogante... et ce sentiment de chevaucher une bête hennissante et noble, débordant sur ma vie quotidienne, me donnait cet aspect que l'on dit cavalier, et le ton et l'allure que je croyais victorieux.<sup>32</sup>

The first paragraph stresses the sense of living the experience of being on horseback; 'vie', 'vivre' and its cognates are mentioned no less than four times here. The first implication of the notion of 'living' links the experience to the specificity of the narrator's life because he lives *his* internal scenes (he uses the possessive to affirm that they are his scenes: 'mes scènes intérieures'). The second implication ties the experience of being on horseback to a state rather than a series of actions. Thus the experience takes place inside the narrator. Within such a context the metaphor 'je suis cavalier' is understood by the reader in a literal sense as a concrete reference to the narrator's physical situation at a given moment in time which the reader tends to imagine in a visual way.

The second paragraph, however, presents a critical perspective on the narrator's living of the experience and its visual component. Gesture is invoked by the narrator to qualify the first paragraph. Although it occurs only once, 'gestes' is an important term because it refers to the sum of the movements in the previous paragraph. The experience of the first paragraph is qualified by the narrator ('non que cela se passe tout à fait ainsi') and gesture is invoked to reconstruct and redescribe the experience of *living* on horseback. This transforms the experience into a conscious simulacrum; there is a distancing movement from the self-referential and reflexive formula of 'se savoir à cheval' to the more critical formulation which recognises that the soul ('âme') and gestures are part of a wider context. In this context the narrator sees himself on horseback, he characterises himself as making the gestures of a man on horseback and thus is at one remove from the self-sufficient experience of 'living on horseback' in the

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previous paragraph.

The difference between both paragraphs should be understood less in terms of a binary distinction between the narrator's inner and everyday life, than as a qualification of the original description of experience by language. There is a linguistic shift between the paragraphs from concrete visual images to more figurative language. This is demonstrated in the shift of the term 'cavalier' which is understood substantively and in visual terms in the first paragraph. In the second paragraph, however, norms and ways of seeing are not internal and private, but external and public in the sense that they are commonly held as opinions, indicated by the phrase 'cet aspect qu'on dit cavalier'. The word 'cavalier' in French is both a noun meaning 'horseman', which corresponds to the usage in the first paragraph and an adjective meaning 'offhand' or, in another more colourful term, 'cavalier'. Thus in English the movement of language between both paragraphs is illustrated in the difference between the following sentences: 'I am a horseman' and 'I am cavalier'.

In this extract the use of the term 'gestes' is part of a critical perspective applied to inner experience. This perspective offered in the term 'gestes' in the second paragraph simultaneously names, externalises and highlights the specifically linguistic components of inner experience, thus relativising them. This second level of critical judgement facilitated by the language of gesture is further indicated by a shift in tense: the imperfect of the last phrase, 'l'allure que je croyais victorieux', suggests that the narrator of *Miracle* in the second paragraph does not evaluate the internal experience of *living* on horseback in the same way as he did in the first.

It was stated in 2.1.5 that gestural passages often contain a shift in the viewpoint of the narrator and that this shift is often subtle as in the example from *Miracle* above and the second example quoted in 2.1.5 where the narrator allows Lieutenant Seblon to name his own gesture because the narrator cannot call it what he originally intended ('[...] l'on ne peut dire qu'il [Seblon] l'endossa tant le mot est fort'). As far as the example above is concerned, the shift is not from the narrator to another character but a shift within the authority of the narrator. The narrator first considers the experience of being on horseback as part of his own inner scenery and then goes on, by means of the reference to gesture, to adopt a much more critical attitude to his earlier position. Moreover, this critical attitude also introduces a notion of the other, and while this other is not another character, it may be suggested that the narrator is referring to the reader as other ('cet aspect que l'on dit cavalier' refers to linguistic norms held in common



between narrator and reader). Therefore, whereas the scenes from the narrator's inner life are played out for the narrator alone, the use of gesture in the second paragraph makes a call on the visual component of gesture in a structural way, distinguishing between the person who makes the gesture and the person who perceives it and goes on to name it. The structural use of the visual component of gesture does not involve the reader picturing the physical situation of the narrator on horseback as in the first paragraph. The visual component of gesture in the second paragraph opens the possibility for the person who perceives the gesture to be different from the person who makes it and in so doing explicitly admits the other as part of a relation between perceiver and perceived, not merely a self-referential description of inner scenes ('je vis mes scènes intérieures'). In the second paragraph the narrator understands himself as performing the gestures of a man on horseback. It is at this point that the narrator has left his inner world and singular subjectivity behind. He communicates with the reader.

The following passage from *Notre-Dame* contains a series of shifts of narrative authority concerning the interpretation of Divine's gesture. Interpretation is the key activity here: the shifts take place around interpretation and concern the idiom, voice and the linguistic register in which the interpretation of the gesture will be made. The passage starts from the point of the absolutely authoritative, but absolutely transparent, narrative voice (it is transparent because the narrative voice is not explicitly indicated by the use of the first person singular or plural). There follows a notion of the independence of the gesture and, finally, it is the voice, idiom and linguistic register of Divine which interprets Divine's gesture (I will examine later whether this development represents a self-sufficient circularity in which the character both performs and eventually interprets the gesture). The passage describes Divine at a Montmartre café:

Il en était de même pour les gestes. Divine en possédait un très grand qui, sortant le mouchoir de sa poche, décrivait une immense courbe avant de le poser sur ses lèvres. Qui eût voulu deviner le geste de Divine se fût infailliblement trompé, car chez elle deux gestes étaient contenus en un. Il y avait le geste élaboré, détourné de son but initial, et celui qui le continuait et l'achevait en se greffant juste à l'endroit où le premier cessait. Donc, en sortant sa main de sa poche, Divine avait voulu allonger le bras et secouer son mouchoir de dentelle déployé au bout. Le secouer pour un adieu à rien, ou faire tomber une poudre qu'il ne contenait pas, un parfum, non: c'était un prétexte. Il fallait ce geste immense pour raconter ce drame étouffant: "Je suis seule. Me sauve qui peut."<sup>33</sup>

This passage begins with a visual description of an extraordinarily expansive gesture which the narrative voice presents as an example of Divine's gestures in general; indeed, here, Divine is said to possess the gesture ('Divine en possédait un très grand [...]'). I hope to demonstrate how the passage immediately undermines and finally subverts the authority of the narrative voice in relation to gestures. The undermining and the subversion of this authority necessarily entails the admission of the other and that is exactly what occurs in the next sentence. Here the narrative voice excludes the possibility of a correct interpretation of Divine's gesture by the other, presumably this is from any source other than the narrative voice, such as the reader for instance; however, this exclusion simultaneously opens the possibility of an interpretation of Divine's gesture by the other because it names the other and admits the possibility of its intention to interpret ('Qui eût voulu [...]'). The narrative voice follows the description with what would appear to be the announcement of an absolutely authoritative interpretation: 'Qui eût voulu deviner le geste se fût infailliblement trompé.' However, the narrative voice does not immediately go on to interpret infallibly; instead there is a description of the binary structure of the gesture. The first gesture is diverted from its initial goal and is thus in suspense and incomplete. The second gesture completes the original gesture by supplementing it. The language used in the description of this supplementing process does not reveal the cause of the process. The reflexive verb 'se greffer' suggests the action of the second supplementary gesture is independent. Therefore the structure of gesture itself admits the other, which at this point is an independent element without a specific origin. The authority of the narrative voice is thereby undermined. After the structure of the composite gesture has been described, the term 'donc' suggests once again that the interpretation of the gesture is to follow. However, what follows is a visual description of the first and the second gesture. The interpretation is further suspended. The string of negatives ('un adieu à rien', 'une poudre qu'il ne contenait pas' and 'non') corresponds to the diversion of the initial goal outlined in the description of the binary structure of the gesture. This description allows the reader to compare the whole of the gesture as narrated at the start of the extract to the description of the first subverted part. The second completing and supplementary part is not described separately and the words 'geste immense' indicate that the narrator is referring back to the appearance of the 'immense courbe' as described at the start of the passage.

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Interpreting gesture is different from describing it in this case. The act of giving the gesture an explicit meaning in direct speech is all the more important because there is no direct pre-existing link between the movements described and the final meaning of the gesture in direct speech. Accordingly, the visual elements of the gesture described at the start of the extract (handkerchief, curve, pocket and lips) cannot be integrated into any existing schema which can be equated to the final verbal meaning of the gesture. That is to say there is no established relation between the signs and other movements made by Divine's hands which relate to pre-existing gestural signs. This is not to presume that all gestures are simply interpretable in the manner of a semaphore, but it is possible to imagine gestures which could suggest solitude in a simpler, less ambiguous way. For instance crossing the arms across the body and enclosing oneself in a protective embrace. As there is no pre-existing link between the movements and the meaning of the gesture the moment when the gesture is finally interpreted is all the more important, because, until then, it remains obscure.

As mentioned above, the shift of narrative authority takes place around the interpretation of gesture. The gesture is interpreted in the direct speech of Divine ("Je suis seule. Me sauve qui peut.>"). However, a central question is whether these words are spoken by Divine or the narrator. It is in these words that the tragedy ('[le] drame') is told and in these words that the gesture is guessed - 'deviner ce geste' - in the terms of the start of the extract.

One answer to the central question of origin is to maintain that the gesture is guessed by Divine alone; the preferred translation of 'deviner' would not be 'guessed' but '*divined*' thereby indicating the unity of the agent and the action of interpretation. This is the only way in which Divine could repossess her gesture. According to this reading the location of the source of narrative authority changes: Divine interprets the gesture in the place of the narrator.

A second answer to the question which refutes any shift in narrative authority (from the narrator to Divine) would maintain that the narrator interprets Divine's gesture *in the manner of* Divine - that is to say using her voice, idiom and linguistic register, even inflecting the adjective 'seule' to take account of the feminine, the usual procedure used by the narrator to refer to her. However, I believe that this second view places too much stress on the strategies of rhetoric because it ascribes the subtle shifts in narrative authority (and the verbal echoes between 'deviner' and 'Divine' for example) to a putative intentionality which then has to be located in a clearly defined existence, an

existence not found in this extract at all. The narrative voice, as we have already said, does not occupy a specific personal pronoun in this extract, nor are there any references to physical presence or gestures which would imply a more concrete and ontological representation of the narrator.

I would suggest that the interpretation of the gesture in the voice, idiom and linguistic register of Divine is better described in the first answer outlined above, but that it is also more radical and complex than that first answer. The interpretation is not specifically associated with the narrative voice, yet nor is it something that Divine *says* in the situation because she does not speak; she makes a gesture. The inverted commas ('guillemets' in the original text) which enclose the interpretation do not function as quotation marks of direct speech. I would argue - and this point will be developed further in 2.3 (Gesture and Character) - that the shifts in narrative authority (and particularly the shift that occurs at the moment when he interprets Divine's gesture in direct speech in this case) reduce the distance between characters and the narrator, moving towards a point where there is no distinction between them at all. Conventionally, this distance between narrator and character is representative of the gap between the creator and the created - a clear separation according to function. Whereas in the cases of both of the quotations analysed above the situation is more complex and ambivalent.

### 2.2.3 Conclusion

In the 'cavalier' extract from *Miracle* at the start of this section the first-person narrator names, describes and interprets his own gesture and is thus able to stand apart from it. If we view this in terms of the subjectivity of the first person singular narrator, it is then possible to say that, at the moment when he interprets his own gesture from a critical standpoint, his subjectivity is slightly different from the moment when the gesture was made without being interpreted. Therefore a shift in the representation of subjectivity accompanies the interpretation of gesture.

In a different way, the extract from *Notre-Dame* also indicates how the interpretation of a gesture can throw uncertainty on the representation of the subjectivity of a particular character. Divine's subjectivity becomes complex and ambivalent at the moment at which the narrative voice uses Divine's language to interpret her gesture (but in so doing implicitly questions her possession of the gesture). As we have seen, it is at this moment that three established propositions become uncertain: first Divine's possession of the gesture, secondly, the use of the feminine inflected adjective to denote

that Divine is speaking and, thirdly, that the narrative voice who has been describing and naming gesture in the extract until that point interprets Divine's gesture.

Both the extracts analysed in this section contain interpretations of gesture which are similar in register, syntax and form to direct speech but which are not identical to it. In the extract from *Miracle* the narrator refers to linguistic norms held in common between himself and the reader in the phrase: 'que l'on dit cavalier'. In the extract from *Notre-Dame* the interpretation of gesture is in the voice, idiom and linguistic register of Divine without being directly spoken by her.

We have seen that, although the representation of physical movement is problematised and partially obscured in Genet's texts, the word 'geste' is still frequently linked to movement in the narrative point of view, to shifts in narrative perspective. As soon as the word 'geste' is used it raises questions about signification and mediation. As soon as 'geste' is perceived, the reader can (and should ask) what is being called a gesture, who is doing the calling and for what purpose? It may be objected that many other terms and notions might act in a similar way; for instance, abstract qualities such as strength also have a link with the body. However, I would argue that the relationship between language and gesture is a unique one for the following reasons. In both examples of gesture in 2.2.2, gesture has been linked with a specific character at a specific point. It is an attribute of that character and belongs to him. However, the possession of a gesture is highly ambivalent. Although a gesture is frequently dependent on movements of the character's body, it does not have any fixed physical referent. Put simply this is the difference between the character's hand gesture and the character's hand. Gestures are therefore at one remove from physical existence. Gesture has its own temporality and it forms an episode or sequence with a start, middle and an end. This structure relates it to language, but because gesture requires the mediation of language, it is not in successful competition with language, bidding to supersede it. Thus in the first extract from *Miracle* the gesture was used at the point where the narrator moved beyond a self-referential assertion of his own particularity in which the pronouncement 'je vis à cheval' had to be taken at face value because it was unelaborated, to the point where the narrator is able to use gesture to view his own experience of being on a horse in a critical way. In the passages that have been analysed in 2.2.2 we have seen that the word 'geste' occurs at the point where there are subtle shifts in authority, at the very point at which the significance of the episode is concentrated.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.3 Gesture and Character

### 2.3.1 Introduction

In literary criticism the term 'character' usually denotes the representation of an individual in a fictional text. The term tends to stress what is particular to the individual, but in the pragmatic sense of a particularity which can then be used to distinguish that individual from another. The use of the word 'geste' in Genet's fiction confounds this pragmatic use of particularity. We will see that gestures in Genet's texts neither result from, nor contribute to the 'character' of a particular character.

Indeed occurrences of the word 'geste' in Genet's texts are particularly set against any conception of character which allows the generalising, global notion of the term to intervene. This is because, if given, this notion presupposes that gesture has a fixed relation to character in which a particular character would make a specific gesture as a direct consequence of his or her personality and that the gesture made (and all gestures preceding and following it) would contribute cumulatively to the personality of that particular character.<sup>34</sup> Another implication of this notion would be that the gestures belonging to a particular character would need to be visually distinctive *as a function of the character*. We have already seen in 2.1 that the relationship of gesture to its visual component<sup>35</sup> is a highly complex one; that is to say that most occurrences of the term 'geste' in Genet's texts are remarkable because they refer only partially to visual descriptions (or even omit such descriptions completely). We have also already seen in 2.1.3 how taxonomies and classifications based on the visual distinctiveness of gestures

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If this cumulative effect of gesture were adopted it would also dictate the structure of the present section. As a consequence, each of the individual texts would be privileged as a self-sufficient unit within which to trace the cumulative characterising effects of gesture and the present section on gesture and character would have been structured in terms of each of the five texts with an individual section devoted to gestures of the characters in each text.

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The visual component of gesture is the highly variable and usually very slight extent to which a gesture can be visualised by the reader in a direct description in the text.

break down.<sup>36</sup> Therefore I hope to explore in 2.3 how a notion of the relation between gesture and character based on visually distinctive gestures as the expression of the personality of individual unitary characters is untenable.

Indeed 2.3 will go on to suggest that characters in the texts by Genet considered here are best understood, not in terms of unitary personalities (with gestures playing a cumulative role in their construction and a consolidating role in maintaining them) but as temporary, fragmented and changeable clusters of subjectivity which are dependent on textual context, narrative mediation and on the crosscurrents and echoes in the language of the passages in which they are found. It may be objected that this notion of character is stretching the term beyond its semantic breaking point. So be it. The conclusion of this section (2.3.8) will finally put the retention of the term 'character' into question altogether.

It must be stressed in this introduction that there is no rigid distinction between gestures performed by characters and those performed by the narrator; both will be analysed here. The narrator cannot and should not be excluded, because, in all the texts except *Querelle*,<sup>37</sup> the narrator is also a character who performs gestures, and characters can also provide models for the narrator's gestures. The narrator of *Notre-Dame* is represented in the text at intervals<sup>38</sup> whereas the representation of the narrator is progressively more important in *Pompes*, in *Miracle* and finally in the first person singular narrative of *Journal* where the first person narrator predominates.<sup>39</sup> Therefore

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The breakdown of the taxonomies of gesture in Caroline Daviron's 'mémoire de maîtrise' *Les Caractères chez Jean Genet* is examined briefly in 2.1.3.

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Lieutenant Seblon in *Querelle* is a surrogate narrator who narrates his own gestures in the first person singular. Thus, for the purposes of the present analysis of gesture and character, Seblon is equivalent to the narrator in the other four texts (*Querelle* also has a narrative voice which occupies the first person plural but does not have a determined physical existence and therefore does not narrate its own gestures).

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Principally as a narrative frame at the start and the conclusion of the text.

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It should be noted that this progression does not correspond to the chronological order

the relation between character and narrator in all five texts should be thought of as less a case of a rigid distinction between the character on one side and the narrator on the other, where the relation between them is also conceived of as one of creator to created object. Rather, the language of gesture in the texts indicates a more dynamic relationship between narrator and character following the model suggested by the previous section, Shifts in Narrative Authority and the Naming, Interpretation and Description of Gesture (2.2), which introduced shifts in narrative authority and the potential temporary independence of characters (in the sense that they may name, describe, mediate or interpret their own gestures). As a consequence, the present section will constantly seek to stress the role of language in the gestural passages.

### 2.3.2 Narrative Mediation of Gesture and Character

This subsection looks briefly at the ambiguous way in which the narrator links the term 'geste' and the representation of character. In the case of the following passage from *Pompes* the ambiguity is illustrated by the absence of a visualisable gesture, instead we have an example of the fluidity of the term 'geste':

Voici quelques notes qui essaient de préciser l'image d'Erik. Je prends des gestes choisis sur des jeunes gens qui passent. C'est tantôt un soldat français, un américain, un voyou, un barman... Ils m'offrent tout à coup un geste qui ne peut être que d'Erik. Je le noterai.<sup>40</sup>

From the start of the passage, the narrator announces the representation of the character in a way that leads their reader to think that the visual component of gesture will be emphasised. That is to say that the narrator specifically sets out in the first sentence to make Erik's *image* more precise. Therefore, it is assumed that the reader will be able to understand the characterisation of Erik in a visual way and that there will follow an overt

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dictated by the dates Genet's texts were written (or published). In the present thesis, I have constantly sought to foreground ways of organising Genet's early prose fiction which are different from chronological ones.

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*Pompes*, p. 67. This passage forms the start of a 210-word passage excised from the subscribers' edition of the text. It is highly unusual because it is separated from the main body of the text by the heading 'ERIK' in capital letters. The only parallels in the whole of Genet's early prose fiction are the headings 'LA GLOIRE DE QUERELLE' (p. 141) and 'JE PRENDS LA PEINE A MON COMPTE ET JE PARLE' (*Miracle*, p. 344) and possibly also the 'Divinarianes' (*Notre-Dame*, pp. 78, 202 and 362).



attempt to make the image more precise by means of language in the form of notes. Now let us explore how these transparent intentions are complicated and rendered ambiguous by what follows.

In the whole of the rest of the passage the narrator indicates how he comes to a final point where he is given a gesture which can only be Erik's and which he will note down ('je le noterai'), thus fulfilling the goal outlined at the start of the passage to make Erik's image more precise. The linguistic construction 'd'Erik' usually indicates possession and this is intensified by the use of 'ne [...] que'. Thus by the end of the extract the narrator has made the image of Erik more precise for himself, but this image has been made more precise by a gesture which remains invisible to the reader and by a process which is obscured as far as the reader is concerned. Therefore, the gesture has no defining attributes other than its belonging to Erik. There are also unanswered questions regarding the process by which the narrator arrives at Erik's gesture. The narrator constructs a model in which Erik's gesture originates in the gestures of the series of young men. Yet the narrator has performed an occulting and an obscuring of the origin of the gesture: the narrator uses 'geste' in the singular in connection with Erik and in the plural when referring to the original movements of the series of young men. The originating process of Erik's gesture, despite the narrator's statements, is not visualisable for the reader who has to take on trust the preciseness and the appropriateness of Erik's gestures to Erik's image. Finally, therefore, one could interpret the entire episode of the narrator's reference to the visual component of making the image of Erik more precise and finally not characterising Erik for the reader in visual terms at all, as an example of the exercise of, and the drawing of the reader's attention to, the authority of the narrator.

In the lines which follow the passage above<sup>41</sup> the narrator both emphasises his key mediating role, the idea of borrowing gesture, as well as continuing to play on references to a visual component of gesture which is not described. He states: 'Il m'arrive d'essayer de refaire le geste découvert.' Therefore the narrator himself is now borrowing the gesture which was associated (in the plural: 'gestes') with the young men

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The text continues: '[New paragraph] Les réflexions notées furent entendues ou prononcées par moi. [New paragraph] Les sentiments sont les miens. Il m'arrive d'essayer de refaire le geste découvert. Je note l'état qu'il me fait connaître. Je note encore certains sentiments que je crois être à Erik en face de certains faits' (*Pompes*, p. 67).

and which the narrator subsequently says is a gesture which could only have belonged to Erik. Thus the representation of character within the passage containing the term 'geste' is associated with greater multiplicity and fluidity.

In conclusion, this brief subsection on the Narrative Mediation of Gesture and Character is intended to act as a prelude to the discussions of the implications of gesture for our understanding of character, implications which are analysed in detail in the conclusion (2.3.8).

### 2.3.3 Gestural Models

This subsection develops the fluid association between the occurrence of the term 'geste' and the personality of a character in the general sense by stressing the importance of the language which mediates gesture. The gestures in 2.3.3 are drawn from models in interesting linguistic ways. To illustrate this briefly let us reconsider the extract from *Pompes* analysed in 2.3.2. We recall that the gesture which could only be Erik's ('qui ne pouvait être que d'Erik') is chosen from a series of young men. The young men who are the gestural models in that case should not be understood as models in the sense of physically exemplary individuals (as in the English translation of the word 'mannequin') or considered in a general sense at all. Rather they are important on account of the shifts in the language which represents the gestures performed by the models. One example of such a shift in language is the unexplained shift between 'geste' in the singular and in the plural in the passage from *Pompes* above.

I quote both extracts which follow at length because they are probably two of the most sustained gestural passages in Genet's texts, as well as being the best illustrations of what I understand by gestural models. The first passage begins with a reference to Culafroy imitating the gestures of Alberto's sister who provides the gestural model (hence the future references in this subsection to models and imitators):

Ses g enuflexions et ses gestes se firent la copie fid ele de ceux qu'ex ecutait la soeur d'Alberto sur ce prie-Dieu chaque dimanche. Il se parait de leur beaut e. Ainsi les actes n'ont-ils de valeur esth etique et morale que dans la mesure o u ceux qui les accomplissent sont dou es de puissance. Je me demande encore ce que signifie l' emotion qui se manifeste en moi, en face d'une chanson inepte, de la m eme fa on que le fait la rencontre d'un chef d'oeuvre reconnu. Cette puissance nous est d el eguee assez [sic] pour que nous la sentions en nous, et cela rend supportable le geste de nous baisser pour monter en auto, parce qu'au moment o u nous nous baissions une m emoire imperceptible fait de nous une star, ou un roi, ou un truand (mais c'est encore un roi), qui se baissait de la m eme fa on et que nous vimes dans la rue ou   l' cran. Me hausser sur la pointe du pied droit et

lever le bras droit pour prendre au mur ma petite glace, ou saisir sur l'étagère ma gamelle est un geste qui me transforme en princesse de T..., à qui je vis un jour faire ce mouvement pour remettre à sa place un dessin qu'elle m'avait montré. Les prêtres qui recommencent les gestes symboliques se sentent pénétrés de la vertu non du symbole mais du premier exécutant; le prêtre qui enterra Divine en refaisant à la messe les gestes sournois de vols et effractions se parait des gestes, dépouilles opimes, d'un monté-en-l'air guillotiné.<sup>42</sup>

There are five sets of gestures in the extract above, each with its own model and imitator: Alberto's sister and Culafroy, the first person plural and the star, king or villain, the first person singular narrator and the 'princesse de T...', the priests and the first performer ('premier exécutant') and, finally, the priest who buried Divine and a guillotined cat burglar. The examples of models and imitators are closely tied to each other and there are also strong rhetorical connections between the first three pairs. Let us first trace this progression in order to see if it ends at a well defined point which reveals the essential aspects of the gestural model. That is to say what exactly in each of the gestural models causes them to be mimicked by the imitators. More specifically, since the first three pairs of models and imitators are linked by an argument, is it possible to generalise about some common quality of all three gestural models?

In the first example of model and imitator the sense of Culafroy's successful imitation of Alberto's sister is stressed by the narrator ('la copie fidèle'). We should note here that the model's gestures occur in a specific context (hence the demonstrative pronoun in the phrase 'ce prie-Dieu'). However, they are also repeated and repeatable because they occur every Sunday. The most important point to note in this first pair of model and imitator is that it represents a case where model and imitator are said by the narrator to be connected by a faithful mimetic relationship. From this statement about genuflections and gestures the narrator goes on to make a more general statement about what he calls the aesthetic and moral value of acts. It may be presumed on account of the use of 'ainsi' by the narrator at the start of the more general statement, that the first case of model and imitator is considered as a whole and is elaborated by the general statement. The term 'actes' is most probably referring to the gestures of Alberto's sister on the prie-Dieu and yet they are also referred to as gestures so it appears that in this passage 'geste' and 'acte' are partially interchangeable. This is confirmed here by the occurrence of the

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*Notre-Dame*, pp. 180-181.

verb 'accomplir' in conjunction with the noun 'acte' in contrast to the norm in the texts where the verb is almost exclusively found with the term 'geste'.<sup>43</sup> Subsequently, we find this example, spoken by the narrator in the first person singular. It elaborates the notion of aesthetic and moral value proposed in the general statement ('Ainsi les actes n'ont-ils de valeur esthétique et morale que dans la mesure où ceux qui les accomplissent sont doués de puissance'). The implication is that a clumsy song, if interpreted by a person endowed with power, can have the same effect as a recognised masterpiece. This power thus has the potential to subvert traditional notions of aesthetic and moral value. However, it is important to note that the source of the endowment of power is obscured from a linguistic point of view by a passive construction ('sont doués de puissance'). The term 'puissance' is confronted in the next pair of model and imitator: 'Cette puissance nous est déléguée assez pour que nous la sentions en nous, et cela rend supportable le geste de nous baisser pour monter en auto [...].' Once again, the source which delegates the power is not elaborated and a passive construction obscures the agent. As far as the function of the power is concerned, it is the premise which makes the imitator's gesture bearable and thus possible. The text does not allow us to trace the source of the power any further.

There is, however, an indirect way of tracing a source of the power and that is to return to the first set of model and imitator and more specifically to the unelaborated indirect reference to the description of Alberto's sister kneeling down on the prie-Dieu. The point here, regarding the dead end encountered when attempting to trace the chain of influence from the first pair of gestural model and imitator on through the general statement and examples, is that the word 'prie-Dieu' permits the word 'Dieu' to enter the passage in an apparently innocuous way. 'Dieu' is mentioned as an accessory of the gesture. As a consequence, the word 'Dieu' is present in the text and can potentially be the source of the endowment of power of the gestural model. The indirect importance of the divine is confirmed in the fourth and fifth pair of models and imitators. The fourth set are priests and the first performer of religious gestures. The fifth set comprises the priest who officiated at Divine's funeral and a guillotined cat burglar. While it is a

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*Miracle*: 'Est pleine la Centrale, pour accomplir ces gestes, de durs faméliques, au visage trop blanc [...]' p. 238. *Pompes*: 'Si je lui ouvrais une seule et mince écluse son flot allait s'engouffrer dans mes gestes et qui sait quel accomplir' p. 41.

possibility that God and the divine is the source of the power of the gestural model in the first three pairs of models and imitators in the passage, this possibility remains precisely that: something which is not explicitly confirmed by the narrator by means of either the first person singular pronoun or the first person plural. Instead, in both cases the personal pronouns modulate the difference between models and imitators. The modulation means that the gestural model has no fixed source of the power, or the authority of the narrator who interprets many of the passages discussed in 2.2.

Having completed the close textual analysis of the first part of the passage, let us elaborate the relation between the gestural models and the possible existence of an essential quality that causes them to be mimicked by their imitators. We can say that the model does not have an essential nature, aside from its function as one part of the model/imitator pair. Although the gesture is taken up by the imitator, the text does not reveal directly what it is about the gestural model that gives it the power to attract the imitator. An explanation of motivation is not a part of passages which involve gestural models.

Thus far I have emphasised the importance of the indirect action of the divine as far as the power of the gestural model is concerned. However, the process of mimicking and the transfer of gesture is just as important. This is confirmed by the presence of the verb 'se parer de' in the first and last references to gesture. This is a linguistic occurrence which encloses the passage in a frame in a similar manner to the first and last pairs of models and imitators which are both religious gestures.

The following detailed extract, from *Miracle*, illustrates a different feature of gestural models. Here the exact context of the model's and the imitator's gesture is not revealed until the end of the extract:

Ainsi il arrive souvent qu'un geste accidentel fasse de vous le personnage d'une scène célèbre par l'histoire, ou qu'un objet placé de telle sorte reconstitue un décor où se passa la scène, et tout à coup vous avez le sentiment de continuer une aventure interrompue par un long sommeil, ou bien encore il semble n'exister qu'un répertoire restreint de gestes, ou encore que vous appartenez à une sorte de famille héroïque dont chaque membre recommence les mêmes signes, ou encore que vous êtes le reflet dans le temps d'un acte passé comme sur un miroir le reflet dans l'espace: dans le métro, me soutenant parfois des deux mains à la mince colonnette verticale plantée entre les portes, n'étais-je pas le reflet de Jeanne d'Arc au sacre de Reims, tenant la hampe de son étendard?<sup>44</sup>

In common with the previous extract from *Notre-Dame*, a general presentation of the possibilities of gesture (here the second person plural is used) precedes a specific example where the narrator's gesture reminds him, in a complex way which I will explore, of a pre-existing gestural model. However, in this case there is only one pair of model and imitator (compared with five in the previous extract). Here the general presentation is sustained: there are three possibilities which follow the initial one and they are all introduced by 'ou'. The first possibility outlines two elements which comprise the model of gesture: character and scene. The second possibility is the possibility of a decor which relates to the scene. The ensemble that these three elements form is the source of a sudden feeling of taking up an adventure again - the suddenness is familiar to us from the first passage analysed in this section where the narrator experiences the sudden realisation that the gestures performed by series of young men can only be those of Erik ('Qu'ils m'offrent tout à coup un geste qui ne peut être que d'Erik'). The next two possibilities limit the repertoire of gestures and the range of original models of those gestures. In the final phase, before the move to the specific set of gestures of Joan of Arc as model and the first person narrator as imitator of the gesture, the visual element is invoked. This is not done directly because the mirror, a familiar method of transferring an image, is mentioned as part of a comparison. Consequently an image is transferred and the relationship between the model and the imitator is *structured* in terms of the familiar relation between a body and its reflection in a mirror. The phrase with which the narrator finally chooses to express the relation between model and imitator is not described in directly visible terms because there is a reference to reflection in time rather than in space: 'un reflet dans le temps d'un acte passé'. It is at this point, just before the shift to the first person plural, that the relation between model and imitator is at its most abstract.

If we look at all the possibilities mentioned in the passage in terms of the possible essential quality of the gestural model, we see that the possibilities do not offer us an essential quality of the gestural model alone. At each point and with each possibility the model is one particular thing. For example it is variously a famous person in history, one of a limited repertoire of gestures,<sup>45</sup> a member of a heroic family or even a reflection

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This suggests the world of Genet's drama and *'Adame miroir'*, the ballet that he had

in time ('le reflet dans le temps d'un acte passé [...]'). Yet the gestural model is only realised when it is expressed with its imitator at the end of the passage. This is when the narrator supporting himself on the thin column in a Metro carriage is similar to Joan of Arc holding the staff of her standard at Rheims.

When considering each of the possibilities in turn, one might suppose that they are alternatives because each of them is introduced by 'ou'. However, if we consider them in the light of the gesture which follows them, they are not mutually exclusive because they also have a cumulative effect which introduces the radical comparison between the narrator in the Metro and Joan of Arc at Rheims. They prepare the reader for the shock of the comparison (in the passage from *Notre-Dame* the name of the princess into which the narrator states that he is transformed by gesture is elided ['la princesse de T...']): Joan of Arc is one of the mythic figures in French History. This comparison between the imitator and the model is presented in all seriousness by the narrator and appears not to be ironic. Yet it is highly transgressive because it moves across gender, indeed, a few conservatively-minded readers might even regard it as blasphemous.

As the third example of a gestural model, I refer to an extract from *Querelle* where the term 'geste' does not occur but which nevertheless does refer to a gesture:

Vic marchait selon le rythme long et lourd de Querelle, à mesure qu'il entrait dans cette démarche, une grande confiance l'habitait [...]<sup>46</sup>

The entire extract here concerns a process; this is indicated by the adverbial phrase 'à mesure que' and confirmed by the abundance of imperfect tenses. The gestural model is Querelle's gait and Vic is the imitator. The implication here is that Vic's increasing confidence is a function of the length and the weight of Querelle's gait. I will explore the link between gesture and weight and particularly density in 2.3.6 (The Concentration of Gesture); however, with reference to the extract above, the most important point to note is that the gesture is in limbo. It is in the process of being appropriated by Vic, but that process is not complete; the gesture has not been transferred from Querelle to Vic. What

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already written in 1946. The occurrence of words such as 'personnage', 'scène', 'décor' in the passage confirm this suggestion.

occurs resembles a duplication of gesture because Vic walks in the wake of Querelle, following the rhythm of his gait.

In sum, the present discussion of gestural models stresses that the model is part of its whole textual context and not simply a specific gesture characteristic of the personality of a particular character - the introduction to the present section (2.3.1) proposed that the latter notion of character is not consistent with Genet's texts. In addition, a gestural model has no absolute validity outside the specific context of its occurrence in the text. Furthermore, in this subsection I have given examples of the partial and the complete obscuring of the visual component of the gestures of the models. If the gestural models were visually determined, visualisable and linked to one particular character their transferability and fluidity would be curtailed.

#### 2.3.4 The Double Gesture

The term 'double geste' is found in *Miracle*, *Pompes* and *Querelle* and refers to gestures made simultaneously by two characters or two gestures which complement each other.<sup>47</sup> In both cases the effect of the double gesture tends towards the assimilation of two gestures stressing the ways in which they interact, intersect and are harmonised.

Furthermore, it is important to note that in every case the double gesture is described in a visual way. Although, as we have seen above, the visibility of the double gesture is unusual because it combines the gestures of two characters rather than asserting the visual distinctiveness of a single character. The following double gesture takes place after Querelle offers Seblon a mandarin:

L'officier s'approcha en souriant. Alors s'accomplit ce double geste, commencé simultanément: cependant que Querelle portait sa main à un fruit en essayant de le détacher, le lieutenant sortait la sienne de sa poche et la tendait lentement vers

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The Double Gesture is also the fundamental premise upon which the interaction between the sailor and his image in Genet's ballet *Adame miroir* is founded (before the image starts to make independent movements): 'L'Image recopie alors ses derniers gestes. Le matelot passe une main sur le miroir, comme pour effacer la buée qu'il vient de faire avec la bouche. L'Image fait le même geste. Enfin le matelot donne un coup de poing en direction du miroir mais la main, au lieu de rencontrer la glace, heurte le menton de l'Image dont la tête vacillait Le matelot porte les deux mains en avant, l'Image fait de même, le matelot recule, l'Image recule; le matelot se rapproche encore, l'Image se rapproche; le matelot recule, mais cette fois l'Image avance et sort du miroir' (pp. 36-37).



le matelot qui, souriant y déposa son cadeau. L'harmonie de ces deux gestes, plus que tout troubla l'officier.<sup>48</sup>

One of the main features of the double gestures here is the simultaneity of the two composing gestures from each of the characters. The double gesture brings the characters closer (physically and emotionally) for a moment and neither their differences nor the relationship of desire founded on Seblon's lack of Querelle's attributes is stressed during this passage. The object that Querelle hands to Seblon becomes progressively less concrete; before this passage it is referred to as a mandarin and during the passage it is first called a fruit<sup>49</sup> and then a gift. This shift foregrounds the increasing lack of definition between the characters and the emphasis on the symbolic importance of this moment of the double gesture. Here we are concerned with a symbolic and delimited moment of harmony between two characters who for the length of the passage revert to general type (not in the more general, global sense of personality but, in this case, in the sense of their professional relationship within the navy). The narrator no longer refers to them by their proper names: one is a rating ('matelot') and the other an officer ('officier'). The double gesture which involves a gift is all the more important in this context because it also temporarily abolishes this difference in status. It is important to note that the final element of the double gesture is a reversal. It is the very harmony of the double gesture which troubles the officer. In terms of the wider context, although the gesture is harmonious, it is in fact the sole act of unsolicited generosity to Seblon on the part of Querelle.

The second example of a double gesture is also taken from *Querelle*; it relates to

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*Querelle*, p. 118.

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There are certainly implicit parallels between this double gesture and the figure of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge in Genesis. Of course, at a basic level the fact that the branch with the mandarins has been stolen and was hidden in Querelle's trousers is a travesty of the biblical account. In terms of structure, the double gesture marks an exceptional moment in the relationship between Querelle and Seblon because it is one of the only moments of kindness of the sailor towards the officer - the unusualness of the situation is therefore the reason why the officer is troubled - and it also signals the officer's mistake: he believes that the gift of the mandarin might signal an awakening of Querelle's love for him. In a moment of bathos Seblon is disillusioned almost immediately afterwards because Querelle farts in his direction.

Querelle and Norbert as they undress:

Les deux hommes dressés face à face s'assouplirent et simultanément portèrent leurs deux mains derrière eux. Ce double geste, si parfaitement accordé, les étonna l'un et l'autre. Il y avait là un élément d'entente.<sup>50</sup>

As in the case of the first extract the sense of harmony and understanding ('harmonie' in the first extract and 'entente' in the second) and simultaneity ('simultanément' is found in both extracts) of the double gesture is stressed here. In addition, as stated above, the double gesture tends to abolish the difference between characters: 'le double geste' is echoed in the lack of distinction between Nono and Querelle who are referred to simply as 'les deux hommes.' In this passage the element of understanding has a rather unusual relation to the gesture itself. One would presume that the understanding is a result of their intentions, yet it appears that a different notion of the source of the gesture is operational. The understanding which is a constitutive part of the double gesture appears not to be part of the intentionality of the two men because they are simultaneously astonished by it. Therefore this lends independence to the gesture and its own intentionality whose source is obscured, as we have so often seen in other aspects of gesture and character.

The notion of the independence of gesture is also to be found in the third example of a double gesture which is part of a 150-word excision from the subscribers' edition of *Miracle* between the words 'gabion',<sup>51</sup> (p. 283) and 'Je sortais' (p. 283):

Au cours d'une promenade, je m'étais placé près de Toscano - car nous allions quatre par quatre - et sans m'en rendre compte, j'échangeai avec lui des fleurs, ou des herbes peut-être, poudreuses, cueillies en passant, sur le bord de la route. Machinalement, nous les mîmes à nos bouches. A peine fait, le double geste parfaitement simultané déclencha le mécanisme des amours.<sup>52</sup>

The lack of intentionality is so marked in this passage that the narrator uses the term

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*Querelle*, p. 64.

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The word is the same in English and denotes a cylindrical construction woven from branches and sometimes filled with earth; it is used for protection.

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*Miracle*, subscribers' edition, pp. 404-405.

'peut-être' to signal the uncertainty of which object was exchanged in the double gesture. In addition, the lack of intentionality is further indicated by the words: 'machinalement' and 'mécanisme'. As in the case of the exchange of the mandarin, the fruit and the gift in the first extract, the double gesture is intimate and linked to love (in the second extract Querelle and Nono are undressing before they make love)<sup>53</sup> as indicated by the phrase: 'le mécanisme des amours' which still does not reveal the causation of the double gesture.

The last two examples of double gestures are slightly atypical in the sense that the first does not include the term 'double geste' and that the second is more complex and does not present a clearly visible image of the gesture. The first extract comes from *Miracle*:

Pendant un instant très court, je me trouvais un genou en [sic] terre devant mon idole qui tremblait d'horreur, ou de honte, ou d'amour, en me regardant comme si elle m'eût [sic] reconnu, ou seulement si Harcamone eût reconnu Genet, et que je fus la cause de son atroce émoi, car nous avons fait l'un et l'autre exactement les gestes qui pouvait s'interpréter ainsi. Il était d'une pâleur mortelle et ceux qui virent la scène de loin purent croire que cet assassin avait la fragilité d'un duc de Guise ou d'un chevalier de Lorraine, dont l'Histoire nous dit qu'ils défailaient, terrassés par l'odeur et la vue d'une rose.<sup>54</sup>

We have seen in this section that in previous extracts there is a progressive increase in

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The following gesture from *Pompes* is intimate to the point of becoming highly sexual and, yet, paradoxically, the double gesture here is part of the narrator's intention to avoid a functional physical gesture linked with bodily hygiene and visibility ('sous mes yeux'). The narrator desires a further level of intimacy: 'Par un souci très grand de lui éviter sous mes yeux, les moindres gestes d'une toilette intime, je passai ma main entre ses fesses, comme si je l'eusse caressé là, et lui, par une semblable pudeur, craignant que ma queue ne fût salie par sa merde, l'essuyait avec sa main libre. Nous accomplîmes en même temps ce double geste avec la même innocence, comme si accidentellement, dans la nuit, sous les draps, ma main avait rencontré ses fesses et la sienne ma queue' (*Pompes*, p. 60). The intimacy achieved in the passage is one of mutual feelings which contextualise the double gesture. In addition, the narrator's aim here, as indicated by the phrase 'comme si accidentellement' is the avoidance of intentionality. Thus in the passage an intimate, even highly sexual double gesture occurs and a functional one is avoided. The crucial difference between them is that the double gesture is intimate yet harmonious. The functional gesture would be intimate (as is explicitly stated: 'les moindres gestes d'une toilette intime') yet, in contrast, this intimacy would be forced and embarrassed.

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*Miracle*, pp. 25-26.

the lack of differentiation between characters. In this case the character of Harcamone is first referred to, not by name but as an idol. It appears that the narrator is prey to an increase in uncertainty and that he is unable to interpret the reason why Harcamone is trembling and puts forward three possibilities: horror, shame or love. Following this the narrator characterises himself and Harcamone together (it is, however, important to note that this characterisation is by no means authoritative and permanent because it occurs as part of a condition of possibility with the term 'comme si'). Once again, the (double) gesture is associated here with a transformation (from murderer to nobleman).

The final example of a double gesture is taken from *Pompes* and is more complex than the passages considered previously in the present section:

Erik, preste, se rangea derrière la cheminée, dans l'ombre, de façon à s'y confondre. Aussi rapide, mais déséquilibré par sa cuirasse de balles, Riton esquissa le même mouvement et le loupa. [...] Au sommet du toit, Riton accomplit quelque chose comme un grand écart imparfait, une jambe allongée et l'autre repliée en arrière [...] Leurs armes s'entrechoquèrent [...] Erik défit son étreinte et laissa pendre ses bras. Riton perçut une légère sensation d'humidité et de froid sur le dos de sa main qu'il porta machinalement à sa bouche. A peine s'étonna-t-il. Il comprit que la salive d'Erik conservée dans les alvéoles de l'harmonica avait coulé sur sa main. L'étoffe de laine bleue sombre, dont était fait la culotte du milicien, et celle, noire du soldat, contenaient une odeur que les journées et les nuits d'août, la fatigue et l'angoisse, avec leurs sueurs avaient accumulée, mais que ce double geste libéra, fit se mêler, et des guerriers noirs au corps luisant, nus et la ceinture ornée de chevelures, porteurs de piques, sortirent des bambous. Le coeur d'Afrique palpait dans la main fermée de Riton.<sup>55</sup>

The complexity here stems from the gradual increase in the harmony of the gestures and from the fact that the double gesture is not completely visualisable. As far as the gradual increase in the harmony of the gestures is concerned, at first the narrator describes Riton attempting to reproduce Erik's gesture of moving behind the chimney. However, Riton is thrown off balance by his ammunition belt and fails to reproduce Erik's movements. The first indication of the harmony that will exist between Erik and Riton is a paradoxical one in that it originates in the movement of their guns which knock against each other ('Leurs armes s'entrechoquèrent'). The double gesture here is composed of opposite movements; Erik undoes his embrace lets his arms hang loose, whereas Riton lifts one of his hands to his mouth. As we have already seen in the double gesture in the passage

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*Pompes*, pp. 64-65.

excised from *Miracle* where the narrator and Bulkaen mechanically put the blades of grass into their mouths, the extract above also contains the adverb 'machinalement' which describes Riton's gesture without reference to intentionality.

Clearly, there is a difference between double gesture passages and the other types of gestural passages. Whereas in the other passages the visual component of gesture is understated, ironised or subverted, the visual description of the double gesture with its concentration on the creation of the composite gesture from two parts is a *sine qua non*. However, the double gesture passage is typical of the other gestural passages in Genet's texts in the sense that it also serves to refute the notion that these texts possess unitary characters performing specific gestures.

### 2.3.5 Gesticulation

The *Petit Robert* dictionary defines 'gesticulation' as: 'l'action de gesticuler' and this verb is defined in turn as: 'faire beaucoup, trop de gestes'. The verb 'gesticuler' can be traced back to the Latin verb *gesticulatio* and to the noun *gesticulus* which is the diminutive of *gestus*. *Gesticulatio* has the nuance of excess because it frequently refers to pantomime and the uncontrolled and unsystematised use of gestures in contrast to the gestures of *actio* in Classical Rhetoric and thus to a regulating system of control where the meaning of human movement can be circumscribed. From the point of view of logic it is quite interesting that the verb related to the diminutive of *gestus* should be concerned with the notion of excess, that is to say with too many gestures. Probably the best way to attempt to reconcile this touch of illogicality within the etymology of gesture is to consider *gestus* in *actio* as the norm, and to assume that etymologically related forms are used to signify any aspect of gesture which differs from the norm of *gestus*. What was important was the difference not its degree or characteristics. As a consequence, we have the diminutive of *gestus* (in *gesticulus*) and *gestus* taken to an extreme in a parody of itself (in *gesticulatio*).<sup>56</sup>

Genet's early prose fiction uses the word 'gesticulation' in a unique way. In an

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The Latin neuter noun 'gestum' which signifies 'deeds' and 'exploits' and has given rise to the French term 'la geste' also seems to have developed in a similar way to its masculine gendered cousin 'gestus'. In English the term 'jest' comes from 'gestum' and adds an ironic and parodying nuance to heroic or exemplary deeds and exploits denoted by 'gestum' and 'la geste'.

*oeuvre* which is striking for its respect of conventional diction and lexis in higher linguistic registers (outside the domain of slang of course), any modification of received definitions is extremely significant. In the use of the term 'gesticulation' in Genet's texts all connotations of excess and a lack of control over the body inherited from classical antiquity are evacuated. In the context of the five works under consideration here, 'gesticulation' signifies the totality of the gestures associated with a specific character in a particular situation.<sup>57</sup> Admittedly, compared with the ubiquity of the term 'geste' there are relatively few occurrences of 'gesticulation' in the five works under consideration. I have been able to locate five examples. However, the meaning of 'gesticulation' does indeed remain constant in all these occurrences, so I would maintain that they indicate a coherent concept and the possibility of considering as an organic whole the gestures that a character makes in particular circumstances.

Let us now look at examples of the use of 'gesticulation'. The first is a short example which clearly conveys that the use of the term has no connotation of excess. Indeed, the very opposite applies in this case where the narrator describes Culafroy on the point of performing: 'une danse à la gesticulation retenue, ébauchée, tout en intentions [...]' (*Notre-Dame*, p. 221).<sup>58</sup> The second example retains the connotation of understatement and measure in gesticulation:

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In the 1970s there was an increasing interest in gestures in the empirical world and their relation to speech (the majority of the publications mentioned in 2.1.4 date from this period) The following terms were coined within these anthropological, linguistic and sociological approaches to denote the totality of the gestures associated with a particular person in empirical reality. They are: 'la gesticulation', 'le gestuaire' and 'la gestuelle' (examples taken from: *Le Trésor de la Langue Française* Paris, Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1981) pp. 231 and 233. The principal difference between these terms and the use of 'gesticulation' in Jean Genet's early prose fiction is that these terms imply a degree of permanence in time, an idea of durability and a sense of universality not present in the Genetian term 'gesticulation'.

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Although the following passage makes no reference to 'gesticulation' the use of the term 'langage' aspires towards the same totality of reference to the gestures in the scene being described by the narrator of *Journal*. And in this passage the link between sober and restrained gestures and the total picture is emphasised. In this extract the narrator is speaking about beggars: 'Leur langage gardait la retenue des classiques. Se sachant ombres ou reflets, déformés et malheureux, ils travaillaient pieusement à posséder la discrétion malheureuse des gestes et des sentiments' (*Journal*, p. 183).

Les anciens étaient d'accord pour se souvenir qu'Harcamone continuait à vivre dans son monde - de plus haute lignage que le nôtre - humiliait autrefois les prévôts. Non qu'il refusait d'obéir, mais par ses gestes non emphatiques, car sa gesticulation était très sobre, il prenait en face d'eux, des poses d'une autorité insolente.<sup>59</sup>

Here 'gesticulation' is the gestural norm. There is a specific reference to Harcamone's non-emphatic gestures which are indicative of his sober gesticulation in this scene. In this passage the lack of expansiveness in gestures and gesticulation is considered by the narrator to be as expressive as a movement which directly subordinates the 'prevôts'. Harcamone's gestures are non-emphatic that is to say not like the gestures in *actio*. The notion of sobriety is further emphasised in the shift in terminology in the extract which moves from 'gestes' to 'gesticulation' and finally to 'poses' getting progressively less expansive and progressively less mobile, yet simultaneously taking on authority<sup>60</sup> ('pose' is also an example of one of the words such as 'mouvement', 'attitude', 'posture' and 'tic' which are related to 'geste'). At the end of the extract it appears that Harcamone is almost immobile, facing his antagonists. Therefore, while it is clear that 'gesticulation' in *Miracle* (and in the other texts as will be seen) is both different from its conventional etymological meaning and aspires towards totality, it is also the case that it is simultaneously presenting a face of gesture which is different from the ambitions of the 'gestus' (if we understand that 'gestus' as an adjunct to spoken discourse in Classical rhetoric and that it is used strategically by the orator to mark time and give emphasis). In the passage above, gesticulation is linked to near-immobility and non-emphatic gestures. Returning to the original proposition of this chapter (gesture is more and less than language), it would seem that 'gesticulation' is less than language in terms of movement, but more than language in terms of the authority and significance that it acquires as a consequence of this winding down towards immobility.

The following example of 'gesticulation' concerns the attempt by the narrator of

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*Miracle*, p. 106.

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'Gravitas' is another possible description of the end product of the progressive concentration of gesture in this extract. We will see in the next subsection, the Concentration of Gesture (2.3.6), how gestures come to be related to weight, dense physical matter and plasticity.

*Miracle* to discern similarity of gestural type between a boy whom he loves (Bulkaen) and one of the nameless tramps who are randomly abused in Mettray. Jeannot, the narrator of *Miracle*, states:

Mais je n'osais croire que je me trouvais en face de deux types (Bulkaen et le pédé) identiques au fond. J'épiais sur Bulkaen la réponse des gestes de la lope. J'essayais de surprendre une correspondance entre leurs gesticulations. Rien n'était maniéré chez Bulkaen. Un excès de vivacité le faisait paraître un peu brutal. Portait-il au fond de lui un pédé honteux et frétilant pareil au clodo piteux que tout le monde méprisait?<sup>61</sup>

In this passage it is a case of the narrator raising the possibility that the two visually distinct types (or 'blokes') are identical, but not daring to confirm it. If they were identical his lover would be a tramp. This would be unbearable and the narrator leaves this conclusion as a question. Therefore gesture partially subverts the cherished differences between characters who are first considered (by the narrator in this case) to be irreconcilable opposites. This reading is confirmed by the narrator's activity of being on the look out for a gestural response from the tramp, in case the feared equivalence between the characters is confirmed.

The next example from *Journal* is related to the previous one from *Miracle*, but it deals with the difficulties of distinguishing between the tough pimp ('maquereau') and weak queen (the Spanish term: 'maricona' is used). That is to say that the passage is concerned with their fundamental similarity. Both this juxtaposition and the one in the previous passage between Bulkaen whom the narrator loves and the tramp whom he

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*Miracle*, pp. 32-33. 'Gesticulation' also occurs in a variant passage from the original edition of *Miracle*. The text of the Folio edition of the text reads: '[...] Nous [les colonistes de Mettray] sommes un livre d'histoire familière et vivante où le poète sait déchiffrer les signes de l'Éternel retour. La faute que Toscano [...]]' p. 290. Whereas the subscribers' edition of the text reads as follows (the differences between it and the 'Collection Folio' version are indicated by underlining): 'Nous sommes un livre d'histoire familière et vivante où le poète sait déchiffrer les signes de l'Éternel retour. Mais on comprendra que cette interprétation ne permette pas au poète d'employer de tels gestes qui le font pénétrer au coeur même d'intimités qu'il viole ainsi puisque ce sont les gestes de morts ou de mortes. Il oeuvre donc dans la nuit. La nuit, le poète secrète de la mort. Et lui seul peut s'occuper de cette gesticulation car, à voler des attitudes vous risquez de poursuivre jusqu'au bout le destin dangereux des héros. Cela est arrivé. La faute que Toscano [...]]' (p. 415, *Miracle*, subscribers' edition). As far as the use of 'gestes' when a more general term is required to indicate the heroes' gestural language as a whole.



despises would appear at first sight to be illogical. However, it will also be seen that gestures and gesticulation are frequently associated with apparently illogical contrasts which point to a different logic, that of the oxymoron. Thus here, the ‘gesticulation’ is obscured and equivocal and Stilitano mistakes the tough pimps for weak queens:

Un soir il [Stilitano] dut se battre. Nous passions, calle Carmen, et la nuit tombait presque. Les Espagnols ont quelquefois dans le corps une sorte de flexibilité ondoyante. Certaines de leurs poses sont alors équivoques. En pleine lumière Stilitano ne se fût pas trompé. Dans ce début d’obscurité il frôla trois hommes qui parlaient doucement mais dont la gesticulation était à la fois vive et langoureuse. En passant près d’eux Stilitano les interpella, de sa voix la plus insolente et de quelques mots grossiers.<sup>62</sup>

Once again, as in the case of the previous extract, ‘gesticulation’ refers to the totality of gestures of a particular character (in addition, a single occurrence of the term refers to the movements of no less than three individuals). However, within the gestural passage in both cases we see an example of how ‘gesticulation’ precisely is not able to be used in a strategic rhetorical way to distinguish one character from another. In the previous extract from *Miracle* the phrase ‘deux types [...] identiques au fond’ is used, and in the extract from *Journal* immediately above, the term ‘équivoque’ indicates the equivalence between two poses and gesticulation which appears to be contradictory to its very core. How are we as readers to visualise ‘gesticulation’ which is at once lively and languorous (‘à la fois vive et langoureuse’)? Furthermore, a complete representation of the visual component of gesture is not realised in both cases. That is to say the narrator does not perceive gesture clearly in either case, nor is a visual perception of the gesture communicated to the reader. In the extract from *Miracle* the narrator hardly dares to believe his physical situation in front of two types (or ‘blokes’), identical at bottom (‘en face de deux types identiques au fond’). Both adjectives ‘en face de’ and ‘au fond’ are able to denote perspective and physical position; however, although the narrator is positioned in space as a potential observer (he is in front of the object he can potentially see), vision is not realised and neither the gestures nor the gesticulation are described. Vision is also obscured in the extract from *Journal*, but in a different way. The whole scene of Stilitano’s mistaken interpretation of gesture is shrouded in semi-darkness (the

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*Journal*, p. 73.

precise turns of phrase are: 'la nuit tombait presque' and 'dans ce début d'obscurité').<sup>63</sup> Therefore in both of the extracts above (and indeed in all of the passages containing the term 'gesticulation' that I have been able to locate in Genet's five texts) the distinguishing visual features which one would expect to be indicated by a term which denotes the totality of a specific character's gestures in a particular situation are obscured.

Thus the term 'gesticulation' does not reinforce the unity of a particular character; that is to say that it does not characterise, associating visualisable gestures with a character as part of that character's singular subjectivity, or personality - to use a traditional term which psychologises and ontologises the textual construction of character and also recalls the definitions of the word 'subjectivity' from the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1.3 (as well as the generalising, global use of the term 'character' mentioned at the start of 2.3.1).

However, 'gesticulation' cannot only be defined in the negative in terms of what it cannot or does not do. Thus I maintain that the term is acting in at least two directions at once; first, it is obscuring the visual component. Secondly (as illustrated in the first example from 2.3.5), 'gesticulation' denotes the totality of the gestures of a specific character in a particular situation. This is in direct contrast to the meaning of 'gesticulation' in classical antiquity and to the nuance of a potential loss of control over the body which the term still retains in conventional definitions today. Thus 'gesticulation', when defined by the adjectives in the two passages above, simultaneously affirms its significance but within a structure of the retention of movement rather than in the strategic gesture of *actio*, denoted by 'gestus' the *frère ennemi* of gesticulation.

### 2.3.6 The Concentration of Gesture

In the previous subsection the narrator attributes adjectives to gesticulation which lend it weight by concentrating and reducing descriptions of movement. We should note that in both cases the source of the force which concentrates, reduces and restricts gestures and gesticulation is not elaborated. The absence of the originary force and the impossibility of tracing the chain of influence back suggests a similarity between the models of gesture - where it was impossible to definitively trace the source of the power

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The metaphor of light and, in particular, that of light fading into imminent darkness is also found in the conclusion of this section (2.3.8).

of gesture - and what I will call the concentration of gesture. This concentration of gesticulation and the concomitant increase in gravitas and authority is also found in gestural passages (passages containing the term 'geste') across all five texts, of which a selection will be examined here. Clearly, the suggestion of a heaviness of gesture alone is a well known feature in fiction<sup>64</sup> and Genet's texts also contain many examples of this more straightforward usage. For instance, the following quotation refers to the effect on Seblon when Querelle suddenly pulls off his beret to reveal blond tresses: 'Son bras, son geste furent soudain de plomb' (p. 72).

However, Genet's texts go much further because they elaborate commonplace references to the weight of gestures. They refer to gestures with the same vocabulary as is used to talk about sculpture; that is to say a vocabulary concerned with physical substance and the degree to which, and the means by which, human movement is represented in an inanimate physical object such as a sculpture. The possibilities for the word 'geste' to represent the concentration of movement will involve the juxtaposition of opposites such as heaviness and lightness, speed and slowness and in the following case liveliness and the inanimateness of the material which composes the sculpture. One of the straightforward examples of the concentration of gestures occurs in the description of the arrival of Mignon at Divine's funeral (which is also the first time that Mignon is described in *Notre-Dame*). Within this passage there is the following reference to the physical concentration of Mignon's gestures: 'Depuis qu'il est parti, libre, à ses vols je retrouve ses gestes si vifs qu'ils le montraient taillé dans un cristal à facettes, si vifs ses gestes qu'on les soupçonnait d'être tous involontaires [...]' (*Notre-Dame*, p. 22). Here the narrator represents Mignon's gestures in plastic form; an enterprise made all the more difficult because it takes place in the absence of Mignon. After Mignon has left to thieve, the narrator attempts to elaborate the adjective 'vif' which was applied to his gestures. The dictionary definition of 'vif' also contains an aspect of movement ('lively') which is subverted in the plastic representation. The other aspect of the meaning of the adjective 'vif' which is 'live' is also subverted because the cast of words in the passage stresses that it is a question of a representation ('[...] qu'ils le montraient [...]') and that this

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Cf. Emile Zola's *L'Assommoir* (Paris, Livre de Poche, 1983) relating to the gestures of the roofer Coupeau: 'Alors il se risqua, avec ces mouvements ralentis des ouvriers, pleins d'aisance et de lourdeur' p. 131.

representation occurs for the first person narrator ('je retrouve ses gestes'). Thus the effect of Mignon's gestures is to create a simulacrum of Mignon and the narrator is explicitly conscious of the status of the simulacrum as a fictional representation.

A similar process of overt subversion of movement occurs in the following extract, where, after burgling an apartment the narrator of *Journal* is looking to make a quick getaway:

Le trésor découvert il faut sortir. La peur alors envahit mon corps. Je voudrais tout précipiter. Non me précipiter, aller plus vite, mais faire que tout, magiquement, se presse. Que je sois hors d'ici et très loin, mais quels gestes faire pour aller plus vite? Les plus lourds les plus lents. La lenteur amène la peur.<sup>65</sup>

Before gestures are mentioned the narrator introduces a notion of wanting to make everything speed up, rather than speed up himself. The narrator explicitly describes this occurrence as part of a magical process which is still traceable back to the narrator's 'je voudrais'. However, when the narrator asks himself what gestures he needs to perform to go faster it is not clear whether he is referring primarily to himself or whether there is also an implicit reference to the previous idea of making everything go faster ('tout précipiter'). Gesture, just as in the cases of the shifts in narrative authority in 2.2, causes a shift in language which is contradictory to the point of becoming an oxymoron.<sup>66</sup> It is at this point that the concentration of the gesture occurs. It would appear that the contradictory concept of a gesture being dense represents the same structure of opposites as the thief who makes the slowest gestures in order to go faster, or to speed everything up. Therefore once again there is a contradiction concerning the opposites of two terms. The reference to fear in the final sentence of the extract also reminds us of the structuring role of gesture (indirect in this case since the adjective associated with the gesture is

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*Journal*, p. 175.

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The following extract contains a pairing between speed and slowness which is nearly identical to the quotation above: 'En cellule, les gestes peuvent se faire sur une extrême lenteur. Entre chacun d'eux, on peut s'arrêter. On est maître du temps et de sa pensée. On est fort d'être lent. Chaque geste s'infléchit selon une courbe grave, on hésite, on choisit. Mais cette lenteur dans le geste est une lenteur qui va vite. Elle se précipite. L'éternité afflue dans la courbe d'un geste. On possède toute sa cellule parce qu'on en remplit tout l'espace avec la conscience attentive. Quel luxe d'accomplir chaque geste avec lenteur, même si la gravité ne réside pas en elle' (*Miracle*, p. 204).

substantivised in the word 'lenteur'), because the reference to 'peur' echoes the start of the extract: 'la peur alors envahit mon corps'. It is not clear whether fear is the cause or the effect of gesture and thus the paradigm of cause and effect is undermined.

We should note that the phenomenon of reversal continued to be important in Genet's later prose and essays. Thus not only did gestures take on weight and density as in the passages analysed in this subsection, but, as evinced by Jean Genet (1910-1986) in his essay on Alberto Giacometti.<sup>67</sup> The artist's paintings and sculptures also take on some of the attributes of movement that are traditionally associated with gestures. Again, it should be recognised that neither the process whereby gestures in Genet's early prose fiction are linked to physical characteristics nor that of Giacometti's art taking on movement are transformations which are absolute, complete and permanent. Rather, both testify to the reversibility and fluidity of gestures.<sup>68</sup>

I will conclude the present subsection on the Concentration of Gesture by suggesting that the passages analysed here attempt both to make the language of gesture achieve new levels of intensity and also to increase the semantic scope of the term 'geste'. The traditional conception of gesture connects it irrevocably with movement and self-contradiction emerges only when this traditional conception is linked to weight,

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*L'Atelier d'Alberto Giacometti*, Décines, L'Arbalète, 1992 (unpaginated).

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The following example from Genet's essay on Giacometti is typical: Cette après-midi nous sommes dans l'atelier. Je remarque deux toiles - deux têtes - d'une extraordinaire acuité, elles semblent être en marche, venir à ma rencontre, ne jamais cesser cette marche vers moi, et de je ne sais quel fond de la toile qui n'arrêterait pas d'émettre ce visage tranchant.' 'Si je considère mieux la toile, 'relief' convient mal, il s'agit plutôt d'une dureté infracassable qu'à obtenue la figure. Elle aurait un poids moléculaire extrêmement grand. Elle ne s'est pas mise à vivre à la façon de certaines figures dont on dit qu'elles sont vivantes parce qu'elles sont saisies dans un moment particulier de leurs mouvements, parce qu'elles sont signalées par un accident qui n'appartient qu'à leur histoire, c'est presque le contraire: les visages peints par Giacometti semblent avoir accumulé à ce point toute vie qu'il ne leur reste plus une seconde à vivre, plus un geste à faire, et (non qu'elles viennent de mourir) qu'elles connaissent enfin la mort, car trop de vie est tassée en elles' (*L'Atelier d'Alberto Giacometti*, L'Arbalète, unpaginated). These two paintings are in perpetual motion, they have a material quality in their hardness ('dureté'). They also have a high molecular weight which is a key term in the density of element. Finally, Genet plays off the elements of the binary of life and death and of stasis and movement against each other to great effect to increase the semantic weight and hence the density of the paintings.

density and plasticity as in the passages of this subsection. However, in my conception of gesture self-contradiction does not arise because it can equally well be argued that gesture in Genet's early prose fiction has become such a fluid term, with so many diverse semantic ramifications and free of any one particular imitator or model, that it is no longer limited by traditional conventions which assume that gestures have a fundamental, if not always visible connection to movement. Thus we have seen in the course of the present subsection that the language of gesture aspires towards many attributes which might be regarded as fundamentally opposed to it: the concentration of materiality, weight, and density.

### 2.3.7 Gesture and 'la mise à mort'<sup>69</sup>

Why 'la mise à mort'? I use this term to refer to gestures which end in death because it is impersonal and acknowledges the tendency in the texts to concentrate attention on the finality of the gesture itself and to disregard the killer, the victim and the social consequences of death. 'La mise à mort' is also used to describe the moment after the defeat of the bull, when the bullfighter dispatches the exhausted animal by lining up his sword and then swiftly piercing the nervous system with it.<sup>70</sup> What is more, the gesture is concentrated because the matador has a time limit of ten minutes, after which he is warned; if he does not kill the bull by the fifteenth minute he must withdraw.

In the previous subsection we saw how the language of gesture and the term

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The term 'la mise à mort' was first suggested to me by an explanation from Genet's ballet score *Adame miroir* in which a sailor (who is part of a double entity with his animated mirror image) is killed by the highly stylised figure of the domino: 'Enfin le domino se décide, et choisit le matelot. Il le poursuit un moment, puis le poignarde avec le manche de l'éventail. Durant la mise à mort l'Image est accoudée à un portant et examine la scène sans montrer d'émotion' (*Adame miroir*, p. 39 - reprinted in *Fragments... et autres textes*, Paris, Gallimard, 1990). I note in passing that these characters appear to have even less psychological depth and unity than those in the prose texts. The first sentence of the introduction of the sailor reads: 'C'est un matelot qui n'a pas de passé. Sa vie commence avec la chorégraphie, qui la contient tout à fait' (p. 34). The present section is thus pointing towards a notion of character in Genet's early prose fiction which makes a distinctive representation of an individual redundant.

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I am grateful to Guy Danigo for this reference and for clarifying my ideas on this subject.

'geste' aspired to refer to areas of signification, such as physical density, which lie outside traditional notions of what gestures may signify (see 2.1.3). The same applies to gestures associated with the death of one character caused by another.

The present exploration of the relation between gesture, character, death and killing will necessarily mean confronting (if only briefly) the ethical dimensions of violence in Genet's texts. As we have already seen in the *Critical Survey of Secondary Literature (1949-1997)* (1.4), many early critics noted the frequency of killings in Genet's texts with disgust. François Mauriac famously took a stand against what he perceived to be the moral degradation of Genet's work.<sup>71</sup> The perplexed reaction of Alfred Cismaru is no less characteristic.<sup>72</sup> These critics reacted with hostility to what they saw was the general tone of the texts. What struck them above all was the frequency of killings. *Notre-Dame*, *Querelle* (in the subscribers' edition) and *Miracle* all have three killings each and *Pompes* and *Journal* both contain one each.<sup>73</sup> Yet in addition to the high frequency of killings in the prose fiction of Jean Genet, we must also consider how these killings are represented. First, the killings are abrupt.<sup>74</sup> Secondly, there is such an intense concentration on the instant of death that all concomitant factors are ignored; for

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François Mauriac: 'Le Cas Jean Genet', *Le Figaro littéraire*, March 26th 1949 and 'L'Excrémentalisme', *Le Figaro littéraire*, 15th August 1950.

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Alfred Cismaru, 'The Antitheism of Jean Genêt [sic]' *Antioch Review*, 24 (Fall 1964) pp. 387-401. The author maintains that, as liberals, 'we must defend ourselves against this antitheism' (p. 394).

73

We should also note, none of the representations of deaths in Genet's texts contain the term 'geste' in the relevant passage (with the exception of *Querelle's* killing of Vic and Gil's killing of Théo). However, as I indicated at the very outset of this chapter (in 2.1.1), the present discussion of gesture is not exclusively limited to those passages which include 'geste'.

74

The gestures which kill are invariably very short: 'il [Querelle] trancha la carotide au matelot'; 'il [Gil] coupa la carotide au maçon'; 'Querelle l'étrangla'. The movement thus shocks and surprises. The deaths are all narrated in the third person in the past historic tense; the implication is that the narrator is relating a *fait accompli*.

instance the character who dies is not represented as feeling pain, nor does the character who performs the gesture which ends in death feel any remorse. The reader has the impression that death and killing are being trivialised. However, this is not the case; instead there is a concentration on finality and extreme experience at the moment when the fatal gesture is performed. It is possible therefore to understand why fatal gestures in Genet's early prose fiction were overwhelmingly disturbing to the early (1950s and 1960s) critics.

What arguments can be used to contradict this charge of disturbing immorality in Genet's early prose fiction? If we insist on a direct relation between the representation of characters in Genet's texts and empirical reality, then there is no way to avoid the charge that Genet's texts occasionally dehumanise the individual. However, if we follow the present analysis in not taking such a relation for granted, or even problematising it (as this thesis has constantly attempted to do), then the notion of fragmentary character will help the reader to foreground the linguistic elements of the build up to these killings. The texts seem to emphasise an exploration of the language of the context of death, rather than a detailed description of the killing itself.

The social consequences of the fatal gesture are pre-empted in the texts, leading to a focus on gesture and speculation as to *how* the gesture was carried out and not *why it was performed* and *who* performed it. Pre-empting needs to be explained with specific examples. When a fatal gesture is pre-empted the reader is aware that there will be a killing. In addition, killing is acknowledged as a forthcoming narrative event at the level of plot. Querelle's killing of his shipmate and partner in crime, Vic, is pre-empted three times; on the first occasion it occurs implicitly,<sup>75</sup> on the second and third occasions it is quite explicit: there is a reference to Querelle's murders<sup>76</sup> and the clearest case of

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In the first sentence of the *Querelle* there is a connection established between: 'marins, mer et meurtre' (p. 9).

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'Outre le bénéfice matériel qu'il en tirait, ses meurtres enrichissaient Querelle' (p. 19). The narrator uses the term murder because it is important that Querelle pronounces himself guilty and ready to be executed after the event: 'D'une façon très indistincte il sentit que tout n'était pas fini. Il lui restait à accomplir la dernière formalité: son exécution. - "Faut que j'm'exécute, quoi!"' (p. 59). The judgement and the sentence are self inflicted; Querelle remains wholly untouched by the police investigation into the murders of Vic and Théo and his execution consists of being sodomised by Nono.



pre-empting occurs just before the narration of the killing of Vic when the 'Préfet Maritime' is described as being astonished that a sailor had his throat cut on the ramparts of the port. There are many other cases of detailed pre-emptings preceding the representation of fatal gestures in Genet's early prose fiction.<sup>77</sup>

The killing of Sonia by Clément Village is narrated in this way. Sonia has threatened to leave her pimp and is busily packing her suitcase:

La valise était posée sur le lit. Clément renversa sur elle sa maîtresse, qui bascula, couchée en arrière, et dont l'équilibre perdu lui mit sous le nez les pieds encore chaussés de souliers d'argent. La Hollandaise poussa un tout petit cri. Le nègre l'avait empoignée par les chevilles, et la soulevant comme un mannequin d'un geste vertigineux, un geste de soleil, faisant demi-tour rapide sur lui-même, lui fracassa la tête sur le montant du petit lit de cuivre. Clément me racontait l'affaire avec son parler doux de créole, où les *r* manquent [...]<sup>78</sup>

Here the brevity and speed of the fatal gestures are striking. The sequence of gestures above follow in rapid succession, the row of verbs in the past historic emphasize this movement.<sup>79</sup> The extract is typical from this point of view. All the killings narrated in

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In *Miracle* Harcamone's existence is defined at the very outset as that of the man condemned to death for murder: 'En quittant la Santé pour Fontevrault, je [the narrator] savais déjà qu'Harcamone y attendait son exécution' (*Miracle*, p. 10). In *Notre-Dame*, Clément Village is referred to as 'l'assassin noir' (p. 177) before he relates how he killed Sonia. *Notre-Dame* is likewise called an 'assassin' (p. 104). Admittedly, not all murders in Genet's prose fiction are pre-empted, for example Riton's shooting of Erik, Daniel's drowning of 'soeur Zoé' (*Miracle*, pp. 312-313) and Pépé's stabbing of the Spaniard (*Journal*, p. 43); however these unpre-empted murders are in a distinct minority.

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*Notre-Dame*, p. 186.

79

The representation of sound in these sequences is characteristic of the silence usual in the arena before the matador performs the 'mise à mort'. The sounds are subdued before the movement of the killer begins. The death takes place in silence because the narrative focus is on the brilliance of gesture (in a literal and metaphorical sense). The gesture is often described in light imagery: 'un geste de soleil' (*Notre-Dame*, p. 186) and 'il [Gil] empoignait le litre que d'un geste rapide, brisé en deux lignes de feu, il cassait contre la table. Avec le tesson mû comme une vrille, il coupa la carotide au maçon' (*Querelle*, p. 99).

the texts are swift, precise, almost surgical moves (this recalls the use of the term 'la mise à mort' in connection with bullfighting). Death is encompassed in a single gesture; there is no unsightliness or disorder, nor, as has been mentioned, does there appear to be any pain.

The killings in Genet's texts also exhibit a double alienation of the people involved in them. The depersonalizing of the victim is more familiar and also occurs in Querelle's killing of Vic; however, Querelle is also depersonalised to an equal or greater degree. The single fatal gesture which ends the life of the sailor Vic in *Querelle* is preceded by a detailed and progressive abolition of the self, in which the killer loses his identity:

Querelle sentit dans tout son corps la présence du meurtre. Cela vint d'abord lentement, à peu près comme les émois amoureux, [...] (p. 52). 'Il laissait se développer en lui-même cet émoi [...] qui tout à l'heure, [...] prendrait tout à fait possession de lui, chasserait toute conscience, tout esprit critique, et commanderait à son corps les gestes parfaits, serrés et sûrs du criminel.'<sup>80</sup>

The depersonalisation of the victim follows:

Quand il relâcha son étreinte, avec une grande prestesse il tira de sa poche son couteau ouvert et il trancha la carotide au matelot. [...] Les yeux exorbités, le moribond chancela, en faisant de la main un geste très délicat, se laissant glisser, s'abandonnant dans une attitude presque voluptueuse [...]. Querelle le retint fermement sur son bras gauche et il le posa doucement sur l'herbe où il expira.<sup>81</sup>

First the victim is referred to by his name Vic<sup>82</sup> then there is a shift in the text's representation of the victim from the term 'le matelot' to 'le moribond'. In addition to turning away from the specific identity of the person who is killed towards a depersonalised victim, the text invariably characterises these people very sparingly (Gil's killing of Théo is an exception). In this way Sonia is referred to only in the narrative

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p. 53.

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p. 55.

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In the case of the killing of Sonia by Clément Village there is the following shift in the representation of the victim: she is first called 'Sonia' then 'La Hollandaise' and finally 'un mannequin'.

sequence which leads to her death; the same applies to the episode of the opium smuggling in *Querelle* which is Vic's first and last appearance. Other examples of this tendency are: Divine's killing of the infant and both of the killings associated with Harcamone in *Miracle*. The depersonalizing of the victim is commonplace in much violent writing. Genet's early prose fiction, however, also displays the less familiar tendency to depersonalise the killer. This *rapprochement* or relativisation of apparent opposites is reminiscent of Hegel's master/slave dialectic, the termination of the existence of the other also becomes the death of the self or an aspect of the self. The performance of a fatal gesture is therefore often similar to suicide.<sup>83</sup> At the level of the wider historical context of Genet's texts and the existence of capital punishment in particular, we can see that at the very moment when the fatal gesture is performed the killer is simultaneously sentencing himself to death within the binary of crime and ensuing punishment. In all five texts there is a preponderance of fatal gestures which correspond to the most common forms of capital punishment (in particular the slicing of the throat and death by strangulation). It must not be forgotten that 'la mise à mort' may be used to translate the execution of legal or judicial murder carried out by the State. This point should not be laboured because we risk introducing a taxonomy of fatal gestures or gestures in general because there are many gestures which do not fall into this category such as the killing in *Miracle* of sister Zoé, who is simply pushed into a pond.

The death of the killer's self after a killing can also take the form of the end of the unitary character by fragmentation. Thus Clément Village, faced with what to do with the body of Sonia, is transformed:

Il se sublimisa. Il se fit général, prêtre, sacrificateur, officiant. Il avait ordonné, vengé, sacrifié, offert, il n'avait pas tué Sonia [...] <sup>84</sup>

The transformations are so extreme in this case that the killing of Sonia is itself subverted. In the description of Divine just before the moment of the infant's death the fragmentation of the unitary subject is extreme: 'Son corps toujours se manifestait. Manifestait mille corps' (p. 362).

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I am grateful to Andrew Brown for help in clarifying my thoughts on this point.

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*Notre-Dame*, p. 188.

Summing up Gesture and 'la mise à mort', it is evident that the fatal gesture definitively ends interaction between characters; it is therefore a towering and irreversible fact. The fatal gesture is an expression of total power - not power of one person or character over another but impersonal and absolute total power. The movement is final and decisive although the character who performs the killing is not consistently portrayed as being omnipotent. Yet absolute power is indeed achieved at the moment when the gesture takes place. Genet has often been criticised for glorifying killing on account of the portrayal of the act uniquely in terms of its power. There is no explanation or interpretation of the gesture that ends in death and it is precisely the sense of finality that is conveyed by a short gesture which is contextualised in detail beforehand. The following passage, addressed to the imagined reader, exemplifies the fatal gesture:

Vous ne connaissez pas, vous, cet état surhumain ou extra lucide, de l'assassin aveugle qui tient le couteau, le fusil, ou la fiole, ou qui, déjà, a déclenché le geste qui pousse au précipice.<sup>85</sup>

This passage captures that unusual element of the representation of killing in Genet's prose fiction whereby not only the victim but also the killer is depersonalised and subject to capital punishment the moment that the fatal gesture occurs. Here the killer is the object of the relative clause 'qui pousse au précipice'.

### 2.3.8 Conclusions on Gesture and Character

At the start of the present section I criticised the notion that gestures either result from, or contribute to a unitary entity known as 'character'. Throughout 2.3 we have seen the diverse ways in which the writing of gesture in Genet's early prose fiction is altogether more complex than the unitary conception of character. Throughout 2.3 we have also seen the build-up of a cluster of words used in the analyses of gesture; they are words associated with partial contradiction, potential contradiction and self-contradiction, words such as paradox, oxymoron, ambivalence and ambiguity. It is the implications of these recurring terms for the representation of character and gesture and the relation between them that 2.3.8 proposes to explore.

The writing of gesture in Genet's texts is indicative of a writing of character which works against the unity and independence of the latter. The complexity of the

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*Notre-Dame*, p. 30.

narrator in Genet's fiction who is selectively present, performing a structural function, and mediating himself and other characters, is in fact the best model for the way in which gestures modify the unitary notion of character in Genet's texts. It will be seen that the complexity and fluidity of the narrator as indicated by 2.2 has parallels with the present evaluation of the characters in Genet's texts.

The following passage deals with a named character (Stilitano) an unnamed one (Michaelis) and another referred to principally by the musical instrument that he plays (the guitarist); it also deals with the narrator and the connection that gesture makes between all of them:

Encore que je n'oublie pas Stilitano, l'autre prenait sa place dans mon coeur et contre mon corps. Ce qui demeurait du premier c'était plutôt une sorte d'influence donnant à mon sourire, qui se cognait contre le souvenir du sien, un peu de cruauté, et de rigueur à mes gestes. J'avais été l'aimé d'un si beau rapace, sacre de la plus haute espèce, qu'à l'égard d'un guitariste gracieux je pouvais arborer certaines insolences, quoiqu'il n'en permît que peu tant son oeil était éveillé. Je n'ose entreprendre son portrait, vous y liriez les qualités que je retrouve chez tous mes amis. (Prétextes à mon irisation - puis à ma transparence - à mon absence enfin, - ces garçons dont je parle s'évaporent. Il ne demeure d'eux que ce qui de moi demeure: je ne suis que par eux qui ne sont rien, n'étant que par moi. Ils m'éclairent, mais je suis la zone d'interférence. Les garçons: ma Garde crépusculaire.)<sup>86</sup>

We should note that in this passage we are dealing with the narrator of *Journal*, references to whose body and physical existence are the most numerous among the narrators and narrative voices in all five works under consideration here. However, what comes to the fore here is a different way of understanding the narrator in terms of his interaction with other characters by means of gesture. At the conclusion of this passage, the narrator proposes that we should understand him in such a way that his body is not of prime importance ('mon absence' and 'je suis la zone d'interférence'). However, the final representation is not only concerned with de-emphasising the body (within the traditional mind/body dichotomy). We understand the narrator in terms of his fluid and non-determinate relation with the other characters.

Let us first concentrate on the start of the passage. The situation presented here is a fluid and transitional one because the narrator has not yet forgotten Stilitano although another (as yet unnamed) character begins to occupy the place in his heart and the

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*Journal*, p. 106.

physical space beside his body. The reference to Stilitano is in the negative suggesting that, although Stilitano is distinct because he is named, the unnamed other ('l'autre') is in the ascendancy. However, this ascendancy remains as a potential and is not resolved in the passage. The imperfect tense of the verb 'prendre' used with reference to the ascendancy of the other also suggests that the transition between the two characters is a continuous process. The narrator goes on to refer to Stilitano as a remainder. And this remainder of Stilitano who, by definition therefore, is not a unitary character, still influences the narrator. The recollection of Stilitano's smile is material and solid because the narrator's smile bumps up against it ('se cogner contre'). The references to the solidity of Stilitano's smile and the rigour of his gestures are good examples of the aspects of gesture discussed in *The Concentration of Gesture* (2.3.6). Therefore, just as it would first be considered rather self-contradictory that gestures could be associated with the density of physical matter, memories in the extract above are linked to precisely this physical quality. Clearly, if the memory of a character manifests itself in a physical way, this undermines the more traditional means of representation, whereby the body of the character is represented in material terms and the personality of the character is referred to in non-concrete vocabulary. Equally clearly, then, the characters in Genet's texts are different from characters in the traditional mould.

At this point in the extract ('j'avais été l'aimé d'un si beau rapace [...]') the narrator is still under the influence of Stilitano, though the influence of the second unnamed character is steadily increasing. It is in this context that the narrator feels able to attempt a seduction of a third character, the guitarist. The narrator expressly states that he is not going to paint the portrait of this third character in visual terms ('Je n'ose entreprendre son portrait'), however he goes on to state that this third character cannot be distinguished from the narrator's other friends: 'vous y liriez les qualités que je retrouve chez tous mes amis'. From this point in the passage the parenthesis is opened and the narrator begins to speak about himself and begins to disperse all notions of a unitary character.

The narrator describes his friends/characters as pretexts ('prétextes') for his own progressive dispersal. The stages in this dispersal are linked to the metaphor of light and we recall that they follow the narrator's refusal to provide a visual representation of the guitarist by means of a portrait. First, the narrator describes his diffraction ('irisation') which refers to the break up of white light into the prismatic colours. Secondly, there comes the narrator's transparency and finally his disappearance. Moreover, the characters

(who are referred to as 'garçons' at this point) also undergo the same process in the sense that they change state ('ces garçons dont je parle s'évaporent'). The narrator goes on to invert the traditional hierarchy whereby the narrator is responsible for the creation of the characters because he ties the characters' fate up with his own. And the circularity of this relationship is reiterated in the phrase: 'Il ne demeure d'eux que ce qui de moi demeure: je ne suis que par eux qui ne sont rien, n'étant que par moi.'<sup>87</sup> The relationship between the narrator and the characters is marked by interdependence, but interdependence to the point that the distinctions between them collapse in the same manner as their self-sufficient unity as individuals. In a subordinate clause of the sentence quoted directly above, the narrator states that the characters are nothing; a statement which follows the expression of the narrator's absence and a reference to the evaporation of the characters. Given this void where the characters used to be, what remains therefore is the relationship between the narrator and the characters ('je ne suis que par eux [...] n'étant que par moi'). The dual use of 'par' emphasises this interdependence once again.

How is the narrator to continue from this point where narrator and characters are rotating in a hermetic circular formulation around a central absence? What happens is that the text returns to the metaphor of light. Now the narrator states that the characters enlighten him ('ils m'éclairent'). The characters' light thus shines from a void. This is a highly paradoxical figure. In the final movement of the extract the narrator states that he is the interference zone. This term has quite a precise meaning in optics: it is the place where the paths of the waves of light cross. Moreover, interference can produce equal and opposite effects because the waves or the systems of waves can either reinforce or neutralise each other. Interference has implications for the relationship between narrator and character and for the understanding of character itself. The narrator stated that the characters were light which enlightens and illuminates the narrator. It is important to note that the characters are not represented as being the source of the light - the source of the light is not elaborated in the text and the previous descriptions of the source of the characters and the narrator are obscured in the hermetic circular formulation ('il ne

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The dual use of the verb 'demeurer' at the conclusion of the passage recalls its use at the start in reference to Stilitano who is named and has a clear influence, but who, in common with the narrator, is in the process of being forgotten and superseded by two other characters. The narrator is thus drawing an implicit parallel between Stilitano's position in relation to the narrator and the narrator's position in relation to his characters.

demeure d'eux que ce qui demeure de moi: je ne suis que par eux, qui ne sont rien, n'étant que par moi'). The narrator, in describing himself as the interference zone - the place where the paths of the waves of light cross and where the waves can either be reinforced (thus doubling them) or neutralised, reducing them to nought - maintains the existence or the absence of the characters' as a potentiality.<sup>88</sup>

The representation of the narrator as interference zone implies that the understanding of character, characters and the narrator in the extract is arbitrary and polyvalent. Yet, this interference zone is not the last word that is said about character in the passage. The whole of the reference to the metaphor of light takes place within a context of the decline and waning of this light. The increasing darkness is linked both with the twilight ('crépusculaire') and also with a more metaphysical notion of decline, reminding the reader of the potential of the void, nothingness, darkness and death.

One short (27-word) paragraph before the passage that I have been analysing is the following aphoristic statement: 'Ce livre, Journal du voleur: poursuite de l'Impossible Nullité.' There have been several interpretations of this rather dense statement, the best-known of which is found in *Saint Genet*.<sup>89</sup> However, I would argue that this phrase refers to the absence of the narrator, with characters who are described by the narrator as nothing and with the general decline in light and life. Admittedly, it is difficult to take the link between characters and the void further. Notwithstanding this, I propose to highlight passages from the texts which express a similar situation from a viewpoint which is less tied to notions of nothingness and the void.

To end the present section on gesture and character I will present a series of extracts from the texts which confirm the understanding of character which 2.3 has been outlining. It is an understanding which undermines the notion of unitary character and thus perhaps challenges the term 'character' itself. Here, just as in the case of the

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The bivalency in the concept of rays of light which are either doubled or neutralised will be mentioned in 4.2 in connection with another crossing: Martin Heidegger's striking through of 'Sein' with the X-shaped crossing out.

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J.-P. Sartre links 'nullité' directly to his own concept of 'néant' in his philosophy of being. For Sartre it is simple: Jean Genet (1910-1986) is speaking about nothingness in relation to himself. 2.1.3 has raised some of the problems associated with equating the narrative voice in Genet's texts with Jean Genet (1910-1986).



interference zone in the passage from *Journal* above, the narrator creates a space for duality and plurality where there is no upper limit to the attributes and other characters that the individual character can encompass. As in the case of the light in the passage from *Journal* above, the source of the multiple attributes is obscured; the character does not create them; they only manifest themselves through him or her. The following passage refers to Armand:

[...] il parlait, la voix irréaliste de si peu prendre part à la conversation. De certains regards on peut dire leurs rayons (ceux de Lucien, de Stilitano, de Java), non d'Armand. Pas davantage ne rayonnait sa voix. Au fond de son coeur, ce qui l'émettait était un groupe de minuscules personnages qu'il gardait secrets. Ne trahissant rien, elle n'eût pu trahir. On y discernait toutefois un accent vaguement alsacien: les personnages de son coeur étaient Boches.<sup>90</sup>

Multiplicity and plurality express themselves in the voices of Armand. Thus at this basic level the narrator regards a character trait such as an Alsatian accent as the result of a group of tiny characters inside Armand who embody a whole speech community with its diversity. The multiple origin of the accent means that it is not a completely unified self: it is described by the narrator as vaguely ('vaguement') Alsatian.

The extract from *Notre-Dame* which follows explicitly includes the term 'geste' as part of the representation of a fluid and multiple character:

Ses mouvements, et plus particulièrement une prise de ceinture, une mise en garde devaient à tout prix, au prix de la victoire même, faire d'elle, plutôt que le boxeur Divine, certain boxeur admiré, et quelquefois plusieurs splendides boxeurs ensemble. Elle chercha des gestes mâles, qui sont rarement des gestes de mâle. Elle siffla, mit ses mains dans ses poches, et tout ce simulacre fut exécuté si malhablement qu'elle paraissait être en une seule soirée quatre ou cinq personnages à la fois. Elle y gagnait la richesse d'une multiple personnalité.<sup>91</sup>

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*Journal*, pp. 208-209.

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*Notre-Dame*, pp. 125-126. The following passage also makes a connection between gesture and a multiple personality, but *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs* is estranged from himself here because his name is used to refer to the Virgin Mary. His gender also becomes bivalent like the masculine noun attached to a feminine adjective 'un garde-française' (this word denotes soldier in a pre-Revolutionary regiment which mounted a guard at important buildings in Paris): 'L'assassin était assis au banc des accusés. La délivrance des chaînes permettait qu'il mît ses mains au fond de ses poches, ainsi, il semblait être n'importe où [...]. A un moment donné il sortit une main de sa poche, et, comme tout à l'heure il rejeta avec, en même temps que d'une secousse de sa jolie petite tête, la mèche blonde et bouclée. La foule cessa de respirer. Il acheva son geste en lissant sa

In this passage a movement is described, but the most important aspect is not what the movement is, but its effects on Divine. Rather than a generic conflation of the type of the boxer with Divine, Divine becomes a particular boxer or several boxers. The male gestures that Divine is said to look for are a parody of the gestures that males make, but these genuine gestures are not described in the passage and I would propose that authenticity in gesture is not important in either this text or in Genet's early prose fiction as a whole. What *is* important is the ongoing process of Divine's attempt to look for gestures which she associates with the male. It is from this attempt at an artificial simulacrum that Divine gains something positive, from this mistake in missing authentic male gestures (and we never learn what they are) that Divine wins the riches of a multiple personality. The loss of unity and singularity are thus not a frightening unravelling of subjectivity;<sup>92</sup> this extract suggests that polyvalency may also be positive.

#### 2.4 Conclusions on Gesture

In this section I develop the particular implications of gesture for the representation of subjectivity in Genet's texts. Gesture is useful for the study of subjectivity because it foregrounds the problem of representation. The word 'geste' not only frames a human movement drawing attention to its significance, but it is also possible to use the representation of the word to investigate the possibilities of the activity of framing itself, raising the following questions: who is performing the gesture, who is watching it being performed and in which circumstances? In this way the significance of the gesture is negotiable; it can be interpreted by a character or the narrator. Moreover, the

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chevelure vers l'arrière, jusqu'à la nuque, et par lui je retrouve l'impression étrange: quand, chez un personnage déshumanisé par la gloire, on discerne un geste familier un trait vulgaire (voilà bien: chasser d'un coup de tête brusque une mèche de cheveux), qui casse la croûte pétrifiée, par la fente adorable comme un sourire ou une erreur, on aperçoit un coin de ciel. Je remarquai cela déjà à propos d'un des mille précurseurs de Notre-Dame, ange annonciateur de cette vierge, un jeune garçon blond ("Des filles blondes comme des garçons..." Je ne me laisserai pas de cette phrase, décidément, qui a la séduction de l'expression: "Un garde-française") que j'observais dans les ensembles de gymnastique' (*Notre-Dame*, pp. 325-326).

visualisability of the gesture becomes an issue. The following questions are raised: is gesture completely visible? if not, what obscures it? And who describes it (however partially). This foregrounding of framing and interpretation and especially the language in which they take place, frees up gesture from the character or narrator who is supposed to have performed it. So the frequent occurrence of the word 'geste' is a linguistic feature in Genet's text which is associated with a whole series of non-singular representations of subjectivity.

Throughout this chapter we have seen narrators' and characters' subjectivity modified in passages which contain the word 'geste'. We will see in the next chapter on Language Consciousness that gesture is not unique in being associated with complex and plural representations of subjectivity; however, it *is* unusual in the way that it does this and this chapter has demonstrated the great variety of writing about gesture in Genet's texts which exhibits plural subjectivity, which problematises representation and which foregrounds (and modifies) language. Examples of this writing have been analysed in all the subsections of 2.3: Narrative Mediation of Gesture and Character (2.3.2); Gestural Models (2.3.3); The Double Gesture (2.3.4); 'Gesticulation' (2.3.5); The Concentration of Gesture (2.3.6) and Gesture and 'la mise à mort' (2.3.7).

First, let us address the foregrounding of language. At a general level the methodology of the present thesis and the approach to the word 'geste' as a linguistic feature of Genet's text means that language is necessarily foregrounded. However, 2.3.4, 2.3.5 and 2.3.6 go further than this, because they concern a modification of language in the writing of gesture in Genet's texts. In 2.3.4 there is a departure from standard definitions (in the case of 'gesticulation'). In 2.3.5, there is the creation of a concept (in 'le double geste') and finally in 2.3.6 there is a focus on attributes given to gesture (stasis and weight) which appear to contradict the way in which it is traditionally conceived (in terms of movement).

I would argue that it is unhelpful to consider the modification of language as an expression of plural subjectivity or, alternatively, to maintain that plural subjectivity is the result of the modification of language alone. Conceiving the question in this way automatically posits one concept as the cause and the other as the effect. This is too simplistic. The relationship between subjectivity and language is much more dynamic and symbiotic; they feed off each other. Each of the types of gestural language analysed in the subsections of 2.3 have distinctive qualities; however, they are also linked by the language of the interpretation, description and naming of gesture which was the subject

of 2.2 and 2.3.2. Language which gives meaning (interpretation, description and naming) becomes important because of the fluidity of the term 'geste' in Genet's texts (we have already discussed how gesture is frequently only partially visualisable and always only partially dependent on one character). If it were possible to isolate interpretative language by distinguishing it from the language which represents subjectivity in Genet's texts, it might be initially possible to see one in opposition to the other. The instances of the clear assertion of an interpretation analysed in this chapter appear to be associated with singular subjectivity and with the first person singular. As for example in the following passage from *Miracle*: 'Sentiment qui fut indiscernable dans son geste, seulement je sais qu'il fut, ce gâfe, soudainement attendri, prêt à fondre en larmes' (p. 272). However, this opposition between the plural representation of subjectivity and interpretative language is not always valid because the subsections of 2.3 approach the relationship between both aspects in different and non-oppositional ways.

Let us take the case of 'gesticulation' first. Since it refers to the totality of the gestures associated with a specific character, a reader not acquainted with Genet's texts might associate it with a single authoritative interpretation of gestures. This association would appear to be a necessary consequence of the way that 'gesticulation' addresses the *totality* of a given character's gestures. However, this view is not confirmed by the examples of 'gesticulation' found in the texts. Of the five examples quoted, two concern the subdued nature of 'gesticulation' and two concern cases where mistakes are possible concerning its interpretation. One can conclude from this that either 'gesticulation' as a term is working in two almost completely opposite directions: on the one hand distinguishing a gestural totality and thus interpreting and representing gestures while also on the other hand indicating how mistakes in the interpretation of 'gesticulation' can occur. This apparent contradiction should not disturb us because 'gesticulation' is no different from the subjectivity to which it is linked; subjectivity is associated with singular elements (such as characters' names and third person singular pronouns) as well as plural ones (for example their 'gesticulation' is able to be confused with that belonging to another). It is also possible to elaborate the connection between the bivalency of gesture and subjectivity in relation to tone and style. Robert Smith describes the apparent uniqueness of a writer's tone and style in the following terms: 'Like style, tone is perhaps inimitable, a token of singularity, but this singularity is possible only because it can be distorted, the tension altered, the pitch deranged' (*Derrida and Autobiography*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995; p. 190). Hence something is singular

because it can be distorted and be turned towards the plural.

Secondly, there is the case of double gestures. They seem to be unequivocally asserting the singularity of gesture as an ordering principle of human action, making a link between two characters. Double gestures (with one exception which does not include the term 'double geste') are all described in a clearly visualisable way. However, while the two characters who will perform the gesture are initially distinct in the 'double geste' passage, this clarity is not shown to prevail for the length of the passage. One interpretation of double gesture emphasises the links between characters through their unconscious. However, this interpretation is not confirmed by the language of the text which depicts the characters in different ways and with different nouns in the course of double gesture passages. For instance in one passage from *Querelle* Seblon is referred to first by name, then as 'le lieutenant' and finally as 'l'officier'. This is a progressive depersonalisation (pp. 117-118). It is paradoxical that the characters lose all distinctiveness and merge at the moment that the double gesture occurs. They merge not into one being which is then described, but into the double gesture itself which is then described visually. This recalls the excisions concerning sex and sexuality; they too attempted to represent the impossible union between individuals during sex by the use of body fluids or a mediating third partner.

Let us now consider gestural models, the third type of writing associated with gesture in this chapter. With gestural models there appear to be two distinct conceptions of gesture. These conceptions are exemplified by quotations from the two most detailed gestural passages in Genet's texts. The first is: 'Les prêtres qui recommencent les gestes symboliques se sentent pénétrés de la vertu non du symbole mais du premier exécutant [...] ' (*Notre-Dame*, p. 181). This first conception seems to emphasise the singular subjectivity of the first performer of the gesture. The second conception can be summarised in the following quotation: '[...] ou bien encore il semble n'exister qu'un répertoire restreint de gestes, ou encore que vous appartenez à une sorte de famille héroïque dont chaque membre recommence les mêmes signes [...] ' (*Miracle*, p. 290). According to this second conception both gesture and subjectivity are associated with a singular plurality. That is to say that they are both generic and independent just as members of a family who are related by blood might resemble, *and also be different from* each other. However, if we return to the first extract we can discern the singular plurality there as well; this is because the gesture of the first performer is multiplied before it is transferred down the ages to the priests. The unexplained shift from singular to plural and

vice versa recalls the archetypal example of a gestural model which is quoted in 2.3.2. In this model several gestures are taken from various characters to produce a single gesture which cannot but belong to Erik (none of the gestures are described). In Erik's case there is a movement from plural to singular. In the case from *Notre-Dame* above the movement which is unelaborated is from singular to plural.

The fourth type of gestural language is the concentration of gesture (2.3.6). This subsection concentrates on a particular type of language which modifies gesture because qualities not normally associated with it (such as weight and density) are attributed to it here. Perhaps more than any type of gestural language described in the subsections of 2.3, the concentration of gesture illustrates how gesture is such a fluid term that interpretation can affect and influence it in various ways. Gesture, now becomes linked to something more than the singular subjectivity of human beings; in Genet's texts it is taken one step further, into the realm of inanimate objects.<sup>93</sup> This connection between gestures and objects is extreme and counterbalances the fluidity of the representations of the term 'geste' in all of the texts. The concentration of gesture can therefore be said to be a forerunner of the gestures which end in the death of another (2.3.7, Gesture and 'la mise à mort').

It is therefore in relation to the fifth and final type of gestural language that we find the implications of the concentration of gesture described in full. We may note, for instance, that the concentration of his gestures occurs only when Mignon is absent ('Depuis qu'il est parti, libre, à ses vols [...]'). These gestures put Mignon on display as if he were a monument: '[...] ils [ses gestes] le montraient taillé dans une cristal à facettes' (*Notre-Dame*, p. 22). Thus the narrator's interpretation is foregrounded as a concrete recollection of Mignon (concrete in the most literal sense possible). 2.3.7 has already adequately explained how the victim is depersonalised in gestures associated with death and also how these gestures exclude the sociological and legal consequences of killing, both of which are linked to the modification of singular subjectivity. Therefore let us focus again on the performers of the gesture in order to understand how their

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It is possible to discern some similarities between the concentration of gesture in Genet's texts and *en-soi* existence in Sartre's philosophy. Particularly in the danger for all human beings of turning the other in to an *en-soi* object, by their gaze and by their actions. And also in the impulsion that characters (Antoine Roquentin for example) have towards objects, the *en-soi pour-soi*.

subjectivity is represented. Querelle is inhabited by his criminal self immediately prior to the killing of Vic.<sup>94</sup> This manifestation of subjectivity, defined by the gesture of killing and the way and the circumstances in which it took place, temporarily occupies what could be considered before the murder as Querelle's singular subjectivity before he committed the murder. The killer Querelle becomes known and is named according to the interpretation of the gesture (in this way Clément Village is called a priest and a officiant). A killing is thus a temporary abolition of the self which then becomes defined by the gesture, which in turn is determined by the mediation of language and wider concerns such as the narrative authority and the relationship between the narrator and characters. However, performing a gesture which involves the death of another opens the representation of the subjectivity of a given character up to dissolution, fragmentation and frequently also to death. Let us consider the case of Gil: before killing Théo he is simply a builder; but afterwards he must isolate himself following the association between his name and criminality in the newspapers of Brest (this situation is called 'l'apprentissage douloureux de la poésie' p. 151 and is analysed in more detail in 3.2.3). It is also after the killing that Gil has sex with Querelle, thus connecting himself with the physical and emotional linchpin of the text. Therefore the range of representations of Gil increases as a consequence of his gesture.

Similarly, Harcamone commits two murders: the first condemns him to death and the second to immediate execution; however, the representatives of the society who seek to punish him, the judge, the lawyer, the chaplain and the executioner, do not simply carry out the capital punishment; instead there is a complete loss of scale and they wander within Harcamone's body, visiting different parts, like so many cells in a prison. Harcamone's death is therefore prefigured as a merging of the self with the world outside it. At the end of the episode the four men are themselves lost at the centre of Harcamone's heart which is called a mystic rose: '[...] au coeur de la rose: c'était une sorte de puits ténébreux. [...] Ils firent tous les quatre les gestes de gens qui perdent

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'cet émoi [...] qui tout à l'heure, [...] prendrait tout à fait possession de lui, chasserait toute conscience, tout esprit critique, et commanderait à son corps les gestes parfaits, serrés et sûrs du criminel' (p. 53).

l'équilibre, et ils tombèrent dans ce regard profond' (*Miracle*, p. 369).<sup>95</sup> Lou-du-Point-du-Jour announces Harcamone's death in the following terms: 'Du beau gosse, on en a fait deux!' This description is a challenge to the way that the executed body is usually mentioned; in this *boutade*, Harcamone the murderer is executed, but the guillotine blade does not divide and terminate, it multiplies.

The developing focus of this chapter towards representations of subjectivity provides us with a new and radical means of extending the implications of the fluidity with which gesture is written. This is particularly the case in 2.3.8 where the word 'geste' is linked to a radical exploration of the narrator's subjectivity and its relation with that of his friends (probably used here as a euphemism for 'lovers'). Gestural osmosis does not only precede the exploration of subjectivity in the text, it is a part of this exploration; it deals with the same constellation of questions (subjectivity, problematic representation and language) but with 'geste' as its linguistic core.

Let us now return to the initial formulation of gestural language: 'gesture is more and less than language'; the essential point is the connection between language and gesture. This formulation captures the problematic nature of the connection: language and gesture sometimes appear to be working in different ways and it is often difficult to describe exactly how they interact (hence the use of both 'more' and 'less' here). However, the formulation does emphasise that, in spite of the difficulties, gesture and language are always connected in Genet's early prose fiction and it has been the aim of this chapter to describe and analyse the variety of the ways in which the connection occurs. This conclusion has refined the notion of language to stress interpretation and problematic representation, before making a final link between the types of gestural language and representations of subjectivity.

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In the subscribers' edition of the text the men re-emerge in Harcamone's cell in an adaptation of the birthing process: '[...] ce regard profond. Ce qui dura la chute... Les jupes ballonnantes de l'aumônier, du juge, de l'avocat, les soutinrent et leur permirent une descente en douceur, malgré leur bouche ouverte par la frayeur et la verticalité et malgré leurs gestes effarés pour s'accrocher à une paroi dure et lisse comme le marbre. Le bourreau descendit plus brutalement. Enfin il touchèrent un fond solide, soupirèrent, et, rouvrant leurs yeux, ils se virent dans la cellule, en face d'Harcamone qui les regardait en souriant, vêtu seulement de sa chemise de toile blanche et dure et de son pantalon de bure...' (p. 528).



### 3.0 LANGUAGE CONSCIOUSNESS

#### 3.1. Introduction of Terms

Language consciousness is a ubiquitous feature of Genet's early prose fiction (in crude fractional terms it comprises between a tenth and a twentieth of each text). Hence the main body of this chapter will refer as frequently to 'the language conscious passage' as to the concept which is most simply defined as a reference by the narrator to the production or the reception of a passage, a section of text, or of the text as a whole. As we will see in the course of this chapter, although language consciousness is a linguistic feature it continuously interacts with subjectivity and representation and it is therefore fruitless to attempt to abstract it as a discourse from the individual works in which it occurs. So it is a simplification to say that terms such as those which follow sum up language consciousness: 'livre', 'mot', 'poète', 'matière-prétexte', 'orthographe', 'dénouement'. All of these terms occur in Genet's texts, some of them many times, but language consciousness cannot be reduced to self-reflexive vocabulary. Therefore language consciousness is not exclusively a language.

Neither is language consciousness exclusively a consciousness; we can also exclude an exclusively ontological interpretation of language consciousness in which it is ascribed to both an author (for the references to production) and to a reader (for the references to reception). Language consciousness is not exclusively any particular individual's consciousness *of* language; this is because stated discursive aims are undermined and modified in Genet's texts. For instance, in *Pompes* the narrator's initial aim of commemorating Jean D., by means of historical references to the Second World War, during which his death occurred, is partially undermined by language consciousness linked to quasi-autobiographical and poetic modes. This affects the representation of the subjectivity of the narrator who proposed the initial aim. Therefore language consciousness, like gesture, is linked to interpretation and representation in complex ways which this chapter seeks to describe, analyse and evaluate.

We will see that 'narrator', a term which is so often taken for granted in literary criticism, is at the centre of the implications of language consciousness. The narrator neither exists in empirical reality nor possesses a specific discourse. The discourse and ontologically-based approaches perhaps have more to do with a spurious search for the absolute origins of language consciousness, than with an analysis of its interaction with

three fundamental concepts: subjectivity (both transcendental and plural forms), representation (both successful and problematised) and language (which is both simply foregrounded by the narrator's quotations from his own narrative and also modified by his recasting of certain passages).

I will now briefly discuss previous uses of the term 'language consciousness' and the similarities and differences between these uses and my own. The term is found in two theoretical essays on realism. Stephen Heath uses the term in his essay 'Realism, Modernism, and "language consciousness"' (in *Realism in European Literature*, N. Boyle and M. Swales (eds.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986; pp. 103-122). Heath is concerned to redress the undervaluing of what he calls 'language consciousness' in debates about realism. His key argument is that reality is represented by language in fiction and all fiction, including realist fiction, must acknowledge this mediation by language. For Heath, language consciousness should also be part of a 'new' realism which acknowledges the importance of (its own) language in the representation of reality: 'What is at issue is not a loss of realism but a contemporary redefinition of it to include the awareness - the 'language-consciousness' of the terms of its production' (p. 118). Heath refers to J.P. Stern's (hyphenated) use of the term in his *On Realism* (London and Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973; pp. 159-167). I have not been able to locate any sources which predate Stern, so I presume that he coined the term. Stern's book is a rich description and survey of realism. 'Language-consciousness' is found at the end, in a section entitled 'Distensions, Alternatives, Concentrations' and applies to 'fictions [which] are dominated by language, or rather by an articulated consciousness of the creative process, its psychology, technicalities and institutionalisation' (p. 159). While my use of the term has nothing to do with a theoretical definition of a genre such as realism, I would agree with the basic emphasis that the term places on language and representation in Stern and Heath (but particularly in Heath and with the provisos mentioned at the outset of this chapter).

Let us now briefly consider the differences between my own understanding of the term and Heath's, Stern's and related concepts developed by other theorists. I agree with Heath's shift of emphasis in realism 'to include the awareness [...] of the terms of its production'; however, the ability of realism to mediate the real and its concomitant teleology is still present. Heath does not go far enough. For both Heath and Stern this mediation implies that reality is both pre-constructed and yet also passive. Their notions of the process of mediation are both limited by the separateness of the thing mediated

(reality) and the medium (language). In their type of mediation the medium conveys reality without exchange, without them both being affected (a process completely different from the mediation of gesture by language described in chapter two. We recall that I argued that gestures in prose and poetry cannot be abstracted from the language which mediates them). In my discussion of language consciousness I prefer the term 'representation' because it goes further than Stern and Heath's mediation and is a more open term which allows both language and what is represented by it to change as representation takes place.

Stern concentrates on production in his reference to 'the creative process' above. However, in Genet's texts reception is also emphasised to at least an equal degree; this is a major limitation of Stern's definition at the level of his critical vocabulary alone (Stern does not engage directly with subjectivity and representation). More than this, Stern ultimately rejects language consciousness in his description of realism because for him language quickly takes over as the exclusive concern of literature:

What prevents the literature of language-consciousness from being *un réalisme d'aujourd'hui* is that it is trapped inside a self-reflective circle which, in the last resort, turns out to be yet another form of inwardness.<sup>1</sup>

Stern goes on to characterise the *nouveau roman* as an example of 'the literature of language-consciousness'. I will not be diverted from the specific focus of this thesis on the early prose fiction of Jean Genet and pursue the validity of Stern's evaluation of the *nouveau roman* here. The main point is that Stern situates 'language-consciousness' outside the bounds of his discussion of realism. The terrain of my enquiry is completely different since language consciousness is one of its heartlands.

Once discussions of language consciousness (or related concepts) attempt to define themselves, however tentatively, as a discourse separate from 'literature' (however this term is defined) they lose touch with forms of subjectivity and, most importantly, with the link between these forms and interpretation and representation. This loss of touch with subjectivity, interpretation and representation occurs in all the critical works on concepts related to language consciousness such as 'self conscious genre',<sup>2</sup> 'surfiction',<sup>3</sup>

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p. 162.

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Alter R., *Partial Magic. The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1975.

'metafiction'<sup>4</sup> and 'reflexive fiction'. I will use this final example to illustrate what the loss means.

Bruce Kavin in the introduction to *The Mind of the Novel; Reflexive Fiction and the Ineffable* (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1982) states that:

Although such awareness [of language] is recognised both by the author and by the reader as artificial and imitative, it remains compelling because of its systemic complementarity with the natural system of consciousness - because, in other words, it offers such a good imitation.<sup>5</sup>

Kavin discerns a link between the awareness of language and consciousness in an ontological sense. I would object to this way of considering language consciousness because it is seen as less than authentic in that it must fall short of human consciousness. In my view, language consciousness should be evaluated in terms of its intersection with representation and subjectivity rather than as an imperfect imitation of a normative 'natural system of consciousness'.

Before moving on to the structure of this chapter, it is important to note that, while examples in it are taken exclusively from Genet's five works of early prose fiction, language consciousness is relevant throughout Genet's writing, both fiction and non-fiction. References to the structure and possibilities of the theatrical act abound in Genet's plays.<sup>6</sup> Analogous examples are found in his political essays<sup>7</sup> and in *Un Captif amoureux*.<sup>8</sup>

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Federman R., (ed.) *Surfiction; Fiction Now and Tomorrow*, Chicago, Swallow Press, 1975.

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A wide-ranging survey of the subject is to be found in *Metafiction; The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious fiction* by Patricia Waugh (Methuen, London and New York, 1984).

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p. 6.

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'Tout à l'heure, il va falloir recommencer... tout rallumer... s'habiller... [...] Redistribuer les rôles... endosser le mien... *Elle s'arrête au milieu de la scène, face au public.* ...préparer le vôtre... [...] il faut rentrer chez vous. où tout, n'en doutez pas, sera encore plus faux qu'ici... Il faut vous en aller... Vous passerez à droite, par la ruelle...'

The present chapter differs from the previous one about gesture because language consciousness is analysed in terms of each individual work of Genet's early prose fiction (this also explains the brevity of 3.1 compared with 2.1). Language consciousness frequently concerns the basic structure of the text: such as narrative frames and the particular narrative constellation (the relative forces between the narrator and the characters, and whether or not the narrator is a character in the text; it also touches on which personal pronoun he uses, either the first person singular or plural, and whether he is represented as a character in the text.

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*Le Balcon*, Paris, Gallimard 'Collection Folio', 1979 (p. 153).

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The following passage subtly points to the difference between two dimensional photographic and film images and writing of the personal experiences of Jean Genet (1910-1986) in the aftermath of the refugee camp massacre at Chatila: 'Une photographie a deux dimensions, l'écran du téléviseur aussi, ni l'un ni l'autre ne peuvent être parcourus. D'un mur à l'autre d'une rue, arqués ou arc-boutés, les pieds poussant un mur et la tête s'appuyant à l'autre, les cadavres, noirs et gonflés, que je devais enjamber étaient tous palestiniens et libanais' (*L'Ennemi déclaré*, Paris, Gallimard, 1991, p. 244). Here the dead people are almost breaking the frame made by the walls (a reference to the frame of the photograph and screen). The narrator is forced to move through them in a third dimension, in depth.

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'La page qui fut d'abord blanche, est maintenant parcourue du haut en bas de minuscules signes noirs, les lettres, les mots, les virgules, les points d'exclamation, et c'est grâce à eux qu'on dit que cette page est lisible. Cependant [...] ...la réalité est-elle cette totalité de signes noirs? [...] La révolution palestinienne fut-elle écrite sur le néant, un artifice du néant, et la page blanche, et chaque minuscule écart de papier blanc apparaissant entre deux mots sont-ils plus réels que les signes noirs?' (p. 11).

### 3.2 Language Consciousness in *Querelle de Brest*

#### 3.2.1 Introduction: the Specificity of Language Consciousness in *Querelle de Brest*

This section analyses the interaction between language consciousness and the representation of subjectivity. In *Querelle* both are different from their counterparts in the other four works of Genet's early prose fiction. Let us consider subjectivity first. The representation of the self is unique in this text because neither the narrator nor any of the characters has an autobiographical relation (however tentative) to Jean Genet (1910-1986). In the other texts the autobiographical relation exists either at a thematic level, for instance the imprisoned narrator in *Notre-Dame* shares aspects of his experience of incarceration with Jean Genet (1910-1986), or at a linguistic level: the narrators of *Journal* and *Pompes* are called 'Jean'. Indeed, in *Querelle*, it is more appropriate to speak of a narrative authority rather than a narrator because the narrative authority does not represent itself in a distinct physical way with a body capable of making gestures, for example. In this section I refer to the narrative authority using the neuter personal pronoun 'it' and we will see that it is sometimes male and sometimes female (but neither in a concrete biological sense - this indeterminacy is elaborated in 3.2.5). Allied to this, the narrative authority uses the first person plural to indicate the source of its own language conscious interventions<sup>9</sup> (we will see in the conclusion that this first person plural should be understood more as a sign of the plurality of the narrative authority, rather than simply as a reappropriation of a well-established form of rhetorical solidarity between reader and narrator or orator - the 'nous de modestie').

*Querelle* mainly displays language consciousness in the form of self-reflexive references to the text and to language in general. The unique aspect here is not the type of language consciousness *per se*, but the fact that the narrative authority uses the voices of all the major characters (and the vast majority of minor ones) either to make statements about language, or to exemplify a particular attitude to it (in the other four works of Genet's early prose fiction it is primarily the narrator who is responsible for

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There is a single exception where the narrator uses the first person singular: '[...] c'est ainsi que j'aimerais que l'on se représentât la partie dénudée des cuisses de Querelle' (p. 66). It is impossible to say for certain whether this usage is a crucial moment in the text; it would seem not, since the passage is similar in content to many of those which guide interpretation and which are analysed in 3.2.2.

such self-reflexive statements). In *Querelle* no less than nine characters (or groups of characters) perform in this way. They are: Querelle and Seblon, Madame Lysiane and Robert, followed by Gil, Mario and Dédé and the police, the builders and, finally, Nono and Roger.

The present analysis of the interaction between language consciousness and the representation of subjectivity will examine whether they are mutually interdependent. It focuses on two aspects: the first is the link between, on one hand, the representation of the subjectivity of the narrative authority (which is not described in physical terms) and, on the other, the distribution among all characters of comments on the text made by the narrative authority. Is this distribution simply a devolution of the representation of subjectivity from the narrative authority to the characters, or do certain characters have an independent subjectivity (and how are we to understand this possible independence; how can a character be free of the narrative authority)?

### 3.2.2 The Narrative Authority and the Plurality of the Self

This first subsection briefly examines the language conscious interventions of the narrative authority which is a distinctive type of interrelation between the representation of subjectivity and language consciousness. That is to say that the narrative authority is actively language conscious and is not represented in a distinctly physical way (whereas the other characters are less actively language conscious but are the main protagonists in the physical action of text). Throughout the text the narrative authority is the arbiter of language use, structure and tone. Here is the first of three quotations which illustrate the interventions of the narrative authority:

Et cette clarté des sourcils troubla (nous voulons ici employer le verbe troubler dans son sens le plus intime: détruire la pureté) troubla son inquiétude, la pureté de son inquiétude [...].<sup>10</sup>

Here the narrative authority clarifies the use of a particular verb. The second example concerns the narrative authority as determining the structure of the text:

Lorsqu'eut lieu la scène décisive (qu'afin d'obéir à une logique habituelle nous aurions dû placer à la fin du livre) de sa rencontre [la rencontre de Seblon] avec

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p. 45.

Gil au Commissariat [...].<sup>11</sup>

The third example has the narrator as a judge of the tone that can be given to an individual phrase:

Sous les pantalons de toile bleue (ajoutons pour notre émotion, que les dockers portent encore le pantalon de toile semblable, quant à la couleur, au caleçon des galériens) rapiécés et ténus [...].<sup>12</sup>

The tone in this last extract signals a shift from a more realistic description to a sexually charged one.

These three extracts are by no means exhaustive: further examples of this type of active language consciousness can be found on pp. 56, 74, 121, 181 and 227. In common with the examples above, many of these interventions are in parentheses and this bracketing-out distinguishes the extracts from the text which encloses them and performs the same function as the speech marks which separate Lieutenant Seblon's diary from the rest of the text. The extracts occur when the interpretation of the narrative needs to be guided. Thus the personal pronoun ('nous') appears when it is case of emphasising that the narrative authority is the originator of these interventions.

This type of active language consciousness which is 'spoken' by a first person plural is stable. That is to say that the plurality of the 'nous' is not an issue in these extracts; indeed, one could say that in the extracts above the first person plural is closest to its conventional usage as a symbol of rhetorical solidarity between reader and author or writer: the 'nous de modestie' (in the same way for example that the phrase 'let us [consider]...' is used in the present thesis). Thus in these interventions the first person plural is equivalent to a singular and subjectivity is stable when it is a case of giving guidance to the reader. These examples also characterise the narrative authority in a certain way; it is precise (first example), playful (third example) and conscious of literary norms (second example).

However, this type of active language consciousness is not the only type found in *Querelle*. The second type of language consciousness and representation of subjectivity

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<sup>11</sup>

p. 181.

<sup>12</sup>

p. 69.



is found in the opening passage of the text in the first occurrence of the first person plural:

L'idée de meurtre évoque souvent l'idée de mer, de marins. Mer et marins ne se présentent pas alors avec la précision d'une image, le meurtre plutôt fait en nous l'émotion déferler par vagues.<sup>13</sup>

Here, the narrative authority is not plural in a mathematical sense (the simultaneous existence of more than one manifestation of the narrative authority), rather, we have an acknowledgement of the vast extent of the narrative persona. Indeed, this persona exhibits indeterminacy because of its scale. Emotions break in it like waves, but its internal space cannot be easily determined: it is as vast as the sea.

In *Querelle* the oceanic descriptions of the subjectivity of the narrative authority coexist with concrete guiding phrases from the same source. Let us give an example of this coexistence: on the first page of the text the narrative authority guides the reader in the parenthesis: '(nous parlons toujours de ce déguisement et du criminel)' (p. 10) - this sort of guiding phrase was discussed above. However, there follows on the second page, a language conscious commentary which analyses a portion of the first page. This commentary demonstrates the ability of the narrative authority to subvert and to ironise what was previously held to be worthy of direction by guiding phrases and clarifications. What is interesting is that this ironising commentary presents a different representation of subjectivity from the one dimensional authority of the guiding phrases which were outlined above. Let us now consider the commentary:

Dans la très longue phrase débutant par: "il enveloppe de nuées..." nous nous sommes abandonnés à une facile poésie verbale, chacune des propositions n'étant qu'un argument en faveur des complaisances de l'auteur. C'est donc sous le signe d'un mouvement intérieur très singulier que nous voulons présenter le drame qui se déroulera ici. Nous voulons encore dire qu'il s'adresse aux invertis.<sup>14</sup>

As far as subjectivity is concerned, the extract asserts the validity of the 'complaisances de l'auteur'. The word 'auteur' occurs rarely enough in Genet's early prose fiction to merit attention (there is only one other example in *Querelle*, on p. 226). A surrogate

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p. 9.

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p. 10.

author figure is not developed in the text and when the reader is referred back it is not to a concrete reference to the biography of Jean Genet (1910-1986) as is the case of the references to the birth certificate and photographs of Jean Genet (1910-1986) in *Journal* (see 3.6). Here, we learn nothing about the specific identity, personality or situation of the author other than his homosexuality. The author's sexual orientation, perhaps the word 'tendencies' better captures the uncommitted nature of 'complaisances', is not expressed in terms of identity, but in a conjunction between homosexuality and textual and fictional terms through the figure of the sailor and the criminal. The sailor is a source of confusion, he covers the tracks of a criminal: 'il enveloppe de nuées le criminel [...] (p. 9) and 'le fait s'avancer sur les eaux, personnifier la Grande-Ourse, l'Etoile Polaire ou la Croix du Sud [...], il le fait remonter de continents ténébreux où le soleil se lève et se couche, où la lune permet le meurtre sous des cases de bambous [...], il lui accorde d'agir sous l'effet d'un mirage [...]'. Thus the specificity of subjectivity is at once affirmed and denied; affirmed in its relation to Jean Genet (1910-1986) as author of *Querelle* and denied because what the reader is given is a non-human system of intentionality which is supernatural because it does not obey the laws of physics. In this system the criminal can walk on water, and personify constellations, the criminal comes to Brest from afar, accompanied by other systems of morals in which the *moon* permits murder (perhaps this is an indirect feminisation of *Querelle* who might be subject to a menstrual cycle;<sup>15</sup> symbolic ramifications of this sort are discussed in 3.2.5). Moreover, the criminal, in common with many of the gestures analysed in the previous chapter, is not directly visualisable ('l'effet d'un mirage'). All these elements are mediated by the sailor, who is not defined by his occupation in a sociological or existential sense, but simply in terms of his sailor's clothes - '[l']homme qui revêt l'uniforme de matelot [...]' (the implication is that any man can *be* the sailor).

The next sentence (C'est donc sous le signe [...]) elaborates the 'complaisances', the references to indeterminacy and movement are intensified in the phrase: 'mouvement intérieur'. Thus it is possible to conceive of an interaction between the subjectivity and the language consciousness of the narrative authority on two levels. The first is singular and is concerned with authoritative structural comments and guiding phrases. The second

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I am grateful to Louise Bloor for this insight.

is concerned with an elaboration of the plurality which is always present in the first person plural pronoun. These two levels coexist and are made possible because the narrative authority is not limited to one particular physical representation and both references to its subjectivity and to the language consciousness associated with it are constantly shifting. Therefore, discursivity - such as the ability of the narrative authority to clarify language, tone and structure - requires at least a potential of plurality in order to function in both a grammatical ('nous') and textual sense; yet this plurality is not tied to a determined physical representation.

### 3.2.3 Language Consciousness and all Characters Except Querelle and Seblon

This subsection analyses language consciousness associated with the following four categories of single characters and groups of characters: 1. Madame Lysiane and Robert; 2. Gil; 3. Mario and Dédé, the police and the builders ('les maçons') and finally, 4. Nono and Roger. The different aspects of the language consciousness of these characters are analysed together in one subsection and follows the discussion of the language consciousness of the narrative authority because the former is mediated by the latter. Querelle and Seblon are not included in this category because the narrative authority only partially mediates the language conscious passages associated with them. Seblon has his 'journal intime' and Querelle is also partially independent from the narrative authority because he has a 'carnet' (p. 195).

The first of the characters is Madame Lysiane; the language conscious passages associated with her introduce a sensitivity to the intersection between language and her body. Thus from the first sustained descriptions of her appearance and character in the third fifth of the text, the narrative authority foregrounds Lysiane's sensitivity to language (p. 154; this does not include cursory references to 'la patronne' at the opening of *Querelle*, p. 11, in which her name is unknown to the sailors who talk about 'La Féria'):

L'opulence de la chair de Madame Lysiane était la forme même de sa générosité. Sa peau était blanche et douce. Aussitôt allongée (Madame Lysiane avait horreur du mot couché, par respect pour sa délicatesse, nous ne l'emploierons pas en parlant d'elle, nous toucherons un mot de ses "délicatesses", des mots interdits) allongée elle regardait la chambre.' (p. 156) [...] 'Elle était en sécurité. Le mot que nous allons employer ne la choquait plus à force de se l'être mentalement répété, qu'un docker avait lâché à son passage: son 'prose'<sup>16</sup> [sic]. La

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The ambiguity of the word 'prose' should be noted as it represents an explicit intersection

responsabilité, la confiance en soi de Madame Lysiane résidait dans son prose.<sup>17</sup>

Both these extracts indicate that the relationship between Madame Lysiane's body and her language is the central aspect of the language consciousness associated with her (her's is the only significant female body in the text). In the first extract the narrative authority portrays her as being excessively sensitive to the slightest hint of the visceral or the vulgar in language. This sensitivity to language is related to her gender in perhaps a clumsy way, but it distinguishes her from the male characters all of whom use slang (except Seblon who is associated with a lyrical register). Both extracts above are typical in the way that they stress and repeat the femininity of Lysiane by continually referring to her as *Madame* Lysiane. This sense of formal address accords with her linguistic propriety.

However, Madame Lysiane's sensitivity to language is paired with her inability to verbalise and use language in a rhetorical way (this inability is in no way presented as feminine in *Querelle* because both Querelle and Robert exhibit a similar tendency). This characteristic is emphasised to such a point by the narrative authority that her speech confounds the norms of French usage, as in the following request to Robert: '- Allume les rideaux...' (p. 165). The grammatically unconventional nature of Madame Lysiane's relationship with language is also underlined in the following extract:

Mais à peine l'avait-elle pensé, qu'elle s'affaissait dans la honte. Soit Madame Lysiane voyait écrit ce qu'elle prononçait mais écrit selon l'orthographe qu'elle possédait. Songeant à ses amants elle voyait ceci: "Ils chante [sic]."<sup>18</sup>

Madame Lysiane's mistake acts as a sign of her fascination with the plurality of Robert and Querelle who appear to her to act as a singular entity, hence the plural personal pronoun twinned with the singular verb. Her fascination troubles her, but also makes her

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between the slang vocabulary of the body and language conscious vocabulary: 'prose' has the additional meaning of buttocks. There is a second example of this usage: '[...]elle-même était une forte femelle, forte de son argent, de son autorité sur les filles, et de la solidité de son prose' (p. 158).

<sup>17</sup>

p. 157.

<sup>18</sup>

p. 246.

linguistically stupid ('sotte'); thus we could say of Madame Lysiane, in a colloquial register of French, that *la fascination l'embête* (in the sense of both 'annoying her' and 'making her stupid'). The quotation above is an example of how the relevance of a concept (the twins considered as a singular plural and a plural singular) is maintained by using the perspective of another character to examine the concept via language consciousness.<sup>19</sup>

Robert is the second character whose relationship with language is portrayed by the narrative authority. More will be said about Robert in relation to his twin Querelle in the next subsection; however, at this point it is sufficient to note how the narrative authority alludes to his inability to think discursively. This passage is part of the sustained self-reflexive exchange between Madame Lysiane and Robert (pp. 159-166):

[...] une étrange émotion s'emparait de Robert. Ce fut d'abord assez trouble. L'idée de son frère n'y avait aucune part visible mais seulement l'idée de saletés. Robert ne pensait rien [sic]. Son regard avait trop de rigidité, son corps immobile aussi, pour qu'il pût penser intelligemment. Il ne savait pas penser.<sup>20</sup>

However, in the exchange with Madame Lysiane regarding the word 'saletés' the narrative authority shows that Robert overcomes his general difficulty with language, temporarily at least. This is a process which is even clearer in the subscribers' edition of the text where there are two scenarios proposed for Robert's concept of the word 'saletés'. Both scenarios were excised from the *OEuvres complètes* edition of the text. The first is a reminiscence of a family outing; Lysiane's 'saletés' here sullies his idea of his family: 'L'idée de saleté le gênait, souillait son idée de la famille. Il songea douloureusement: "C'est la famille tuyau de poêle!"' (p. 162). The second is: 'Lentement l'idée de saleté se précisait à Robert, cette idée enfin se confondait avec l'idée de la ressemblance et de la beauté' (p. 163). Finally, Robert begins to see clearly, he does not see the spelling of the word but perceives the idea, the mental image of his own resemblance to his twin brother and the image of beauty. This is a unique moment for

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This structure is reminiscent of the third type of excision discussed in 1.6.1 where a third partner is included in a sex act, not as an equal participant but performing a mediating role between the first two partners.

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p. 162.

Robert: he is able to imagine for the first time, albeit clumsily, as indicated by the verb 'se confondait'. This is a moment of language consciousness *par excellence* because a character of whom it was said: 'Il ne savait pas penser' (p. 162) is described as thinking about the meaning of a word ('Il songea [...]') and more than this, the idea of the word becomes more precise in the second scenario.

Gil (Gilbert Turko) is the third character and he exhibits a concern for poetry (this is compounded by Gil's solitude in the disused prison colony in Brest): 'Gil faisait (sans qu'il s'en doutât) l'apprentissage douloureux de la poésie' (p. 151). This extract explicitly states that Gil is not aware of his poetic apprenticeship; thus his language consciousness is directly mediated by the narrative authority. The poetry associated with Gil is different from Seblon's lyricism and the narrative authority stresses that Seblon himself is responsible for it.<sup>21</sup> In addition, Gil's language consciousness is on a much smaller scale than Seblon's.<sup>22</sup> However, one other aspect does emerge: it concerns Gil's reading of his own name as poetry:

Le jeune maçon connut une étrange émotion quand il vit pour la première fois de sa vie, en grosses lettres, son nom. C'était à la première page. Tout d'abord il crut qu'il s'agissait en même temps d'un autre et de lui seul.<sup>23</sup>

Thus poetry paradoxically concerns his name as well as a simultaneous alienation of this name from Gil's notion of his own subjectivity.<sup>24</sup> At the start of this extract Gil is

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'(Si les autres personnages sont incapables du lyrisme dont nous nous servons pour plus efficacement les reconstituer en vous, le lieutenant Seblon est seul responsable de celui qu'il manifeste.)' (p. 26).

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The relevant passages are found on p. 51 (Gil's use of the word 'même'), p. 146 (a commentary on the emotions behind Gil's dialogue with Querelle), p. 151, and p. 192 (both analysed above).

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p. 192.

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These passages which demonstrate the power of the news media to affect the individual who is the subject of the stories are an important precursor to the critique of representation in the mass media which emerges strongly in Genet's later political writing. Genet's article about the misinformation in the media concerning the nationality

referred to by his profession; however, by the end of the extract his concept of himself is doubled by a process of incomplete alienation from himself. And by the end of the following page (p. 193) Gil is inextricably linked with the figure of the criminal (this transformation from builder to criminal mirrors the metamorphoses of 'Genet' in Sartre's study). Another characteristic of poetry is its transience; this is indicated by what happens to the newspaper articles in the course of time:

Mais chaque jour un peu plus l'habitude dépouillait les articles de leur merveilleux. Gil pouvait les lire et les discuter: ils cessaient d'être des poèmes.<sup>25</sup>

Thus with the passage of time the intense link between Gil's name and the newspaper articles fades and he is able to externalise and rationalise them and treat them as any other text. The penultimate language conscious passage relating to Gil confirms the theme of affirmation of, then alienation from, the name as well as the theme of transience:

[...] comme encore, dans son enfance, accroupi sur le bord de la route, il avait écrit dans la poussière avec les doigts, son nom en creux et qu'il avait connu cette étrange douleur provoquée par le velouté de la poussière sans doute et la courbe des lettres - où il s'oublia jusqu'à l'écoeurement, jusqu'à sentir son coeur chavirer, presque à désirer s'allonger sur son nom et s'y endormir malgré les automobiles: il ne fit pourtant qu'en brouiller les lettres, démolir leur rempart fragile de poussière, avec ses dix doigts écartés doucement passés sur le sol.<sup>26</sup>

This passage displays the same language conscious concern for the materiality of the letter of the name as for the format of the letters in the newspaper; in the newspaper the name is printed 'en grosses lettres' whereas in the passage above it is hollowed out of the dust and yet the words chosen by the narrative authority also invoke the opposite of a hollowing out because we can read 'en creux' as 'encreux' - like the ink applied to the

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of one of the leaders of the May 1968 student uprising, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, is important; its title, 'Les maîtresses de Lénine' draws a parallel with the propaganda disseminated concerning the communist leader (the article is reproduced in *L'Ennemi déclaré*, Paris, Gallimard, 1991, pp. 29-31). More directly relevant to Genet's early prose fiction is the fine article by Philip Watts, 'Political Discourse and Poetic Register in Jean Genet's *Pompes funèbres*'.

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p. 192.

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p. 193.

newsprint in order to create the headline in which Gil features. Gil's experience of his own name in this passage is at once sensuous ('le velouté de la poussière'), alienating (the text specifies that Gil writes his 'nom' which is 'Turko' which recalls the phrase 'tête de turc' (not found in *Querelle*) which denotes the other), as well as transient (the name is written in dust and is then obliterated). The final gesture draws a parallel between writing one's own name and self-effacement.

The final passage of Gil's language consciousness concerns the end of transience (and poetry) and the fixing of his identity:

Gil se laissait gagner aux arguments de Querelle. Il voulait se laisser gagner. Il n'avait plus le sentiment de courir un grand péril, mais au contraire il était sauvé car *il était fixé*. Quelque chose de lui allait demeurer, étant écrit, échappant encore à la justice puisque désigné par la Gloire, encore qu'il s'y mêlât [sic] dans sa bouche l'amertume du désespoir: Gil se sentait perdu puisque son nom s'accompagnait toujours et partout du mot "crimes".<sup>27</sup>

The fixing of Gil's identity also represents the fixing of a relationship between his name and the companion-word 'crimes', which will be permanently associated with it. This fixed word association is the definitive end of 'le merveilleux' which characterises Gil's impression of the poetry of the newspaper articles (p. 192). In the passage above, Gil's name is always accompanied by the word 'crimes'. Gil's subjectivity is now defined by his killing of Théo (and the murder of Vic the sailor which Querelle and the newspapers attribute to him). We will see (in 3.2.4 and 3.2.5) that Querelle and the narrative authority are not fixed in this way; they retain their plurality.

The characters and groups of characters that follow all exhibit the same type of language consciousness, which is linked to a heuristic reading of *Querelle* as a crime/detective story. They are: Mario and Dédé, the Police and the Builders. Mario's language consciousness represents an unsuccessful attempt to understand the events in the text heuristically. It is part of Mario's job as a police inspector to uncover motives and to trace the pattern of events. The crimes which Mario has to solve are the murder and robbery of Vic, the murder of Théo and the robbery of Seblon.<sup>28</sup> Clearly, there are

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p. 193.

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The murders of the Russian sailor and the Armenian and the other murders committed by Querelle stand outside the frame of reference (and legal jurisdiction) of Mario's investigations in the crime story.



parallels between the inspector and the reader who seeks to understand the narrative in terms of cause and effect. Mario's apparent faith in the ability of words to access the truth is confirmed by his use of the following construction: 'Je dis ce que je dis' (p. 168), thereby asserting his linguistic authority. However, this faith is clearly not confirmed by the results of his investigation. The crimes in *Querelle* are not solved because Querelle escapes and it is not known what happens after Seblon has accused himself of committing the robbery of which he was a victim. Rainer Werner Fassbinder (in *Filme befreien den Kopf*, (ed.) Michael Töteberg, Frankfurt am Main, Fischer Cinema, 1984) writes that the plot of *Querelle*, when divorced from the imagination of Jean Genet (1910-1986), is little more than a 'third rate crime story'.<sup>29</sup> Fassbinder does not specifically mention the Mario's investigation, but it is a plausible explanation for his judgement. If this is indeed the case, we could say that Fassbinder's judgement is too summary to take account of two different interpretations of Mario's investigation. The investigation and the crime story may be third class because they are short; however, we should note how unusual it is for a crime story, of whatever class, to have *no solution* to the crimes committed at all (as is the case in *Querelle*).

Now let us examine the language consciousness of two groups (police and builders) which is connected to the conception of *Querelle* as crime story. As part of the investigation of Théo's murder, the narrative authority explores the way in which a series of associations and assumptions is built up from individual words. The police investigating the murder are seen to use the word 'assassin' ('murderer') as the focal point for a creation of a being which is a travesty of Gil's character: '[...] un enfant persécuté par un obsédé [...]' (p. 129). In these passages the narrative authority explores the possibilities for fantastical constructions of the murderer which are simultaneously described as poetic but they also subvert the investigative (heuristic) reading of the crimes in the text. Thus a police commissioner (not Mario) '[...] ne pouvait s'empêcher d'inventer de toutes pièces un assassin sur mesure'. (p. 129). A more explicit example

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Fassbinder writes: '*Querelle de Brest* von Jean Genet ist vielleicht der radikalste Roman der Weltliteratur, was die Diskrepanz von objektiver Handlung und subjektiver Phantasie anbetrifft. Das äusserliche Geschehen abgelöst von der Bilderwelt des Jean Genet, ergibt ein wenig interessante, eher drittklassige Kriminalgeschichte, mit der zu beschäftigen sich kaum lohnte' (p. 117).

of the same phenomenon occurs when the police interview the rest of the gang of builders. A trigger to their poetic imagination comes from the word 'tapette' (in a similar manner to the way in which the police construct the figure of the murderer):

Aux policiers ils [les maçons] découvrirent cent détails prouvant que l'assassin était bien une tapette. [...] Timides en face des inspecteurs, ils s'aventurèrent dans une description folle, hésitante - et folle à cause de son tremblement dans l'hésitation - et de plus en plus appuyée à mesure qu'ils parlaient. Ils s'apercevaient sans doute que toutes leurs affirmations n'avaient pas de bases effectives, qu'elles n'étaient qu'un lyrisme leur permettant de parler enfin avec sérieux de ce dont ils avaient orné leurs jurons - donc leurs chants - [...].<sup>30</sup>

At the end of this passage the narrative authority makes the association between the swearwords of the builders and song. Again, paradoxically, it is the opportunity of the continuing criminal investigation which causes the lyricism of the builders; there is a repeated intersection in the passage between the seriousness of the situation of gathering evidence and the resulting laxity of 'une description folle'. In the final sentence of the passage there is a movement from affirmation, to lyricism, to seriousness, to swearwords and finally to song.

The fifth and final group of characters is formed by Dédé, Nono and Roger. In their case self-reflexive references to language are taken to an extreme: the narrative authority comments on the way that Dédé views the world and this corresponds to an objective type of language use: 'Dédé fut une merveilleuse machine à enregistrer' (p. 229). Dédé is Mario's eyes and ears in the criminal fraternity. On the same page it goes on to stress that the impersonal world view is important, rather than a character trait specific to Dédé. This is because the narrative authority uses the same verb after an authoritative intervention concerning the structure of the text: 'Ce livre dure depuis trop de pages et nous ennuie. Enregistrons donc le profond espoir [...]' (p. 229).

In the case of Roger and Nono the narrative authority compares the characters to language at a level below that of the individual word, that of punctuation. Here the notion of language can be extended to include the typographical sign:

Le visage de Nono était composé de virgules: la courbe des sourcils, l'ombre de la courbe de la narine, les lèvres, les moustaches. La suprême formule de la

structure de toute sa tête avait son essence dans la virgule.<sup>31</sup>

It is in the case of these minor characters that the narrative authority employs phrases such as '[l]a suprême formule de la structure' which appear to correspond to a describing language with absolute authority, in short, to a metalanguage (a describing language within the text which nonetheless claims to comment authoritatively on the text from a position outside it). However, in the case above it is not the syntactical value of the comma as a division or pause which is emphasised, it is its sheer shape and form. Thus the narrative authority uses essentialist vocabulary only when there is an absence of meaning in the language (or punctuation) concerned. So this is not metalanguage but figurative language.

*Querelle* contains a second example of a comparison between Nono and punctuation. When speculating on the friendship between Mario and the brothel keeper, the narrative authority states:

Sans doute trouve-t-il [Mario] en Norbert un indicateur qui est en quelque sorte un trait d'union entre la société avouable et une activité suspecte [...].<sup>32</sup>

The extract above represents a more conventional figurative usage of an element of punctuation; the focus is on the function of the hyphen and although the comparison is entirely mediated by the narrative authority, it is couched in more tentative language: 'en quelque sorte'.

In our final example, the narrative authority adapts the description of an element of punctuation to suit an additional concept of mobility that it wishes to convey:

Cependant, Roger disparu, devint pour Querelle un "mystérieux lien" quelque chose de plus précieux qu'il ne l'avait vu jusqu'ici [sic]. C'est son absence qui donnait à l'enfant une si rare existence, une si soudaine importance. Querelle sourit, mais il ne put s'empêcher d'être troublé par ce fait que l'enfant était le trait d'union mobile entre deux assassins, il était ce trait animé et rapide.<sup>33</sup>

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p. 183, not found in Gallimard *OEuvres complètes*.

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p. 70.

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p. 144.

Here the narrative authority modifies the strictly syntactical definition of a hyphen; Roger is a mobile link between the two murderers (Querelle and Gil). We should note that although the same element of punctuation is used to describe Nono and Roger, the narrative authority takes account of Roger's youth, impressionability and role in the text as messenger to adapt the account of punctuation. The brief discussion of these three passages demonstrates that adaptation and modulation is even possible in the case of punctuation.

We have seen that in *Querelle* the description of a character by the narrative authority is necessarily accompanied either by a speculation on *Querelle* as a literary text or on literary language itself. This accompaniment is developed in a systematic way (the only exceptions are Querelle's victims: the Armenian, Jonas and Vic) and its validity for all of the other characters is a testament to the strong interrelation between the stable elements of characters on the one hand and the speculation on the language which represents them on the other (this interrelation will be developed in the conclusions of language consciousness (3.7) and in the General Conclusions (4.0)).

#### 3.2.4 Seblon, Querelle and Potential Independence

In this section, I will consider the language consciousness of two characters who both appear not to be wholly mediated by the narrative authority: Seblon and Querelle. Seblon seems to be an ideal candidate for this category of the partially independent character. This is because his distinction from the other characters is founded in his notebook and the first person singular in which it is written.<sup>34</sup> This distinction between Seblon and the other characters appears to be confirmed in the following quotation: '[...] aucun des héros de ce livre (sauf le lieutenant Seblon, mais Seblon n'est pas *dans* le livre) n'est pédéraste [...]' (p. 71).

However, notwithstanding this initial emphasis by the narrative authority on Seblon's distinctiveness (and the concrete matter of Seblon's use of the first person singular in his notebook), I will suggest that, if we consider the text as a whole, it is not

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Extracts from Seblon's notebook are found on pages: 12-14, 26-27, 80-85, 103, 122-126, 141, 166, 231, 232-233, 234-237 and 244 in the Gallimard 'Collection l'imaginaire' edition (which correspond to pp. 206-208, 218-219, 219-220, 273-277, 293, 310-313, 350, 401, 402-403, 404-407 and 414 in the *Oeuvres complètes*, volume III).

Seblon but Querelle who is potentially independent of the narrative authority.

In a brief examination of the language consciousness of Seblon's private notebook, we see that it is dominated by his fascination with Querelle; first he is conscious of the language in which he expresses his fascination<sup>35</sup> and secondly, he is conscious of Querelle's own use of language.<sup>36</sup> Seblon's notebook is singular in the obsession which it recounts; it does not have the plurality of the language consciousness of the narrative authority which refers to all the major characters in the text. Indeed, the narrative authority also comments on passages from Seblon's notebook.

The following example concerns a commentary by the narrative authority which occurs immediately after the first extract from Seblon's notebook. Here, the narrative authority intervenes in Seblon's text for the sake of clarity and thus contributes to our understanding of the language in which Seblon expresses his fascination with the sailor:<sup>37</sup>

Après ces quelques notes relevées ça et là, mais non au hasard, dans un carnet intime qui nous le suggère, nous désirons qu'il vous apparaisse que le matelot

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'Et chaque individu que je vois n'est que la momentanée représentation - fragmentaire aussi, et réduite - du Marin. Il en a tous les caractères: la vigueur, la dureté, la beauté, la cruauté, etc... sauf la multiplicité. Chaque matelot qui passe sert à comparer le Marin. Tous les matelots m'apparaissent-ils vivants, présents, à la fois, tous, et aucun d'eux séparément ne serait le marin [sic] qu'ils composent et qui ne peut être que dans mon imagination, qui ne peut être qu'en moi et par moi. Cette idée m'apaise. Je possède le Marin' (p. 122).

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Seblon puts forward his own reading of Querelle's use of sexually explicit language and slang: "Ça, c'est tous les mecs qui me font des pipes. Pendant qu'ils me sucent ils se branlent dans mon froc. Ça c'est leur décharge. Pas plus" (p. 27). Of this Seblon writes: "Il" en paraîtra très fier [sic for tense]. 'Il' porte ces souillures avec une impudeur glorieuse: ses décorations' (p. 27). Thus in the notebook, the Lieutenant who is fascinated by the sailor, first respects the integrality of Querelle's utterances (by quoting them) then imaginatively interprets Querelle's matter-of-fact realistic language, beautifying it, and thereby directly contradicting his beloved Querelle's 'pas plus' to explicitly make something more of the stains.

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In order to avoid confusion of the referent of the personal pronoun 'il' in the notebook, the narrative voice helpfully includes the referent Querelle in parenthesis. Therefore no rigorous distinction exists between the notebook and the narrative which surrounds it.

Querelle, né de cette solitude où l'officier lui-même était reclus, était un personnage solitaire comparable à l'ange de l'Apocalypse dont les pieds reposent sur la mer. A force de méditer de Querelle, d'user par l'imagination ses plus beaux ornements, ses muscles, ses bosses, son sexe deviné, pour le lieutenant Seblon le matelot est devenu un ange (il écrira, nous le verrons plus loin, 'l'ange de la solitude') [...].<sup>38</sup>

The first thing to note is that the narrative authority has performed the task of selection from Seblon's texts.<sup>39</sup> The second is that the narrative authority privileges itself over Seblon's text at this early stage because it commands both references to Querelle. It calls Querelle the Angel of the Apocalypse, but also introduces Seblon's name for the sailor ('l'ange de la solitude'). The narrative authority also details the process by which Seblon came to his description. However, this alternative description has already been described as having its origins in Seblon's situation, alone at sea. The narrative authority is thus mediating Seblon's obsession with Querelle at this point.

Let us now consider a series of language conscious references in the last parts of Seblon's journal which stress the artifice of the notebook. These references are a prelude to the total collapse of the distance between Seblon and the narrative authority. Their exact circumstances relate to Gil's successful assault and robbery of Seblon. Subsequently Seblon is seen to experiment with different conclusions to the robbery which are at once more romantic and portray him in a heroic light (in one of the scenarios Seblon resists his attacker and invites him to shoot him). Seblon understands the robbery of which he is a victim in terms of its relation to Querelle. Thus Seblon focuses on Gil's dress (Querelle had allowed Gil to borrow his sailor's uniform). It is from this situation of partial knowledge that the officer constructs and speculates on his various scenarios: 'le lieutenant mettait au point un dialogue héroïque [...]'. 'Après de longues inquiétudes, le lieutenant choisit ce dénouement: [...]' (p. 233). The concern with endings is reflected in the phrases 'mettre au point' and 'dénouement'.

Having undermined Seblon's imagination and inaugurated a discussion about endings, the narrative authority causes a final collapse of the distance between its

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p. 14.

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In the terms of classical rhetoric there is an acknowledgment only of *dispositio*, not *inventio*.

language consciousness and Seblon's private notebook. This collapse is expressed in this simple sentence: 'Ainsi Madame Lysiane était bonne et soignait ses clients malheureux' (p. 236). This is because this extract conflates Seblon's notebook and an intervention by the narrative authority. The narrative authority has taken over the notebook because Seblon knows only where 'La Féria' is, nothing more and because Madame Lysiane has not been mentioned in the notebook up to this point.

The above interventions by the narrative authority into the domain of the notebook finally absorb the distinctiveness of the notebook into the plurality of the narrative authority. Therefore despite the fundamental separateness of the notebook as form<sup>40</sup> and the initial separation of the first person singular from the first person plural of the narrative authority, Seblon is not an independent character at the end of the text. The plurality of the narrative authority, which takes over from him, makes us reconsider the role of Seblon's first person singular narrative and limit its importance. It is a temporary centre of authority which is then subsumed into the main narrative authority at the end of the text (p. 236). In the longer extracts from the private notebook which open *Querelle*, Seblon's voice is very distinctive in its elevated tone and high linguistic register; however, it occupies the first person singular and thus lacks the plurality which appears to be necessary for discursive authority in *Querelle*; narrative authority demonstrates this type of plurality. Seblon's private notebook is thus best understood as a provisional narrative register in the text, where the distance between the first person singular and the first person plural (whose plurality encloses it) is progressively reduced, until the notebook is finally absorbed.<sup>41</sup>

Let us now move on to a detailed examination of *Querelle*. We will now see that the sailor has more of a claim to be independent from the narrative authority because he does not occupy the latter's domain of rhetoric and discursivity. *Querelle* is a character

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The subscribers edition of the text encloses the passages from the notebook within 'guillemets' as if they were quotations from another text. The Gallimard *OEuvres complètes* edition uses italics.

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This reduction in distance is pre-empted in one of the key prolepses in the text where the first person plural of the narrative authority occupies Seblon's private notebook: 'Mais en lui-même se levait un vent très léger, au ras des herbes: ("une brise, un zéphir à peine" écrivons-nous dans le carnet intime)' (p. 181).

in the same sense as the characters whose language consciousness was discussed in the previous section; this is because his language consciousness is mediated by the narrative authority. However, what sets him apart from them are the many non-verbal and non-linguistic domains in which he remains outside the power of the narrative authority. As a consequence, Querelle is also outside the power of other characters - whose language consciousness is completely mediated by the narrative authority. One such character is Mario whose attempt at a heuristic and forensic account of the robbery (of Seblon) and the double murder (of Vic and Théo) in the text is abandoned because Gil (who committed the robbery on Querelle's prompting), Seblon (the victim, who goes on to accuse himself in order to ingratiate himself with Querelle) and another police inspector conspire to conceal the sailor's guilt (p. 181). The logical and linear connections between events and between cause and effect that Mario seeks are frustrated. Thus justice and linearity are not allowed to run their course in *Querelle*; Querelle sets sail at the end of his shore leave and the robbery and the double murder go unpunished, a state of affairs unique in Genet's early prose fiction in which the murderer typically receives the death sentence.

Let us consider first whether the language conscious passages associated with Querelle compete with and even possibly outdo the authority of the narrative authority. If we look at some extracts which represent Querelle's general facility with language, they are apparently unequivocal:

[Querelle] manquait d'habileté pour lui donner [the scene in the bistrot where Roger and Gil sing together] une signification précise. Il pouvait à peine penser en mots. Il savait seulement qu'elle [la scène] avait provoqué en lui une légère ironie. Il n'eût su dire pourquoi.<sup>42</sup>

Querelle appears not as a source of absolute discursive authority in text, but as a character who is educationally subnormal. In the extract above Querelle's inability to perform propositional thinking based on the logical construction of arguments is conspicuous.<sup>43</sup> Querelle cannot make the connection that Roger is in love with Gil.

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p. 19.

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We should recall that Robert, Querelle's twin, is represented by the narrative voice in the same way: 'Son [Robert's] regard avait trop de rigidité, son corps immobile aussi, pour qu'il pût penser intelligemment. Il ne savait pas penser' (p. 162).



Therefore he is no match for the guiding phrases and structural comments uttered by the narrative authority. What is more, the narrative authority provides this evaluation of Querelle's abilities in the same manner as the references to the language of the other characters which are analysed above. So to answer the question put at the start of this paragraph: Querelle cannot compete with let alone undo the statements of the narrative authority. However, this still leaves open the possibility that he may be important in non-rhetorical and non-discursive ways. In the passage above, Querelle has an instinctive and intuitive attitude to language. Irony is represented in this extract not as an external verbal construction, but as a feeling located inside the sailor. Therefore Querelle has a relationship to language which is completely different from that of other characters. He is almost certainly not a rational producer of language, but may be more like a reader because his reactions to a scene do not pass beyond the bounds of his own subjectivity.

In general, however, the narrative authority continues to stress the poverty of Querelle's linguistic resources. The following extract suggests that Querelle's utterances are frequently second hand. He is a stranger to language because he does not know the words that he unearths from his memory:

[...] un cabotin merveilleux qui essaye d'ensorceler la mort, puise au fond d'une mémoire attentive un mot qu'il ignore [sic], lu peut-être dans un journal dérobé à un officier s'adressant à un autre officier, et Querelle répéta: "J'suis sans défense. Aucune."<sup>44</sup>

The origins of Querelle's language are obscured in this passage. Another character - an officer - is posited by the narrative authority as the origin of the phrase 'J'suis sans défense. Aucune'. However, as a surrogate user of language, Querelle does not understand the phrase ('un mot qu'il ignore'). In this passage, language is stolen from others, from an officer, from Seblon perhaps.<sup>45</sup>

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p. 172.

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The following example stresses that Querelle is not a possessor of language; here he borrows language: 'il [Querelle] commandait à son double imaginaire des attitudes de peur, de révolte, de confiance et d'effroi [...] Des souvenirs de lectures l'aidaient' (p. 58).

After considering the examples above we may assume that Querelle's difference and possible independence (if it exists) must consist of something outside the narrative authority's mediation of characters and the authority of its structural statements. Therefore we are looking for something which is beyond the reach of the most powerful mediating and explaining discourse in the text - that of the narrative authority. It is undeniable that parts of the character and the language consciousness of Querelle are mediated by the narrative authority (those parts mentioned thus far, for instance). Therefore if Querelle's difference or possible independence will be indicated by the narrative authority itself, this indication will be in an inchoate form; it will be outside the scope of the narrative which can be closed or accelerated by the narrative authority.

Thus Querelle's independence is beyond the mediation of the narrative authority, but will be gestured at by the narrative authority in references to Querelle's non-rhetorical language and a concern in the text with the very limits of mediation and authority. The following language conscious passage shows us how the narrative authority appears to be able to touch the limit of the divide between Querelle and itself, thus referring to Querelle's independence (something which is beyond its own powers of mediation):

Nous essaierons de tenir compte de ce détail pour bien comprendre Querelle dont la représentation mentale, et les sentiments eux-mêmes, dépendent et prennent la forme d'une certaine syntaxe, d'une orthographe particulière. Dans son langage nous trouverons ces expressions: "laisse flotter les rubans...", "J'suis sur les boulets..." [...], etc... expressions qui n'étaient jamais prononcées d'une façon claire, mais plutôt murmurées d'une voix un peu sourde, et comme en dedans, sans les voir. Ces expressions n'étant pas projetées, son langage n'éclairait pas Querelle, si nous l'osons dire, ne le dessinait pas. Elles semblaient au contraire entrer par sa bouche, s'amasser en lui, s'y déposer, et former une boue épaisse d'où parfois remontait une bulle transparente explosant délicatement à ses lèvres. C'était un mot d'argot qui remontait.<sup>46</sup>

The passage demonstrates a concern with the language and the inside of the body (the preposition 'en' is important) which goes beyond Querelle's general lack of discursive ability. At the outset, the narrative authority focuses on Querelle's use of slang; however the passage rapidly moves on to consider not what is said by Querelle, but how he says it. The passage concentrates on Querelle's relation to his language. The lack of clarity referred to in this passage corresponds to Querelle's difficulties with propositional

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pp. 15-16.

reasoning which were referred to above. However, it is at the end of the same clause ('[...] plutôt murmurées d'une voix un peu sourde, et comme en dedans, sans les voir') that a relationship between Querelle's language and visibility is proposed by the narrative authority. Querelle does not see his expressions - that is to say that he cannot visualise their verbal representation - he cannot see the words. Thus there appears to be a connection made here between the visualisation of language and being able to use it in a rhetorical way. Querelle can do neither; Querelle's relationship to language is different and is introduced by the phrase 'au contraire'. It appears to be an inverted relation to language where words enter the mouth rather than leave it. Querelle is a receptacle for language rather than a producer of it. There appears to be a total lack of strategic motivation in the fortuitous welling up of words from the inside of Querelle's body. Querelle is inhabited by language but does not possess it. So much for verbal language; there follows an important passage which concerns Querelle's relationship with the manifestations of written language:

Il s'était habitué à vivre dans la compagnie répugnante de ses crimes dont il tenait une sorte de registre d'un format minuscule, un registre des massacres, qu'il nommait pour lui seul: 'mon bouquet de fleurs du pavé'. Ce registre contenait le plan des endroits où avaient lieu les crimes. Les desseins étaient naïfs. Lorsqu'il ne savait dessiner l'objet il le nommait, et l'orthographe du nom quelquefois était fausse. Il n'avait pas d'instruction.<sup>47</sup>

This extract illustrates Querelle using writing as a last resort when a pictogram is impossible. An earlier passage refers to the same process in greater detail:

En plusieurs points du monde il [Querelle] avait des dépôts secrets, habilement notés sur des papiers conservés dans son sac. En Chine, en Syrie, au Maroc, en Belgique. Le carnet portant ces inscriptions était quelque chose comme le 'registre des massacres' de la police. Shanghai, Maison de la France. Jardin. Baobab de la grille. Beyrouth, Damas. Dame au piano. Mur de gauche. Casa, Banque Alphand. Anvers, Cathédral [sic]. Clocher.<sup>48</sup>

In this form of notation the entry for the episode which takes place in Brest (encompassing the whole of *Querelle*) would be annotated in the same deficient orthography as: 'Brest, Dans les remparts'. The term 'registre des massacres' relates to

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p. 195.

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p. 113.

Querelle's activity in the course of the text - murder - but also indicates that the text as a whole can be seen as part of a series of events which are present in it, but not described in detail by the narrative authority.<sup>49</sup> In these extracts the narrative authority touches on the possibility that Querelle possesses, in a highly unliterary and even non-linguistic (pictorial) form, the precedent and/or subsequent episodes of another larger narrative each of which is analogous to *Querelle*.

In the following passage the narrative authority also acknowledges Querelle's freedom as far as the structural organisation of the text is concerned:

Cette exécution serait capitale. Si un enchaînement logique des faits n'eût conduit Querelle à "La Féria", nul doute que l'assassin n'eût agencé mystérieusement, en secret de soi-même, un autre rite sacrificiel.<sup>50</sup>

This passage sets up twin centres of narrative power which can influence the direction of the narrative. The first is the one that we are more used to as readers: the narrative authority describes it in terms of logic and rhetoric as 'un enchaînement logique des faits'. Querelle is set up as the other pole in the passage: there is no doubt that Querelle would have proceeded to perform an unspecified sacrificial rite of 'his own' if the narrative authority did not organise the execution of Querelle at 'La Féria' into the text. However, the essential point to note here is that Querelle would have acted in a mysterious way, he would have been ignorant of his own actions.

How are the readers of this passage supposed to understand its implications for the conflictual relationship between the narrative authority and Querelle? The view which maintains that the narrative authority is the source of all the characters including Querelle and mediates their relationship with the reader might find this and other passages difficult to explain. This is because the narrative authority is acknowledging that Querelle would have had the same power to alter the course and structure of the text had the narrative authority not intervened. Another explanation, proposed from the point of view that the narrative authority is in supreme control of the narration, would be that the authority is

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The following passage from *Pompes* cursorily mentions a similar form of notation of Hitler's private executioner: '[...] il existait peut-être une liste ou un cahier avec des précisions déroutantes, et que ce tueur, pour tuer le temps, tenait à jour' (p. 188).

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p. 61.

merely acting out a situation whereby Querelle has equal influence on the course of the narrative. In this view, therefore, the potential power accorded to Querelle is a feint and a ploy which is part of the rhetoric of the narrative authority which only cedes the possibility of narrative control to one of his heroes. However, I would argue that this view of the narrative authority remaining in supreme control of the text does not square with the large number of examples where the limit of this control is explicitly touched upon.

Notwithstanding these examples it would seem that Querelle cannot break away definitively; thus within the following quotation the narrative authority goes from equating Querelle's thoughts with his own (almost as if Querelle were the name of an author speaking in autobiographical mode) to indicating the escape of the character from the author figure. Thus:

En voulant préciser le mouvement psychologique de notre héros, nous voulons mettre au jour notre âme. Noter librement l'attitude que nous choisirions - en vue peut-être ou plutôt en *prévision* d'une fin convoitée - nous conduit à la découverte de ce monde psychologique donné sur quoi s'appuie la liberté du choix mais, s'il le faut, pour le déroulement de l'intrigue, que l'un des héros prononce un jugement, réfléchisse, nous nous trouvons tout à coup en face de l'arbitraire: le personnage échappe à son auteur. Il se singularise.<sup>51</sup>

In the first part of the extract up to the 'mais' adverbs, verbs and nouns denoting choice abound (for example: 'librement', 'choisirions' and 'la liberté du choix').<sup>52</sup> These words stress the freedom of the narrative authority. However, it appears that the references to

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p. 226.

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It is also possible to suggest tentatively that the dramatisation of conflictual freedoms of the narrative voice and Querelle may have been influenced by Jean Genet's (1910-1986) close association with Jean-Paul Sartre during the period from March 1945 to November-December 1947 when Genet was writing *Querelle*. However, it is notoriously difficult to chart the influence of such empirical details with precision (the inaccuracies in *Saint Genet* are a testament to this). *Querelle* does not offer a pre-emptive strike at the overwhelming use of the Sartrean concept of freedom in *Saint Genet*, where the whole of 'Genet's' personal history is directed towards (and subservient to) his free choice to become a writer. It is clear that Genet's notion of freedom of choice belongs to an altogether textual sphere when the representation of textual freedom in the language conscious passages is compared to Sartre's notions of freedom applied to Jean Genet's (1910-1986) life and the character of 'Genet' (the principal protagonist of *Saint Genet*).

the freedom of the narrative authority do not preclude the freedom of Querelle. We should note that the passage above (like several others that I have analysed in this subsection) enacts Querelle's escape from the narrative authority. The escape is still in the present tense; it is still happening; it is not yet in the past, not yet complete. Indeed, it cannot be complete; Querelle cannot be entirely independent of the narrative authority. One might then conclude with the proposition that both Querelle's total independence and the total control of Querelle by the narrative authority are impossible in the text.

The following extract illustrates a rather paradoxical conclusion:

Il [Querelle] était apparu au milieu d'eux avec la soudaine promptitude et l'élégance du joker. Il brouillait les figures mais leur donnait un sens.<sup>53</sup>

This striking description of Querelle is taken from the penultimate page of the subscribers' edition and occurs as part of the subdued atmosphere around Madame Lysiane as she is faced with the sailor's impending departure. It exemplifies the question of Querelle's independence. The word 'eux' refers to Madame Lysiane, Nono and Mario. In the description the appearance of Querelle has a range of possible effects because of the range of meaning of the term 'figures' his appearance could affect the (characters') faces, and/or the (structural) patterns and/or the (rhetorical) figures of *Querelle*. Crucially, the construction 'Il était apparu [...]' gives no indication of the motivation and causes of Querelle's appearance. The reader is unsure whether to ascribe the appearance of the joker to chance or to the deliberate strategy of a card player in control of the game. There are two possibilities; first, Querelle's sowing of confusion and meaning may be ascribed to a narrative authority for whom the joker is a wild card, something to which it can assign value at will because it is a player. The second possibility is quite simply that the appearance of the joker is beyond the player's control. Therefore, in this passage Querelle can be considered both as an independent character, and as an unusual card in a hand played by the narrative authority.

### 3.2.5 Conclusions

Thus far this section has foregrounded the authority, language consciousness and subjectivity of the narrative authority and that of Querelle in separate subsections. Now

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p. 247.

it is time to elaborate a comparison and contrast between Querelle and the narrative authority. Subsequently, I will also contrast interpretations made in Gérard Genette's *Figures III* (Paris, Gallimard, 1972) and in Jacques Derrida's *Glas* because these texts offer different models for the analysis of narrative structure and for the integration of a character such as Querelle into such a structure.

We have already seen how the narrative authority assigns different types of self-reflexive comments about language to nine different characters in the text. However, the narrative authority does not only mediate the language consciousness of a large number of characters; it can (as we have seen) also make structural comments and guiding statements on the text as if it were a singular. Therefore it seems that to be authoritative both the singular and the plural are required. One of the ways in which this *singular plurality* manifests itself in *Querelle* is in the use of the royal 'we', for example in the phrase 'nous-même' (found on pp. 21, 22, 104 and 229). This usage is a combination of the singular and the plural which also gives the impression of being grammatically irregular because the adjective does not agree with the personal pronoun (we will see that Querelle also exhibits this *singular plurality* in a non-rhetorical domain: his relationship with his twin Robert).

Querelle's language consciousness does not concern rhetorical authority. This is because it is not an awareness of a particular register or tone of language; rather, it concerns the limits of linguistic expression. It is a non-language consciousness or a language unconsciousness (an example of this is that Querelle expresses himself in pictograms in his 'carnet' (p. 113). Querelle circumvents the need to convince altogether; he asserts authority through his body and his sexuality and the fascination that all the other characters have for him (his authority is never in question, it is simply taken for granted). Querelle's sexual interaction with the other characters and the fact that he represents something different to each of them, is the basis of an alternative type of subjectivity. In the comparison and contrast between the narrative authority and Querelle in this conclusion, we must examine whether Querelle's subjectivity should be integrated into a totalising view of the text, in which Querelle is subject to the narrative authority because he is ultimately described by it. Alternatively, it may be the case that Querelle's non-rhetorical authority is simply different and irrecoverable by the latter.

When we examine the authority associated with Querelle with a view to answering the above question, we also see plurality, particularly in his subjectivity because it is shared with Robert, Querelle's identical twin. There are several passages (pp. 67-68,

109, 163 and 188 - this group was also excised from the subscribers' edition of the text) which deal with the threatened coalescence between the twins. Here is a quotation from one of them in which Querelle addresses his brother: 'Taisez-vous. Nous risquons de nous dissoudre dans une unité trop exactement précisée' (p. 109). This rather formal utterance is all the more incongruous because it is made during one of the brothers' fights. The utterance should not be undervalued because it is a source of many paradoxes. The dissolution in the text refers to the individual subjectivities of (Georges) Querelle and Robert (Querelle). However, this dissolution consists of an overly precise union between the twins ('une unité trop précise'). More than this, Querelle who is the addresser already appears to have merged with Robert who is the addressee; this is because he uses the second person plural. He is simultaneously addressing himself and Robert, addressing himself as part of Robert and Robert as part of himself (other examples of this type of writing - this time not excised from the subscribers' edition - are found on pp. 60, 148, 200 and 220).

At one level the simultaneity of the plural and singular of Querelle in the paragraph above is very similar to the royal 'we' of the narrative authority in terms of the fact that it cannot be enumerated or that it counts as singular and plural at different times. However, it can also be argued that Querelle's plurality in the paragraph is a different order of plurality when compared with that of the narrative authority. This is because Querelle's plurality and occasional coalescence with Robert is not based on control, he does not control his twin. I would argue that this is a fundamental difference and it makes Querelle different from the other characters, despite the narrative authority's comments on Querelle's lack of facility with language.

However, the narrative authority continues to attempt to control and define Querelle, for instance it tries to define his genealogy in the following way:

Il fallait qu'en nous-même [sic] nous pressentions l'existence de Querelle puisqu'en<sup>54</sup> [sic] certain jour, dont nous pourrions préciser la date avec l'heure exactes [sic], nous résolûmes d'écrire l'histoire (ce mot convient peu s'il sert à nommer une aventure ou suite d'aventures déjà vécues). Peu à peu nous reconnûmes Querelle - à l'intérieur déjà de notre chair - grandir, se développer dans nôtre âme, se nourrir du meilleur de nous, et d'abord de notre désespoir de n'être pas nous-même en lui mais de l'avoir en nous. Après cette découverte de Querelle nous voulons qu'il devienne le héros même du contempteur. Poursuivant

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This non-standard usage is corrected in the *OEuvres complètes* edition (p. 213).



en nous-même son destin, son développement, nous verrons comment il s'y prête pour se réaliser en une fin qui semble être (de cette fin) son propre vouloir et son propre destin.

La scène que nous rapporterons est la transposition de l'événement qui nous révéla Querelle. (Nous parlons encore de ce personnage idéal et héroïque, fruit de nos secrètes amours.) De cet événement nous pouvons écrire qu'il fut comparable à la Visitation. Sans doute ce n'est que longtemps après qu'il eut lieu que nous le reconnûmes "gros" de conséquences mais déjà, en le vivant, fûmes-nous parcouru d'un frisson annonciateur. Enfin pour être visible de vous, pour devenir un personnage de roman, Querelle doit être montré hors de nous-même. Vous connaîtrez donc la beauté apparente - et réelle - de son corps, de ses attitudes, et leur lente décomposition.<sup>55</sup>

In the first part of this remarkable passage the narrative authority uses the metaphor of pregnancy to describe the development of Querelle within itself. However, it must be stressed at the outset that the passage describes Querelle's gestation rather than his conception (which attempts to circumscribe his origin, in a relationship reminiscent of mother and child). The narrative authority maintains its lack of corporality and emphasises its gender polyvalency in the reference to 'chair' (where Querelle develops) because there is never a mention of anatomically pre-constituted parts of the body such as limbs or organs. Flesh and soul ('chair' and 'âme') are indeterminate ('poitrine', 'yeux' and 'oeil' used on pp. 14-15 are also used in a non concrete way; that is to say, it is not possible to distinguish the situation, position or appearance of the body to which they belong).

The Immaculate Conception is the metaphor which suggests itself to describe this nurturing relationship between the narrative authority and Querelle. This interpretation gains credence if we consider the capitalised (and thus presumably biblical) reference to the Visitation and the 'frisson annonciateur' in the second portion of the extract. What are the implications of the figure of the Immaculate Conception for the totalising view of the text in which Querelle is subject to the narrative authority? In the Immaculate Conception we are dealing with a human carrier and nurturer of the divine (it is a case of two different orders of being;<sup>56</sup> in the same way the narrative authority nurtures

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pp. 21-22.

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This also recalls Mary Ann Frese Witt's theory of maternal spaces, discussed in 1.4. However, in her article 'Mothers and Stories of Female Presence/Power in Jean Genet'

Querelle who now has his own destiny and development and a goal which is self sufficient and not elaborated by the narrative authority: 'il [Querelle] s'y prête pour se réaliser en une fin qui semble être (de cette fin) son propre vouloir et son propre destin.' The supreme indication of Querelle's independence is that the goal is not mediated by the narrative authority, one can only surmise that the reason for this is because the narrative authority wishes to convey the impression that the goal is unknowable by it. Indeed, the comparison might even be suggested in the comparison that it is as great a miracle for an independent entity to be born of the narrative authority, as it is for the Divine to be born of human flesh. However, it must be insisted that, although one gave birth to the other, the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ remain different orders of divinity. The passage introduces and maintains a similar difference between the narrative authority and Querelle at the same time as claiming that the narrative authority nurtured him.

This difference between family members, which exists between the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ and between the narrative authority and Querelle is emphasised in another way which threatens to undercut the narrative authority's claims to be the nurturer of Querelle: the narrative authority does not have the monopoly on the genealogy of Querelle. This is clear from the text that Querelle has a mother (pp. 15 and 59).<sup>57</sup> However, the mother does not automatically take precedence over the narrator (she is already described as being dead and buried in the second reference, p. 59). And Querelle

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Frese Witt foregrounds the concrete representations of maternal space in *Querelle* in the figure of Madame Lysiane's boudoir (pp. 183-184).

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This passage stresses Querelle's independence from the narrative authority who continues to put itself forward as the 'mother' of Querelle. At the end of this passage Querelle appropriates his own plurality by calling his doppelgänger his 'filles' (the text makes the link between creator and created clear because it uses the example of Beethoven who spoke of his symphonies in the same way). Thus in the same passage as the narrative authority posits itself as the source of Querelle it refers to Querelle's plurality as self generated: 'Et le dernier Querelle, né d'un bloc à vingt-ans, surgi désarmé d'une ténébreuse région de nous-même, fort, solide, avait alors un joyeux mouvement des épaules pour se retourner vers sa souriante, joyeuse et plus jeune famille d'élection. Chaque Querelle le considérait avec sympathie. Dans ses moments de tristesse, il les sentait autour de lui, présents. Et comme d'être êtres du souvenir les voilait un peu, ce voile leur accordait une aimable grâce, une féminité doucement inclinée vers lui. S'il en eût l'audace, il les eût appelées ses "filles" comme le faisait Beethoven de ses symphonies' (p. 104).

has yet another origin: the sea ('la mer' which can be read as another mother - 'mère'). At the start of *Querelle* the sailor comes from the distant seas to the sanctuary of the port of Brest ('elle [la dureté du port] les [les matelots] repose du perpétuel vague de la mer' p. 10). The first page of *Querelle* states that: '[...] le marin "revient de loin" [...]' (p. 9). This reference to the sailor's origin is not authoritative although comes at the start of *Querelle*. This is because it coexists with the other two accounts of the sailor's origins. It is therefore possible to say that *Querelle* has multiple origins and an undetermined genealogy.

In order to take the comparison between the narrative authority and *Querelle* and their respective subjectivities and language consciousness further, I would now like to contrast two critical texts: Gérard Genette's *Figures III* and Jacques Derrida's *Glas*. We will see how *Glas* both acknowledges the plurality of Genet's texts and displays a particular type of plurality in its own structure and language. Both texts are influential in their own right on questions of narrative form and structure which are so important in the understanding of *Querelle*. However, neither writes about Genet's text in a sustained way so the comparison between them will have to be indirect. It is impossible to give conclusive reasons for the absence of a sustained comparative analysis in both cases. Nonetheless it is surprising because, although Genette quotes many examples of different narrative modes in writers (such as Henry James, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Daniel Defoe, Stendhal, Honoré de Balzac, Plato, Homer and Alexandre Dumas among others) there is only one passing and non-specific reference to Genet's writing in *Figures III* (and then only to his drama). The case of Derrida is similar; although he quotes abundantly from Genet's other works of prose fiction (47 quotations from *Miracle* for example), he quotes only three times from *Querelle*.<sup>58</sup> Therefore in my contrast between the two critical texts it is necessary to create an element of mediation between the present conclusion and *Figures III* and *Glas*.

This mediation is straightforward in the case of Gérard Genette. The 1988 article in *Studia Neophilologica* 60 (pp. 235-250) by Sven Ake Heed provides us with elements of a Genettian reading of *Querelle*. '*Querelle de Brest* - un scénario de fantasmes' breaks new ground because it is the first attempt at an analysis of the text as a narrative

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These quotations are found on pp. 14bi, 131bi and 190bi.

structure. At the start of his article Heed writes:

Pour notre part, nous pensons plutôt que le recours aux rêves et aux fantasmes dans les romans de Genet est le produit, conscient ou inconscient, de l'acte d'écriture d'un auteur pour qui le rôle d'auteur justement n'est jamais oublié.<sup>59</sup>

I would agree with this assessment, Heed is right to focus on the authorial function in the texts in general and in *Querelle* in particular. In this quotation Heed opens his analysis up to the importance of the many self-reflexive comments in the text, but in particular to those which are connected with the narrative authority. These are the structural comments and guiding phrases referred to in 3.2.2. However, to adopt a more critical tack towards Heed's analysis, it must be noted that his concentration on narration and narrative function leads him to neglect the devolution of self-reflexive comments in the text from the narrative authority to almost all the characters in the ways that I have shown (3.2.3).

Let us move on to a concrete example of Heed's analysis. Heed distinguishes three levels of narration in *Querelle*. First, there is the story told by 'le narrateur', second is what Heed calls Seblon's commentary ('commentaire') in his private notebook; the final level is represented by what Heed calls 'textes-citations' which are the uncommented quotations from other texts inserted into *Querelle* (see pp. 8 and 16-17).

In the first level of narration, Heed stresses that the narrator is presenting himself as a fictional author because he is in direct contact with his reader. Heed goes on to quote a series of expressions and phrases which illustrate this perceived fictionality.<sup>60</sup>

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p. 237.

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'Il y a d'abord l'emploi d'expressions comme 'le livre' ou 'ce livre', en référence à l'oeuvre en cours d'écriture ou de lecture: 'Georges Querelle, le héros du livre' (p. 11), 'Le mouvement de ce livre doit s'accélérer' (p. 218), 'Ce livre dure depuis trop de pages et nous ennueie', (p. 229). Ensuite, il y a l'emploi d'un 'nous' de modestie pour désigner le narrateur: '...nous parlons toujours de ce déguisement et du criminel...' (p. 9), '...nous nous sommes abandonnés à une facile poésie verbale...' (p. 10). Les adresses au lecteur sont fréquentes: '...ceci ne paraît étrange qu'aux lecteurs qui n'auront pas éprouvé ces instants révélateurs...' (p. 182), '...le lecteur doit nous permettre d'utiliser ce détestable lieu commun littéraire...' (p. 225), ainsi que les pseudo-dialogues avec le lecteur: 'Enfin pour être visible de vous, pour devenir un personnage de roman, Querelle doit être montré hors de nous-même. Vous connaîtrez donc la beauté apparente - et réelle - de son corps, de ses attitudes, de ses exploits, et de leur lente décomposition' (pp. 21-22). Finalement, il y a les commentaires sur le processus d'écriture: '...(nous voulons

Heed's brief examples correspond in a limited way to the passages that I analyse in 3.2.2. However, his examples are not accompanied by analysis and serve merely to illustrate the uniformity of the first level of narrative: 'Ainsi, en ce qui concerne le récit premier de *Querelle de Brest*, nous avons affaire à un exemple de focalisation-zéro, c'est-à-dire que l'auteur analyste ou omniscient raconte l'histoire tout en étant absent comme personnage de l'action' (p. 240). It would seem that the terminology of Heed's analysis is not elastic enough to apply to Genet's text. For example, we have noted that the narrative authority is indeed absent from the action of the story in the sense of a character who makes well defined movements with a body; however, the extract above (in which the narrative authority describes itself as the incubator for *Querelle*) can be considered as being part of the action of the story. More importantly, the relationship between the narrative authority and *Querelle* and the latter's potential independence suggests that the narrative authority is far from being an omniscient mediator of all the ramifications of all the origins (it is not the sole originator of *Querelle*), all the relationships (the relation between the *Querelle* twins escapes it) and all the scenarios (such as those which relate to the secret hiding places ('dépôts secrets' p. 113) which are not elaborated in the text: that is the story of how something came to be hidden in 'Shanghai, Maison de la France, Jardin [sic]. Baobab de la grille' (p. 113) - we mentioned above that these scenarios are distillations of narratives of the scale of *Querelle* itself. In all three cases above *Querelle* has knowledge and information which the narrative authority is not party to.

As is evident from the term 'focalisation-zéro' in the quotation above Heed owes a general debt to Gérard Genette and this is acknowledged at the start of his analysis where he states: 'Nous avons adopté pour cette analyse une méthode inspirée de Genette (Gérard), *Figures III*, Paris, Seuil, 1972' (footnote 8, p. 250). However, Heed initially acknowledges the limits of Genette's terminology:

Cependant, la position du narrateur dans *Querelle de Brest* est loin d'être claire ou univoque. Si le narrateur selon Genette, s'adresse à un narrataire lui aussi extradiégétique, comment expliquer le "Nous sommes à Beyrouth" (p. 207) par lequel commence le passage qui raconte le meurtre de *Querelle* dans cette ville? A qui se réfère ce "nous"? Au narrateur? Au narrateur et au narrataire? Alors

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ici employer le verbe troubler dans son sens le plus intime: détruire la pureté)...' (p. 45), 'Le mot analyse nous gêne un peu' (p. 56), 'Il bougeait serré. On peut écrire: "Querelle déjà jouait serré" (p. 74)' (Heed, pp. 238-239. This represents the entirety of Heed's examples, given by him in tabulated form).

que, dans la diégèse, celui qui se trouve à Beyrouth, c'est bien le héros.<sup>61</sup>

However, Heed leaves this question unanswered. I would suggest that it is indeed unanswerable if we continue to adopt the framework and terminology proposed by Gérard Genette. I have pointed to the plurality of the narrative authority; this means that it can be both inside and outside at the same time, but it also means that the narrative authority should not be considered as a single entity with a determined subjectivity at all - it is impossible to make the copulative verb 'être' link the narrative authority with an individual presence in Beirut. This is because we are dealing with a narrative authority which is not represented in a distinct physical way. Thus, the first person plural in the phrase quoted by Heed, simultaneously concerns all *and* none of the possible attributions that Heed gives. It means both that the reader, narrative authority and Querelle are 'in' the Beirut episode and also that the 'nous sommes' can be omitted because it has no concrete referent. If it were omitted it would resemble Querelle's aphoristic condensation of the whole episode as he reports it in *his* notebook: 'Le carnet portant ces inscriptions était quelque chose comme le "registre des massacres" de la police. [...] Beyrouth, Damas.<sup>62</sup> Dame au piano. Mur de gauche' (p. 113). Therefore Querelle writes an alternative language without copulatives, without the verb 'être'.

As we have already mentioned in this conclusion Querelle's language consciousness (and the representation of his subjectivity) provides a potential alternative to the narrative authority. Therefore we should not be surprised by the similarity between Querelle's notebook and one of the possibilities for reading the first person plural not recognised by Heed (using Genette's terminology). Without a doubt, the plurality of the narrative authority as we have outlined it in 3.2.2. is difficult to describe in the language of *Figures III*; moreover, the potential independence of Querelle is completely unassimilable by it.

Once again, as in the case of the narrative authority (and in the case of Seblon's private notebook about which we shall not go into detail here), Heed recognises the

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p. 240.

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Damas here refers to the administrative region in which Beirut was situated in the 1940s. I am grateful to Kamal Salhi for this precision.

difference between Querelle and the other characters, but this difference is still seen by Heed as attributed to Querelle by the 'narrateur' (whereas I have attempted to show how Querelle is different from and potentially transcends the narrative authority). It is for this reason that Heed does not elaborate the inadequacies of Genette's terminology. I will now quote Heed's recognition of Querelle's difference in his concluding remarks about *Querelle* (before he goes on to consider Fassbinder's film); Heed writes: 'On peut donc dire qu'après tout le héros du roman est un personnage essentiellement décrit du dehors, objet plus que sujet des fantasmes du narrateur et de ceux des autres personnages' (p. 244). Heed is quite correct to highlight Querelle's lack of fantasy. It also concerns Querelle's lack of ability to feel love, I argue that he nearly feels love towards Gil, but then goes on to betray him.<sup>63</sup> However, the concentration on fantasy and Heed's analysis of it in a way which associates it with a binary distinction (either a character fantasises or is fantasised about; the title of his article is '*Querelle de Brest* un scénario de fantasmes') causes him to ignore the representations of Querelle's language consciousness, which are non-rhetorical ('Il pouvait à peine penser en mots' p. 19) and non-representational ('[...] son langage n'éclairait pas Querelle, si nous l'osons dire, ne le dessinait pas' p. 16). It also means that Heed passes over the representation of another type of subjectivity which is associated with Querelle who is not only represented in the text in terms of the fantasies of other characters. We have already examined some of the elements of the plurality of Querelle. They include doubling and his multiple genealogy. The writing of plurality in Jacques Derrida's *Glas* (that is both writing which has plurality as its object and writing which is plural - as a subject), will indicate that the latter has ramifications that are important for Querelle and *Querelle de Brest* as a whole.

In the absence of an article or essay which deals with the relevance of *Glas* to *Querelle*, I will provide the mediation between Derrida's text and the range of ways in which Querelle is interpreted in Genet's text by analysing the following four aspects from *Glas*: familial relations, autogeneration, mourning and 'la navette'. These aspects are

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This passage explains Querelle's relation to Gil: 'En Querelle l'amitié pour Gil se développait jusqu'aux confins de l'amour. [...] Obscurément il comprit que l'amour est volontaire; il faut le vouloir. Quand on n'aime pas les hommes, se laisser enfler peut vous causer quelque plaisir, mais pour les baiser il faut, fût-ce pendant le seul moment qu'on fait aller sa bite, les aimer. Pour aimer Gil il devait renoncer à la passivité. Il s'y efforça [...]' (pp. 204-205).

useful because they illustrate multi-layered interpretation in *Querelle*.

In *Glas*, Jacques Derrida emphasises the importance of familial relations at a symbolic level because they traverse and re-traverse Genet's texts (Derrida does not use fixed descriptions of familial relations with reference to the biography of Jean Genet (1910-1986)). The present conclusion aims to survey the range of ways in which *Querelle* can be understood. First and foremost, familial relations are multiplied and sedimented. The way in which this multiplication and sedimentation occurs is important; it is not a case of starting with archetypal family (mother, father, son/daughter) and then supplementing it with grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. In both texts we are concerned with the *repeated* overlaying of archetypal family relations. The mother, father, and child are symbolic roles and can be adopted by any character regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation and even whether they are alive or not.

I will give concrete examples of the familial relations in *Querelle* and append to each of them a footnote with a comparable passage from *Glas*. Seblon uses an erotic modification of the figure of the *Pietà* to describe the nurturing tender relationship that he longs for with *Querelle*, but is it a *Pietà* where Seblon is Jesus and *Querelle* is the adoring Virgin Mary. The passage in question reads: 'Je ne connaîtrai la paix que baisé par lui, mais de telle façon qu'enfilé il me gardera, allongé sur ses cuisses, comme une 'Piéta' garde Jésus mort' (p. 244).<sup>64</sup>

A second example is that in the deserted penal colony in Brest, *Querelle* is both father/mother, brother and a lover to Gil: 'Il [*Querelle*] éprouvait à son égard une sorte de tendresse de frère aîné. C'était un petit *Querelle* [...] en face de qui *Querelle* conservait un étrange sentiment de respect et de curiosité, comme s'il eût été en face du foetus de *Querelle* enfant' (p. 204).<sup>65</sup> I will not give full references for the third

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'L' "ainsi de suite" [...] attaque encore d'un seul et même cou [Derrida is referring to the strangulation of the old man by Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs], serrez la cravate - revient toujours au mouvement de la fleur virginale (varginale: entre vierge et vagin de la vierge, petite pierre ou cloche clitoridienne), du phallus pris à la Sainte Mère, et qui n'appartient pas plus au Président de Sainte Marie [the name of the judge who presides in the trial of Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs] qu'à Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs ("Je suis l'Immaculée Conception")' *Glas*, p. 98b.

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In the following quotations from *Glas* Derrida elaborates the symbolism of two of the narrator's lovers in *Journal*: 'Pépé, nom de père ou de grand-père, n'est-ce pas aussi le



example, which is perhaps the most obvious. It concerns the familial relations among the group of characters based around 'La Féria', Madame Lysiane, Nono, Mario and Querelle's twin Robert. Querelle is at once brother and son to Mario and son and lover to Madame Lysiane and to Nono.

From all the examples above we can discern an important consequence of this sedimentation of familial relations in *Glas* and *Querelle*: the prohibitions which usually operate in the archetypal family begin to break down.<sup>66</sup> Incest is possible. This is only the first stage because both texts go on to question the received roles of gender and sexual orientation within the family. What is more, the unique events in conventional family history such as birth, marriage and death gradually become repeatable. It is at this point that we move onto autogeneration, as in the case of Querelle referring to the other manifestations of himself as his daughters (p. 104)<sup>67</sup> and to descriptions of mourning which indirectly subvert death as a unique event. The following example illustrates the

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diminutif de Joseph, le père exclu (en soi ineffectif) de cela qui fut immaculément conçu? Son nom frappe l'accent circonflexe, non moins que ses caractères dévirilisés. "Pépé, me dis-je, il se nomme Pépé. Et je m'en fus, car je venais de remarquer sa main petite, délicate, presque féminine. [...] - Je m'appelle Pépé, et il tendit sa main. [...] C'est une fille, pensai-je en évoquant sa main gracile et je crus que sa compagnie m'ennuierait" (p. 198b). The second quotation reads: 'Joseph "est" (bande) donc une fille, à peu près en érection ("De l'ouverture sortait son cou solide, aussi large que la tête. Quand il la tournait sans bouger le buste, un tendon énorme bandait"), l'accent circonflexe un vieil OEdipe aveugle qui monte au calvaire soutenu par sa fille [Stilitano leads the narrator upstairs by the hand], mais sa fille est son père auquel il tient lieu de sceptre ou de glaive ou de glaïeul. Pas d'OEdipe en marche sans gl [an important sound in *Glas*]. Il est donc le phallus de son père qui est à la fois sa mère et sa fille' (p. 199b).

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These relations were outlined for the first time (and before the publication of *Glas*) by J.-M. Gardair in 'La mère homosexuelle' *Obliques*, 2 (1972) 61-63. This is a highly original article, only three pages long, which, to the best of my knowledge, has been totally ignored by other critics.

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'[...] au moment où Stilitano quitte la scène ouverte par "suis-moi" [[I] 'am me' as well as 'follow me'] l'accent circonflexe [the transformation that can be operated between Genet and genêt, the broomflower] ouvre une autre scène, la sienne, celle de l'accent qui s'annonce voici que je suis, où et comment je suis né, comment je me nomme, me baptise moi-même (Jean a baptisé le Christ), je m'appelle, je m'écoute, me surnomme fleur (le baptême est une seconde naissance), je nais une fois de plus, je m'accouche comme une fleur' (*Glas*, 203b-204b).

last case (Seblon is narrating): 'Revu l'Amiral A... Il est veuf, paraît-il, depuis plus de vingt ans. Il est lui-même sa veuve souriante et douce. Le gaillard qui l'escorte, (son chauffeur et non son ordonnance) est la résurrection glorieuse de sa chair' (p. 125). Here familial relations are upset because the husband becomes the wife, and perhaps more importantly the unique event of the death of the wife is subverted because the husband becomes his own widow.<sup>68</sup>

It is only one step further from granting the repeatability of unique family events (birth and death) to admitting the repeatability of the subject. And when we look closely at the text of *Querelle*, it is possible to see that the Querelle twins are not the only doubles. We have already seen that Mario is associated with Dédé but he has a professional double, Marcellin: 'Quant à la police du port et de la ville, Brest était sous l'autorité du Commissariat où travaillent à l'époque de notre roman, liés l'un à l'autre d'une singulière amitié, les inspecteurs Mario Daugas et Marcellin. Ce dernier était à Mario une sorte plutôt [sic for word order] d'excroissance (on sait que les policiers vont par paire [sic]) assez lourde, pénible, et parfois heureusement soulageante' (p. 16). This passage recalls Roger's expression of his fascination with the Querelle twins: '[...] ce monstre bicéphale [...]' (p. 200). This connection between Mario and his double and Querelle and his double, this doubling of doubles is confirmed in the form of Querelle's monogram: 'Autour de son propre autel, Querelle brodait un voile protecteur où son monogramme comme sur les nappes bleues est brodé d'or le célèbre: ~~M~~ [the first 'M' is superimposed onto its mirror image]' (p. 166). The doubling of Mario does not only take place at an interpersonal level. The passage above records his surname as 'Daugas'; however, on page 47, a reference to Mario repeats his rank and his police station (Brest)

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'Derrière: chaque fois que le mot vient en premier, s'il s'écrit donc après un point, avec un majuscule, quelque chose en moi se mettait à y reconnaître le nom de mon père, en lettres dorées sur sa tombe avant même qu'il y fût' (*Glas*, p. 80). In this passage it is not a case of a memory, a recollection or commemoration of the father, corresponding to the familiar experience of mourning *after* death; it is the rather more disturbing case of a vision and *pre*-monition via their common proper name, of the father's death and Derrida's own inevitable death. The passage is disrupting the usual chronology of mourning which has to take place after death. Nor should the passage be described as the denial of the death of Derrida's father because that too would be dependent on the empirical datum which is not given in the extract or the text - M. Aimé Derrida died in 1972. Thus the writing about death in this passage appears to be diametrically opposed to the usual conception of mourning.

but calls him 'Mario Lambert'.

As we approach the end of the present discussion of *Querelle*, let us return to *Querelle* and introduce the question of transcendence. Just as in the case of the self-reflexivity which is devolved down to the minor characters in the text, an impression of dizzying excess can be given by doubling and by the way in which family relations can be multiplied in the symbolic domain. *Querelle* is the only character who has the possibility of escaping this doubling by transcending his status as a single discrete character. We have already commented on the duality of the name 'Querelle', but Madame Lysiane notes that Robert has a private name for his brother: 'Jo' (p. 160). In his *Les Noms de Personnes*, (Paris, Librairie Delagrave, 1924), Albert Dauzat records (in the footnote on the first page of the main text), that: '*Jo* est le nom propre (abréviation de *Jahveh, Jéhovah*), *El(i)* le nom de Dieu [sic for punctuation]' (p. 19). This modulation of *Querelle*'s subjectivity is not doubled, but is part of a tripartite structure (which has echoes of the Trinity; Jo/*Querelle* is the Holy Ghost, Jo-nas is tried and executed for the sins of *Querelle*, and Jo-achim is a father or parent figure who is suddenly sacrificed). The religious is linked to the symbolic in psychoanalysis. In *Civilisation and its Discontents* (London, The Hogarth Press, 1973) Sigmund Freud refers to the 'oceanic' feeling as one of the bases of religion. In this feeling the individual's subjectivity is seen to grow to encompass all other subjectivities and the material world, but also thereby to simultaneously lose its own subjectivity. Freud writes: 'That is to say that it is a feeling of an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole' (p. 2). I would suggest that the way that the representation of *Querelle* constantly seems to transcend his own subjectivity is akin to this feeling.

Finally, let us conclude this section by putting the doubling of characters and *Querelle*'s transcendence into the context of the demands for certainty and finality associated with the end of a critical analysis. In a critical analysis there is a continuous injunction to interpret all the ramifications of meaning and to end only when this task is complete. However, *Querelle*, more than any other of Genet's five works of early prose fiction, conspires to make the end of the analysis fail to coincide with the end of new ramifications of meaning and further examples of *Querelle*'s transcendence (I am not simply referring to the way that further interpretations of *Querelle* by other critics will follow this one, but arguing that it seems especially important not to claim to say the last word about *Querelle* or *Querelle*).

We can further illustrate the demands of the context of a critical analysis by first

drawing attention to Derrida's omission in the following passage where Derrida stages the finding of the word 'navette', although he is not able to say conclusively whether or not the word is present in the corpus of Jean Genet (1910-1986). Of course the word 'navette' is found in *Querelle*; it refers to the launch which brings the sailor and the officer ashore. It is the mode of transport which links the sea and the land (I quote the following passage from *Glas* without detailed attention to Derrida's spacing):

La navette est le mot. C'est d'abord celui que je cherchais plus haut pour décrire, quand une gondole a croisé la galère, le va-et-vient grammatique entre langue et lagune (*lacuna*). Il faudra manipuler des cartes perforées [Derrida refers to a master card index of all the words in Genet's corpus] pour savoir si le mot *navette* apparaît, comme tel [...] dans lesdites "oeuvres complètes". Le mot - la navette - est indispensable. Il aura dû être là. D'abord parce que c'est un terme d'église et que tout ici se trame contre une église. Il s'agit d'un petit vase de métal en forme de navire (*navis, navetta*). On y conserve l'encens. Ensuite la navette du tisserand. Il la fait courir. Va-et-vient tramé dans une chaîne. La trame est dans la navette. Vous voyez tout ce qu'on aurait pu faire avec ça. L'élaboration [the term used to describe the textual practice of *Glas*], n'est-ce pas un mouvement de tisserand?<sup>69</sup>

So Derrida has overlooked the precise naval meaning of the word 'navette'. However, the context of this critical analysis also needs to highlight the artificiality of its own end. I will close the analysis by confirming the relevance of *Glas* to *Querelle* (no doubt my analysis is relevant as well), despite the fact that there are only few references to Genet's text. Derrida cannot find the word 'navette', but he elaborates and analyses the plurality of other texts by Genet in apt ways. I conclude that the ramifications of doubling and *Querelle*'s transcendence are similar to Derrida's discussion of the word 'navette' above, precisely because the similarity between them was not intended by Derrida. Derrida proposes a set of relations (linguistic, ecclesiastic, textile and even nautical) but Genet's extraordinary text always appears to have one more relation which analyses like my own and Derrida's will overlook.

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pp. 232b-233b.

### 3.3 Language Consciousness in *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*

#### 3.3.1 Introduction

The present section aims to lay open several latent structures in *Notre-Dame*. Let us give a concrete example of one of these structures: although the text is not divided into numbered chapters which appear in a 'table' on the final page, there is the following reference within the text: 'c'est au lecteur de se faire à soi-même sentir la durée, le temps qui passe, et convenir que durant ce premier chapitre elle [Divine] aura de vingt à trente ans' (p. 78). This section foregrounds references of this sort, first in terms of what a possible chapter structure in *Notre-Dame* might be and then analyses that structure in relation to other structures. This structural approach is not problematic in itself. However, because the structures of *Notre-Dame* are frequently fragmentary and incomplete, it is also necessary at the outset to sound a note of warning regarding the importance of structures in *Notre-Dame*. For instance, in the case of the example given immediately above, there is only one other reference to the word 'chapitre' in the text and this other reference is found one hundred and seventy six pages after the first one: 'J'ai relu les chapitres passés. Ils sont maintenant clos, rigoureusement [...]' (p. 354). Here the word 'chapitres' is used in the plural, despite there having only been one definite and identifiable previous reference. The second reference does not divide the text directly, but confirms the possibility that it can be divided into chapters. Therefore, in 3.3, I use the term 'structures' in the plural to denote multiple patterns which cross over each other in the manner of a palimpsest<sup>70</sup> rather than a one dimensional master pattern. Furthermore, 'structures', however complex, are not the only ways of understanding the text and 3.3.5 will also attempt to present other ways of interpreting *Notre-Dame* which build on the knowledge that structures provide, but which are incomplete, inchoate or even contradictory dynamics and not static structures. And it is in these dynamics and structures which are in the process of being undone that we find the intersection between language consciousness in *Notre-Dame* and the representation of subjectivity.

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Gérard Genette: *Palimpsestes, la littérature au second degré*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1982. The palimpsest is a structural figure which takes account of accretions over time, as such it is a synthesis of the synchronic and the diachronic (in the Saussurean model). However, Genette does not provide a detailed account of the palimpsest.

### 3.3.2 The Introductory Narrative Frame

At first sight it might almost seem odd that a device as conventional as a narrative frame should be considered in the present discussion of a text which is reputed for its extreme complexity and fragmentation. A narrative frame necessarily suggests both clear structural distinctions (between it and the rest of the narrative) and a certain notion of stability within the frame (because the frame is a position from which a narrator introduces the main narrative). That portion of the text from the dedication to the words 'nez rectiligne' (on page seventeen of the 'Collection Folio' edition) can be said to form an introductory frame because it is narrated in the first person singular (in contrast to the third person main narrative about Divine, Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs and Louis Culafroy).

Camille Naish (1978) was probably the first critic to explicitly mention the term 'frame' with reference to this text (p. 61). However, Naish's is a brief three-page account of 'autogenesis, or [the] fictional account of the birth of a secondary fiction' that is to say 'both the inception of the text *Notre-Dame* and the narrator's declared intention to compose a book' (p. 59). Naish does not justify the appellation 'frame' by a detailed analysis of the connection between it and the process of creation (I do this and as we will see it is an equivocation to describe the imprisoned narrator as the creator and the prison cell as the originating locus of the narration). For Naish, the frame is the first manifestation of the dual structure of the text, a structure which is insisted upon throughout her study; it broadly corresponds to the distinction between the frame and what it encloses. It is indicative of the perceptiveness of her study that Naish repeatedly points out how *Notre-Dame* confounds this dual structure (p. 63 and p. 64). However, it is regrettable that *A Genetic Approach to Structures in the Work of Jean Genet* does not accord importance (as I do) to the ways in which the structures in the text always visibly break down, thus thwarting the totalising ambitions of a structural approach (even if that approach grants exceptions).

This section isolates three language conscious elements in the introductory narrative frame and all of them offer different perspectives on the production of the text. First, we will see how the intersection between the prison cell and the narrator creates narrative possibilities for the place and the person associated with the inception of the narrative. Secondly, the narrator introduces a personal picture gallery<sup>71</sup> of images of

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The word 'gallery' is used by Philip Watts in an article about Eugène Weidmann who

young men that he has cut from newspapers and pasted to the back of the prison regulations hanging in his cell. This gallery becomes a metaphor for the creation of the text inspired by sexual desire. Thirdly, the frame represents a relation between death and writing where writing is a parasitic activity, getting its energy from dead matter.

In an overview of the introductory narrative frame, a conventional structural discussion would seek to begin to describe the narrative frame in terms of its separation from the rest of the narrative. One possible way of describing such a separation which appears to be confirmed by the text is in terms of a spatial and situational separation of the narrator from the main body of the text. This separation would be defined primarily in terms of the stable isolation of the narrator in his prison cell. The imprisonment of the narrator would thus become a factor in the stability of the first person singular narrative viewpoint.

However, it is indicative of the subtlety and the unconventionality of *Notre-Dame* that the cell does not function in this way. The cell is not described in concrete terms and the references to it (to the word 'cellule') do not concern the narrator's state of being imprisoned within its four walls; there are no references to state at all. The narrator does not exploit the existential implications of the cell as a 'situation' in the Sartrean sense.<sup>72</sup> If the narrator wanted to emphasise the Sartrean sense of 'situation' the frame would employ formulations which might be translated as: 'the narrator who is in a cell' or 'the narrator who is here in a cell'. These formulations use the vocabulary of situation (such as the preposition 'in' with the verb 'to be' and the adverb 'here') and are not found in

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was Jean Genet's favourite icon ('Saint Weidmann' in *Esprit Créateur*, 35, 1 (Spring 1995) 11-19). It is not found in *Notre-Dame*, but it is the most apt description of the narrator's arrangement of the pictures of the young men.

72

This point is made clearly and at length by Mary Ann Frese Witt in *Existential Prisons; Captivity in Mid-Twentieth-Century Literature*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1985. In her treatment of Genet's writing Frese Witt notes his 'refusal of prison as a metaphor, as a representation of the "human condition" of the metaphysical, psychological or of anything relating it directly to "your world"' (p. 196). In the epilogue of her discussion, despite certain caveats regarding the existential aspects of the 'portrayal of power and humiliation, of fundamental solitude [which will be taken up in the present discussion] and failed solidarity [between prisoners], of the acceptance of prison as given, and the search for liberation from within', Frese Witt confirms the difference between the representation of prison in Genet texts and those of his contemporaries (such as Jean-Paul Sartre's *Morts sans sépulture*, *Les Séquestrés d'Altona* and *Huis Clos*).

the frame. The narrator does use the verb 'to be' on one occasion: 'Mes héros ce sont eux, collés au mur, eux et moi qui suis là, bouclé' (p. 16) but the use of 'là' instead of 'ici' refers to a narrative situation, rather than a physical one. The narrator writes as if he were one of the figures on the wall of the cell who themselves are part of a metaphor for the creation of the text.

The cell needs to be understood in terms of its narrative function which intersects with the sensibility of the narrator, not with his subjectivity in a singular situational sense. If we were to insist on expressing this mutuality of narrator and cell with the verb 'to be' (which it appears to resist) the following rather unconventional subjunctive phrase would be possible: 'the narrator speaks as if he *were* the cell.'<sup>73</sup> Both the narrator and the cell form a locus *for the reception* of language. This can be a reception of both verbal and written language. The following first reference to the word 'cellule' concerns the permeability of the cell to language because the narrator can hear other inmates singing: '[...] les plaintes qu'ils chantent le soir, que la voix qui traverse les cellules, et m'arrive troublée, désespérée, altérée' (p. 10). Language can also arrive in the form of fragments of text:<sup>74</sup> 'Cette merveilleuse éclosion de belles et sombres fleurs, [the descriptions of murderers and their murders with which the text opens] je ne l'appris que par fragments: l'un m'était livré par un bout de journal [...]' (p. 10). The communication of a narrative fragment to the narrator/cell can also be incidental and inadvertent: 'Quelquefois, le gardien aux pieds de velours, par le guichet, me jette un bonjour. Il me parle, et m'en dit long sans le vouloir, des faussaires mes voisins, des incendiaires, des

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The following example of 'angels' serves as an archetype for imagining the intersection between the narrator and the cell: 'car les anges me font horreur, étant, je l'imagine, composés de cette sorte: ni esprit ni matière, blancs, vaporeux et effrayants comme le corps translucide des fantômes' (p. 10). This description is as unconventional as the formulation with the subjunctive above; in it the angels are neither matter nor spirit. In the main body of the text, outside the frame the narrator uses a more conventional metaphor of breathing life into an inanimate object (though in a Genetian twist, waste air is also used): 'Dans ma cellule, petit à petit, il faudra bien donner mes frissons au granit. Je resterai longtemps seul avec lui et je le ferai vivre avec mon haleine et l'odeur de mes pets, solennels ou très doux. J'en ai pour toute la durée d'un livre [...]' (p. 40).

74

The formulation with the verb 'arriver' of a piece of information reaching or getting to the narrator in his cell is repeated on the next page: 'Ces assassins maintenant morts sont pourtant arrivés jusqu'à moi [...]' (pp. 10-11).



faux monnayeurs, des assassins, des adolescents crânes [...]’ (pp. 16-17).

Therefore the language which is communicated to the narrator and hence the material for the text’s inspiration is delivered to the narrator from other sources. The stability of the frame which is necessary for it to function as an introduction to the text is a result of the fixing of the first person singular as part of the interaction of the cell and the narrator. This stability exists as long as the first person singular refers to the narrator and in fact it does so for the duration of the introductory narrative frame. However, characters such as Ernestine, Divine and Culafroy go on to use the first person singular in the main narrative and on many occasions these incidences of ‘je’ are not part of direct speech and are thus not separated from the third and first person singular narratives by speech marks. In addition, once the narrative frame is at an end the narrator himself will move into the plural and use the first person plural. The narrative stability of the introductory narrative frame is thus temporary, limited to the start of the text before the advent of plurality. Therefore *formal* stability is based on only a temporary position of a shifting personal pronoun.

The second language conscious element, the representation of the picture gallery, is a metaphor for the creation of the text. This is because the picture gallery is a visual support to the narrator in the process of creating the text. It would be expected that the narrator who has cut these pictures from magazines and stuck them to the reverse of the prison regulations sheet hanging in his cell, enjoys possessing the images of sexually desirable young men. However, although the picture gallery can be described as the narrator’s harem, there is also a strong sense in which the narrator also gives himself up to be possessed by the images of the young men. Thus the abandonment of the self is a spur to creation. While this may appear contradictory, it should not surprise us in the light of the discussion different forms of subjectivity in the present thesis.

At first the visual element in the representation of the gallery appears to be fundamental because the narrator compares his own use of the gallery with how the typical reader of the text performs the act of looking: ‘Le soir, comme vous ouvrez votre fenêtre sur la rue, je tourne vers moi l’envers du règlement’ (p. 14). However, if the representation of the gallery is examined closely, there turn out to be no descriptions of the images in it. What concerns the narrator is rather the dynamic of delivering himself up to these images which are unspecified and invisible to the reader but visible only to him. The absence of a detailed visual description of the pictures in the gallery echoes one of the main findings of the second chapter of the present thesis, namely that gestures are

often disassociated from visual description in Genet's early prose fiction.

The visual element of the picture gallery within the introductory narrative frame, concerns fragments of the human body (not even those biological characteristics which are usually associated with males) such as '[s]ourires et moues' (p. 14) or 'au coin de la bouche ou à l'angle des paupières, le signe sacré des monstres' (ibid). Thus the gallery is composed of the elements of an image rather than the finished product and, in the final analysis, the gallery appears to be more akin to the artist's pallet or the elements of a collage awaiting assembly. The narrator describes the relation between himself and the images in the following terms: 'La nuit, je les aime et mon amour les anime' (p. 15). The narrator clearly has more of an emotive relation to the images and more of an active role in composing how they will appear to him than the apparently straightforward way in which the typical reader opens his or her window onto the street. The narrator has a direct sexual reaction to the images as he masturbates while imagining the face and then the whole body of the outlaw that he has chosen for that evening's joy ('[...] tout le corps du hors-la-loi que j'ai choisi pour mon bonheur de ce soir' (p. 15)). However, the image remains depersonalised for the narrator so the latter is not completely dominant: '[...] et un corps vigoureux, une armoire à glace sort du mur, s'avance, tombe sur moi, me broie sur cette paille tachée déjà par plus de cent détenus' (pp. 15-16). The term 'armoire à glace' may be translated as 'a great hulk of a man' but because it compares a man to an object, it depersonalises and defamiliarises the images in the picture gallery even further. The invisibility of the young men in the gallery for the readers also allows the narrator not to reveal too much about his particular aesthetic sensibilities and to concentrate on the key process in which he surrenders to these males.

Let us move on to the third element of language consciousness, just like Divine's attic room which overlooks the cemetery, death is an enduring feature of the frame (and the text as a whole). Death is also of key importance for the language conscious description of the creation of the text in the introductory narrative frame. First I discuss the undermining of death as a monolithic event, then I describe the parasitic relation of the narrator to death. Indeed, the first dedication which precedes the text sets up a causal relationship between the death of Maurice Pilorge and *Notre-Dame* (in a strictly structuralist approach to the text this dedication might be considered as a narrative level above that of the introductory narrative frame):

*Sans Maurice Pilorge dont la mort n'a pas fini d'empoisonner ma vie je n'eusse*

*jamais écrit ce livre. Je le dédie à sa mémoire.*<sup>75</sup>

However, the causal link between Pilorge's death and *Notre-Dame* is undermined in the re-dedication which follows at the start of the frame. Here, the narrator introduces other names in addition to that of Pilorge. There is Weidmann, Ange Soleil and a nameless naval ensign.<sup>76</sup> Subsequently, the narrator considers his book as a votive offering to their crimes: 'Et c'est en l'honneur de leurs crimes que j'écris mon livre' (p. 10). The frame has both undermined the causal link made between death and the text in the dedication outside it and yet it also goes on to make the link more complex. In the first instance the frame multiplies the number of dedicatees. Secondly, the frame also elaborates on the original dedicatee thus confirming his place, at the same time as reducing his status as an absolute inspiration. Thirdly, the frame also creates a simulacrum of the causal link between the death of Maurice Pilorge and *Notre-Dame* because it posits a double relation to death among the dedicatees. That is to say Weidmann and Ange Soleil are not only dead but they are dead because they are murderers:<sup>77</sup> their crime of murder is followed by judicial murder that is to say execution; both victim and perpetrator die. In this way the causality is retained, but its absolute nature is transformed into a double relation to death shared by several characters - the narration of whose crimes opens the text - rather than the monumental and monolithic form of ascribing the origin of the whole text to one death explained in an extra-textual dedication. The dedication to Pilorge by itself is not adequate for the purposes of a narrative such as *Notre-Dame* which has a multiple male population.

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no page number.

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The reference may be to Louis Ménesclou who is described in the following terms in one of three epigraphs to *Querelle de Brest*: "*Pendant les deux années qu'il passa au corps de la Marine, sa nature insoumise, dépravée, lui valut soixante-seize punitions. Il tatouait les novices, volait ses camarades, et se livrait sur les animaux à des actes étranges.*" Relation du procès de Louis Ménesclou âgé de 20 ans. Exécuté le 7 septembre 1880' (p. 8).

77

The implications of the finality associated with the mandatory death sentence for murder in Genet's early prose fiction was discussed in 2.3.7, Gesture and 'la mise à mort'.

Serving the production or the creation of the narration is the most important function of all the types of language consciousness that are being described and analysed in the present section. They are: 1. the intersection of the narrator and the cell; 2. the narrator's private picture gallery and 3. the making plural of the original dedication of *Notre-Dame* to Maurice Pilorge. Let us now move on to the parasitic relation of the narrative to death which is described in the following extract:

Au fur et à mesure que vous lirez, les personnages, et Divine aussi, et Culafroy, tomberont du mur sur mes pages comme feuilles mortes, pour fumer mon récit. Leur mort, aurai-je besoin de vous la dire? Elle sera pour tous la mort de [...] (Weidmann).<sup>78</sup>

Here the narration ('récit') is the product of a dynamic of decomposition whose source is dead matter; that is to say the characters who are also compared to dead leaves.<sup>79</sup> The present discussion of language consciousness will stress the importance of such phrases such as 'fumer mon récit' which concern the production of the narration. It could also be said that the phrase suggests that the cremation of the characters imparts a flavour to the narration in the same way as the process of smoking food. Indeed, it could almost be said that the taste of dead characters permeates *Notre-Dame* from beginning to end and that it is also found at the start of the introductory narrative frame, the main narrative and the concluding narrative frame. The main narrative, indicated by the temporal adverb 'hier', also begins with the description of Divine's funeral: 'Divine est morte hier [...]'.<sup>79</sup>

If we take a second overview of the introductory narrative frame now that its principal language conscious features have been analysed, we can say that it is characterised by its receptivity to language. A necessary concomitant of this receptivity is the self-effacement of the narrator, or, rather, the narrator does not begin to describe himself as existing: there is an absence of situational vocabulary with the verb 'être'. The lowest denominator of a narrative frame is a stable personal pronoun; in *Notre-Dame* the first person singular plays this role. However, even a cursory comparison between this

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p. 16.

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In his article ('Political Discourse and Poetic Register in Jean Genet's *Pompes funèbres*' in *French Forum* 17,2 (May 1992) 192-3), Philip Watts has drawn attention to the term 'feuille' which means also means 'leaf' in the sense of page in French.

frame and the narrative frame of a text by another author, Gide's *La Porte étroite* for example,<sup>80</sup> demonstrates the comparative ethereality of the narrator in Genet's text. Where there is certainty in Gide (in the repetition of the personal pronoun and in concrete transitive verbs such as such as 'raconter', 'écrire', 'rapiécer', 'joindre' and 'apporter') there is doubt in Genet (in Gide any doubt is placed within the realm of the individual character). This doubt is expressed first in a repeated turn of phrase ('Je ne sais pas si [...]') which begins two paragraphs in the frame (pp. 11 and 12) and secondly in the words 'je ne sais plus s[i]' (p. 13). In these phrases the narrator is expressing the inability to distinguish between his dedicatees and the images in the gallery. Thus the narrator, as a receiver of language from other parts of the prison, is not wholly in control of the means and the material of the creation of the narration. This is because the material and the means are too highly charged, emotionally and sexually.

In addition, there is a set of images in which the narrator surrenders to or is penetrated by the males in the frame (that is to say the dedicatees, 'ceux du mur' and a man called Jean). The men enter his mouth; '[...] ta verge traversait ma bouche avec l'âpreté soudain mauvaise d'une cloche crevant un nuage d'encre, une épingle à chapeau un sein'<sup>81</sup> and then all his orifices: 'les uns et les autres inexorables, m'entrent par tous mes trous offerts, leur vigueur pénètre en moi et m'érige'. The only other parts of the narrator's anatomy (in addition to his heart and orifices above) which are described in the narrative frame are *also* part of this dynamic of penetration: 'La main gauche ferme les contours, puis arrange ses doigts en organe creux qui cherche à résister, enfin s'offre, s'ouvre [...]' (p. 15) and '[...] au point que le soir, à genoux, en pensée, j'encercle de mes bras leurs jambes [...]' (p. 13). In the second quotation the narrator's arms form a

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The brief narrative frame which opens Gide's text reads: 'D'autres en auraient pu faire un livre; mais l'histoire que je raconte ici, j'ai mis toute ma force à la vivre et ma vertu s'y est usée. J'écrirai donc très simplement mes souvenirs, et s'ils sont en lambeaux par endroits, je n'aurai recours à aucune invention pour les rapiécer ou les joindre; l'effort que j'apporterais à leur apprêt gênerait le dernier plaisir que j'espère trouver à les dire' (Paris, Livre de Poche, 1964; p. 5).

81

The original subscribers' edition of the text has the word 'clocher' where the Folio edition quoted above has 'cloche'. 'Clocher' accords much better with the second metaphor and confirms the concept of penetration.

hollow organ around the men's legs. Thus, except for his forehead and possibly his heart,<sup>82</sup> the narrator in the frame is a porous network of holes, permeable, much like the cell itself with its hatch ('guichet'), with its picture gallery on the back of the prison regulations notice which is compared to a window onto a street (p. 14) and with the sounds from the prison which penetrate its walls.

Taken together, the absence of situational vocabulary, the doubt and the sexually and emotionally charged nature of the frame as well as the constant penetration of the narrator's body and the cell in the frame, might suggest the passivity and weakness of the narrator. However, in *Notre-Dame* these aspects are most definitely not part of a dichotomy between active and passive where the former is considered to be of positive value in relation to the creation of text and the latter is considered to be negative and useless in the creation of text. The frame introduces the main narrative while also representing the narrator as ethereal, doubting, sexually and emotionally enthralled and multiply penetrated.<sup>83</sup> Therefore at the start of *Notre-Dame* passivity is valorised in the sense that it is divorced from the notion of will. The narrator's passivity is neither forced

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The heart surrenders: '[...] un de ces astres de deuil tombe dans ma cellule, mon coeur bat fort, mon coeur bat la chamade, si la chamade est le roulement de tambour qui annonce qu'une ville capitule'(p. 11). However, the penetration of the invaders into surrendered town is imminent. The forehead is introduced following a subjunctive of possibility, therefore it can be said to be a gratuitous hypothesis: 'Il se peut que cette histoire ne paraisse pas toujours artificielle et que l'on y reconnaisse malgré moi la voix du sang: c'est qu'il me sera arrivé de cogner du front dans ma nuit à quelque porte [...].'(p. 16).

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The adjectives in this description can certainly also be applied to the representation of Divine in the text. In one of the most sustained excisions (565 words in all) from the subscribers' edition of the text Divine's first and only attempt to penetrate Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs is described; (s)he is ready to take up this position (unique for her) when the sight of the youth's penis: 'donna à Divine ce vertige bien connu d'elle: l'abandon au mâle.' When the sex has finished the narrator suddenly asks: 'Avez-vous connu cela? Aimer un jeune garçon longtemps, chèrement, et puis, n'en pouvant plus de cet acte héroïque, j'abandonne. Mes muscles et mon esprit se relâchent. A la lettre, je chancelle. Et j'adore enfin, frénétiquement, les muscles qui me torturent, que me courbent sous eux, et cette domination m'est apaisante comme un sanglot après un trop long temps sur les sommets d'un drame haut comme la mort' (*Notre-Dame*, subscribers' edition pp. 94-95). In this question addressed to the subscribers' the narrator begins by referring to the boy as the object of the verb 'aimer' only to abandon this situation ('j'abandonne') and move, or, rather, return to being penetrated. The narrator has mirrored Divine's surrender.

on to him by another agent nor is it a wilful choice. It is simply a matter of fact which is the basis for the creation of the text by the reception of language.

### 3.3.3 The Concluding Narrative Frame

The concluding narrative frame refers to that portion of text in the 'Collection Folio' edition from page 374 to the end of *Notre-Dame* on page 377. This frame takes up the language conscious elements of the introductory frame but modifies them. Thus confirming that it is correct to speak, tentatively at least, of structures in these parts of the text. As far as language consciousness is concerned the narrator attempts to identify his own narration exclusively with Divine's story. Consequently, now that (s)he is dead the narrative of *Notre-Dame* must necessarily cease as well: 'Morte Divine, que me reste-t-il à faire? A dire?' (p. 374). The narrator introduces the possibility of his own liberation from prison which would also imply the end of the intersection between the narrator and the cell. A change of form is anticipated and the link between liberation from prison and life is made explicit in the following extracts: 'Si demain j'étais libre? (Demain audience.) Libre, c'est-à-dire exilé parmi les vivants'. (p. 374) and 'Déjà, j'ai le sentiment de ne plus appartenir à la prison. Est brisée la fraternité épuisante, qui me liait aux hommes de la tombe. Je vivrai peut-être...' (p. 375). If the narrator is going to rejoin the living if he is freed we can assume that the narrator/cell intersection was a type of living death or rather a state before birth (and is therefore related to the subversion of death as a monumental event).

The narrator, quoting language conscious passages from the introductory narrative frame, confirms that if his hearing results in a condemnation the narrative will continue: '[...] je referai, pour l'enchantement de ma cellule, à Mignon, Divine, Notre-Dame et Gabriel, d'adorables vies nouvelles' (p. 376). More important than the obvious inference here that the narrator was indeed released from prison because the narrative ends, is the quotation of the phrase 'pour l'enchantement de ma cellule' a variation of which is found in the introductory narrative frame (p. 17). At this point the narrator appears to stress his role as the creator of the text, however, in the last element of the narrative of *Notre-Dame* the narrator returns to the role of reader, in the same way that he read about one of the crimes of his dedicatees in the newspapers at the start of the text ('l'un m'était livré par un bout de journal' p. 10) at the end there is a reference to the reading of letters: 'J'ai lu d'émouvantes lettres, bourrées de merveilleuses trouvailles, [...]. J'en choisis une qui sera cette lettre que Mignon écrivit à Divine de la prison', p. 376). These

letters are sent out from an unspecified prison cell in a movement which is the exact opposite of the narrator's reception of text from verbal and written sources during the introductory narrative frame.

At the conclusion of *Notre-Dame* there is an integration of pictorial representation into the text of the letter (which is already a new story, one of the 'vies nouvelles' that the narrator has said that he will write if he is to stay in prison). The element of pictorial representation also recalls the personal picture gallery of images of young men in the introductory narrative frame and we will see that it is equally concerned with sexual desire.<sup>84</sup> This final passage of the narrative comprises a reading of one word in the letter: 'pointillé' relating the description of it to an event that the narrator witnessed in the prison:

Ce pointillé dont parle Mignon, c'est la silhouette de sa queue. J'ai vu un mac bandant en écrivant à sa môme, sur son papier sur la table poser sa bite lourde et en tracer les contours. Je veux que ce trait serve à dessiner Mignon. Prison de Fresnes, 1942.<sup>85</sup>

Thus the final passage of the text is concerned with the description of Mignon but it also marks the limits of the potential of textual description in that it describes an expressly non-textual method of representation.<sup>86</sup> The final passage above refers to Mignon's representation of himself; the narrator has a secondary role as the reporter of the method of representation used, the letter is not even addressed to him: it is destined for an addressee outside the prison. This prefigures the narrator's own release which is

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84

There are other periodic returns to the metaphor of the narrator's picture gallery of men cut from magazines in *Notre-Dame*: 'Elle [Ernestine] passait dans la grand-rue du village, quand elle croisa une jeune canaille, un de ces vingt visages que j'ai découpés dans les magazines, [...] (p. 67); 'avec un visage écrasé de bull-dog, celui du jeune boxeur anglais Crane que j'ai là parmi les vingt, sur le mur' (p. 68).

85

p. 377.

86

It has similarities with Divine's 'carnet': 'Sur son carnet célèbre par son étrangeté, ou une page sur deux était brouillée d'un fouillis de volutes au crayon qui intriguèrent Mignon jusqu'au jour où Divine avoua que ces pages étaient les jours de cocaïne, pour des comptes, des redevances, des rendez-vous [...] (p. 211). Also relevant are the pictograms in *Querelle* discussed in 3.2.4.



intimated in the final pages of the text.

While those passages which analyse the creating and ending of a text are important, there are other numerous and sustained language conscious passages in the rest of *Notre-Dame*. The two sections which follow (3.3.4 and 3.3.5) will categorise and analyse a selection of them.

### 3.3.4 Popular Fiction as a Genre

Language consciousness, because it focuses on those elements in a text which relate to the production (writing) and the reception (reading) of that text, should be attuned to the ways in which *Notre-Dame* intersects with other works and this subsection demonstrates that references to popular fiction are by far the most numerous. Genet's text intersects with popular fiction, not principally in terms of references to authors, titles and extracts from popular fiction, but by means of the norms of popular fiction as a genre.<sup>87</sup> That is to say its style, vocabulary, stock character types, iconography and even the common characteristics of the appearance of the books themselves. The term 'popular fiction' in this section refers principally to the 'roman populaire', 'roman d'aventures' and the 'roman policier'. References to popular fiction span the entire length of *Notre-Dame* and there are twenty eight in total.<sup>88</sup> In discussing popular fiction as a genre, I will concentrate first on the most sustained references which appear to caricature it negatively and then move onto references which praise it directly. Therefore in the first type of references the narrator is defining *Notre-Dame* against the norms of popular fiction and

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87

*Miracle* is different because several authors are named: 'Pour voir avec plus de précision ces enfants, appelez à votre secours les rêves suscités par vos lectures de romans populaires. Michel Zévaco, Xavier de Montépin, Ponson du Terrail, Pierre Decourcelle, ont fait passer furtivement dans leurs textes les silhouettes flexibles et légères des pages mystérieux [sic] qui semaient la mort et l'amour' (p. 168).

88

*Notre-Dame*, pp. 15, 26, 27, 55, 82, 110, 205, 230-1, 252, 268, 302-3, 306-7, 310, 344 and 371. Popular fiction also includes magazines (pp. 11, 67, 69 and 167), the 'chanson populaire' and the 'fait divers' in newspapers (pp. 9, 10, 13, 19, 77, 176, 190 and 317-8) in this category. David H. Walker has provided a sustained analysis of the importance of the latter genre for Genet's early prose fiction. Cf. 'Cultivating the *fait divers*: *Déetective*', *Nottingham French Studies*, volume 31, number 2, (Autumn 1992) 71-83 and *Outrage and Insight; Modern French Writers and the 'fait divers'*, Oxford, Berg, 1995, pp. 43-45, 110 and 154-171.

in the second type the narrator is speculating, to the advantage of popular fiction, on what *Notre-Dame* lacks.

The narrator views popular fiction as a genre, rather than in terms of particular quotations from individual texts of that genre. Therefore the representation of popular fiction in the text is not rigorous and critical, instead, on occasions it borders on the caricatural. However, this tendency towards caricature does not diminish the importance of those passages which are conscious of the general characteristics of popular fiction, because the norms and literary practice of *Notre-Dame* will become manifest by means of a comparison with those attributed to popular fiction. At the same time, those norms and literary practice have interesting similarities with popular fiction, because in repeatedly caricaturing popular fiction, the narrator is imitating two of the main features of popular fiction itself: repetition and the caricatural representation of characters. More will be said about the general judgemental evaluation of popular fiction as a genre in the conclusion of 3.3.4.

The present treatment of the importance of popular fiction as a genre in *Notre-Dame* also has general implications for the reading of all five of Genet's works of early prose fiction. As we have seen in the Critical Survey of Secondary Literature (1.4), it is frequently the case that those non-realistic elements in the texts (such as the depiction of characters and the scenarios which develop between them) are ascribed without question to something termed the 'method' or the 'imagination' of Jean Genet, whose development certain critics such as Tom Faw Driver (unsuccessfully) and Joseph McMahon (more convincingly) have sought to extrapolate from the biography of Jean Genet (1910-1986). This point has been elaborated with quotations in 1.4. Consequently, the literary precursors and intertextuality of Genet's texts are undervalued.

Let us first analyse what appears to be a caricature of popular fiction in *Notre-Dame*. At the end of the first episode of the main narrative which concerns Divine's funeral, Ernestine (Divine's mother, who has been introduced as one of the guests at the funeral) is described in a scene of her own.<sup>89</sup> The scene is initiated by a quotation from an unspecified popular novel. Thus, in the first instance, popular fiction is performing

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89

This scene (like the episode with Alberto and Culafroy which precedes it) takes place in Divine's childhood when (s)he was called Louis Culafroy and lived in the 'maison au toit d'ardoises' with Ernestine.

in a similar way to the dead dedicatees and the images in the narrator's personal picture gallery in the introductory narrative frame, that is to say as a (re)source for the construction of scenarios:<sup>90</sup>

"Il va mourir, je le sais", était l'expression arrachée toute vive, l'[Ernestine] aidant à voler, à un livre [...] et murmurée avec horreur par l'héroïne de ce roman populaire imprimé menu, sur un papier spongieux - comme l'est, dit-on, la conscience des vilains messieurs qui débauchent les enfants.

- Alors je danse autour le chant funèbre [sic].

Donc il fallait qu'il [Culafroy] mourût. Et pour que le pathétique de l'acte en fût plus virulent, elle-même devrait causer sa mort. [...] Avec précision, tout le mécanisme du drame se présenta à l'esprit d'Ernestine, et de la sorte au mien. Elle simulerait un suicide. "Je dirai qu'il s'est tué." La logique d'Ernestine, qui est une logique de scène, n'a aucun rapport avec ce qu'on appelle la vraisemblance; la vraisemblance étant le désaveu des raisons inavouables. Ne nous étonnons pas, nous nous émerveillerons mieux.<sup>91</sup>

In the first section of this passage (up to the phrase 'papier spongieux') a phrase stolen from an unspecified work of popular fiction plays a supporting role by helping Ernestine fly into a fantasy of having murdered her son. The register and the syntax of the words in the phrase are unremarkable. However, it is the context which is important and also specific to popular fiction as a genre - these words are uttered as a premonition<sup>92</sup> and

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It should be noted that this reference to popular fiction, which is typical for *Notre-Dame* in the sense that it does not refer to a particular work by one author, is itself part of non-specific language consciousness in the passage. In this case language conscious references shift from 'livre' to 'roman populaire' then to 'drame' and finally to the 'de scène' used adjectivally.

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pp. 26-27.

92

In *Querelle* premonition and presentiment are associated with popular fiction and condemned and yet used in a highly ambivalent manner: 'Nous ne voulons pas dire que Gil soupçonnait déjà ce vers quoi [...] le conduisait Querelle [...]. Parler de pressentiment en pareil cas serait une erreur. Non que nous ne croyions pas à ceux-ci mais qu'ils relèvent d'une étude qui n'est plus de l'oeuvre d'art [...] Il nous a paru d'une exécration littéraire qu'on ait écrit d'une peinture voulant représenter l'Enfant Jésus: "Dans son regard et son sourire se distinguaient déjà la tristesse et le désespoir de la Crucifixion". Pourtant afin d'obtenir la vérité quant aux rapports de Gil et de Querelle, le lecteur doit nous permettre d'utiliser ce détestable lieu commun littéraire que nous

their tone and delivery are important ('murmurée avec horreur') as well as the character who utters them: a woman and the heroine predicting the death of a man.<sup>93</sup> At the end of this first section the narrator uses the physical appearance of the work of popular fiction to introduce a notion of decay, which is a precursor for his negative evaluation of the genre which Ernestine has chosen as a model for her actions.

In the second section of the passage it is made clear that Ernestine is conscious of the 'mechanism of the drama' which is based on popular fiction. This appears to the narrator only after it appears to her. At this point the narrator is putting popular fiction at two removes from himself. First, it is the sole responsibility of one of the characters and secondly, that character acted independently to snatch the expression ('Il va mourir je le sais') from a text. This distancing of popular fiction is a prelude to what appears to be a negative evaluation of it by means of the disparaging description of Ernestine's logic which does not bear any relation to verisimilitude. At this point the reader believes that the narrator is on the side of verisimilitude and Ernestine's actions appear melodramatic, the 'horror' in the heroine's premonition looks more like mock horror as Ernestine develops it.

However, although a negative evaluation of the genre is prepared by the introduction of the notion of decadence (in the term 'spongieux') and by the distancing of popular fiction from the narrator, there follows no condemnation of Ernestine and of the genre which served as a model for her action. The essential point to note here is that the pronoun 'on' in the phrase above ('La logique d'Ernestine [...] n'a aucun rapport avec ce qu'on appelle la vraisemblance') can mean both 'nous' and 'vous' and that it is clear from the last sentence of the passage that here it needs to be understood more as 'vous'. There is no *de facto* negative evaluation of popular fiction; however, as will be seen there is a complex condemnation of the repressive force of norms such as verisimilitude: not only is it a disavowal, it is a disavowal of reasons which are inadmissible, presumably because of the dictates of taste ('La logique d'Ernestine [...]

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condamnons et nous laisser écrire que Gil connut soudain le pressentiment de la trahison de Querelle et de sa propre immolation. Ce trait de banale littérature n'a pas pour seule utilité de préciser plus vite et plus efficacement les rôles des deux héros [...] (p. 225).

93

Solange, the only other key female figure from Culafroy's childhood, pronounces a similar prediction on pp. 261-264. Both women's predictions are not fulfilled.

n'a aucun rapport avec ce qu'on appelle la vraisemblance; la vraisemblance étant le désaveu des raisons inavouables').

Regarding the act itself, it is unusual in literature for a mother to kill her son, despite the mythical precursor in the figure of Medea; however, the reader may consider it incredible that Ernestine intends to do so in order to intensify her own conception of the pathetic nature of such an act. Despite all this, the narrator stresses in the final sentence of the passage that Ernestine's action should not astonish the reader. The reader may consider the act to be incredible, but the reader should also be in awe of it and of Ernestine ('Ne nous étonnons pas, nous nous émerveillerons mieux'). I would argue that the aim here is to foster the sense of wonder in the reader which is associated with popular fiction as a genre, hence the use of the first person plural 'nous' which contrasts with the interpretation of the pronoun 'on' as 'vous'. The negative evaluation of popular fiction is not confirmed; indeed the narrator remains ambivalent towards the genre because he does not embrace it immediately at this point; he makes Ernestine use it as a model in place of him.

The following extract occurs just before Ernestine makes the attempt on Culafroy's life; it confirms the use of popular fiction outlined in the present section:

Le geste final d'Ernestine aurait pu s'accomplir vite, mais, comme Culafroy d'ailleurs, elle sert un texte qu'elle ignore, que j'inscris, et dont le dénouement doit arriver en son heure. Ernestine sait tout ce que son acte comporte de misérablement littéraire, mais qu'elle doive se soumettre à une mauvaise littérature la rend plus touchante encore à ses yeux et aux nôtres.<sup>94</sup>

The narrator is about to describe the failure of Ernestine's attempt to kill her son and disguise the murder as a suicide. The distancing of popular fiction from the narrator continues: Ernestine knows the literariness of her action; she is conscious that it is a development from the language of popular fiction. At first there is a separation in the extract between Ernestine and the narrator. The narrator is in control and Ernestine is a character who follows a text. The narrator also invokes the term 'dénouement' which belongs to the vocabulary of conventional literary norms that he criticises in the passage above because the literary is juxtaposed with the adverb 'misérablement'. However, at the end of the extract, the narrator uses the first person plural (as in the passage above)

to stress that the desired response from the reader should be an affective one based on sympathy (and not necessarily a literary critical one).

It is sentiments such as wonder, awe and sympathy tempered by scepticism about their literary merit which characterise the language conscious interventions regarding popular fiction. This affective relation is developed in the following passage, which is worth quoting at length:

Je continue la lecture de mes romans populaires. Mon amour s'y satisfait des gouapes costumées en gentilshommes. Aussi mon goût de l'imposture, mon goût pour le toc, qui me ferait bien écrire sur mes cartes de visite: "Jean Genet, faux comte de Tillancourt." Au milieu des pages de ces livres épais, aux caractères écrasés, des merveilles apparaissent. Comme des lys tout droits, surgissent des jeunes hommes, qui sont, un peu grâce à moi, princes et gueux à la fois. Si de moi je fais Divine, d'eux je fais ses amants: Notre-Dame, Mignon, Gabriel, Alberto, [...]. Je ne pourrais faire qu'ils n'aient la nostalgie des romans bon marché aux pages grises, comme les ciels de Venise et de Londres, toutes traversées des dessins et des signes féroces des détenus: yeux de face dans des profils, coeurs sanglants. Je lis ces textes imbéciles à la raison, mais ma raison ne s'occupe pas d'un livre d'où les phrases empoisonnées, empennées, fondent sur moi. La main qui les lance dessine, en les clouant quelque part, la vague silhouette d'un Jean qui se reconnaît, n'ose bouger, attendant celle qui, visant son coeur pour de bon, le laissera pantelant. J'aime à la folie, comme j'aime la prison, cette typographie serrée, compacte comme un tas d'immondices, bourrée d'actes sanglants comme des linges, des foetus de chats morts, et je ne sais si ce sont des sexes roidement érigés qui se transforment en durs chevaliers ou les chevaliers en sexes verticaux.<sup>95</sup>

Here, the narrator outlines the importance of the genre for his taste ['mon goût'] which can also be described in a non-personal way as the particular literary sensibility of *Notre-Dame*. In the first instance, the idea of something which is an obvious fake is shared between popular fiction and the text.<sup>96</sup> The bogus count of Tillancourt is yet another one of the personae that the narrator can assume by means of the first person singular. This plurality is taken up later on in the passage where there is a reference to 'la vague

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pp. 306-307.

96

The example of the visiting card is significant because it immediately makes a connection between the fake and the name 'Jean Genet'. As stated in the introduction to the present section, the references to Jean Genet are not necessarily tied to Jean Genet (1910-1986). Indeed the text is itself concerned with multiplying the name 'Jean Genet' (the figure of one hundred is mentioned on p. 305).

silhouette d'un Jean' who may be the same character from an unnamed novel by Paul Féval who is referred to earlier by the name of 'Jean-des-Bandes-Noires' (pp. 82, 132 and 205).<sup>97</sup> However, because of the omission of the surname and the epithet, it is uncertain whether 'Jean' refers to the character in popular fiction or to the character who appears on the visiting card.

The narrator admires the fact that false identities always seem possible in popular fiction. Cases of mistaken identity and imposture abound in popular fiction and fairy tales: who is the real prince, the young boy who is fêted in the palace or the urchin who looks at the palace through the gates?<sup>98</sup> The plurality of this situation appeals to the narrator and the plurality of characters in the text is stressed throughout the entire passage. There are sets of contrasting elements which the narrator finds in the characters inspired by popular fiction. For instance: 'gouapes/gentils-hommes', 'princes/gueux', 'siffilent en vache/couronne royale'. From the start of the extract these contrasting elements are said to appeal to the narrator's 'amour'. The narrator's affective reaction to these elements is confirmed by the following phrase: 'Je lis ces textes imbéciles à la raison, mais ma raison ne s'occupe pas d'un livre d'où les phrases [...] fondent sur moi' Once again, as in the cell during the start of the introductory narrative frame, the narrator is the *receiver* of another text or communication. The intersection between popular fiction and the private picture gallery is explicit and is continued because the narrator imagines the author of the sentences nailing them somewhere, just as both Divine and Culafroy nail pictures of young men to their walls. The narrator loves the typography of popular fiction just as he loves the prison. It is a love which acknowledges the horror of the fiction and the prison. The final image in the passage where the knights of popular fiction become erect penises (or vice versa) is an example of the narrator's attempts to represent his lack of control. The figure is circular and confuses origin and result, raw material and product, beginning and end. A similar circularity is developed in Jacques Derrida's

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97

The novel by Paul Féval the Elder, *Les Habits noirs* (1863), concerns a gang that terrorised Paris in the 1840s (I am grateful to David Coward for this information).

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Marthe Robert gives a comprehensive treatment of the theme of origins in *Roman des origines, origines du roman*, Paris, Éditions Bernard Grasset, 1972.

reading of the verb 'bander' in a loose leaf sheet which accompanies *Glas*.<sup>99</sup>

The final aspect regarding the references to popular fiction in this passage concerns the physical appearance of the books which are represented as artefacts belonging to prison life, printed on the cheapest paper in small fonts. The contrast between those books and the beautifully produced subscribers' editions in which *Notre-Dame* was first published would have been evident to the early readers of the text. The material appearance of the books is also a continuation of the contrast between the pairs of terms used to describe the characters in the above paragraph; for example: 'princes/gueux'. The subscribers to the first edition of the prose fiction were thus made aware that for the narrator the most cheaply produced book can be highly moving.

As mentioned in the introduction to 3.3.4, the physical aspect of the actual books in popular fiction is also relevant to the representation of popular fiction as a genre. As we have seen, in *Notre-Dame* we are not primarily concerned with a particular author or work, but with the physical appearance of the books in the genre. For instance, even though a figure is determined in the following example of an illustration from popular fiction, its exact source is not: 'Divine [...] voit ses doigts se crispier en crochets criminels, comme ceux du vampire de Düsseldorf sur les couvertures des romans' (p. 252). Returning to the detailed passage above, it is in this vein that the narrator describes the additions that the inmates of the prison have made to these books ('[...] toutes traversées des desseins et des signes féroces des détenus [...]').<sup>100</sup>

The second part of 3.3.4 undertakes to examine a representative extract which is overtly in praise of popular fiction. Here the narrator speculates to the advantage of

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'Chaque colonne figure ici un colosse (*colossos*), nom donné au double du mort, au substitut de son érection. [...] L'écriture colossale déjoue tout autrement les calculs du deuil. Elle surprend et dérèsonne *l'économie de la mort* dans tous ses retentissements. *Glas* en décomposition, (son ou sa) double bande, bande contre bande [...].' A translation of the whole of this passage is found in *Glassary*, the companion volume to the English translation of *Glas* (Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1986; p. 28).

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Also relevant here is the following extract: '[...] il [Mignon] s'y [à la prison] sait voué inéluctablement, peut-être depuis le jour où, sur la page d'un livre de la bibliothèque, il lut ces graffiti: *Méfiez-vous: Primo: Jean Clément dit la Lope, Secundo: Robert Martin dit la Pédale [...]*' (p. 55).



popular fiction about what *Notre-Dame* lacks as a piece of prose fiction. The pages which precede the following extract contain a detailed analysis of the poetic phenomenon created by the contrast between: 'le monde sévère et nu des ouvriers d'usine' (p. 230) and the rich and romantic vocabulary of popular songs. Once again, it is a case of a general reference to genre: without naming specific songs, the narrator quotes a list of twenty two words and phrases from the songs. The list begins with the words: 'où se rencontrent des mots tels que: succombe... tendresse... ivresse... jardin de roses...[...]' (p. 230). For the narrator, the essential and overtly acknowledged point is that the above words are 'd'un luxe féroce' for the workers who sing them. The narrator then goes on to conflate popular songs and popular literature:

Voyez s'ils sont beaux! Tous leur corps busqués par les machines, comme une locomotive qu'on inaugure, s'ornent, comme s'orne aussi d'expressions émouvantes le corps solide des cent mille voyous qu'on rencontre, car une littérature populaire, légère d'être non écrite, légère et volant de bouche en bouche, dans le vent, dit d'eux: "Ma petite gueule", "Petite gouape" [...]<sup>101</sup>

The lightness of the vocabulary of popular fiction is praised here by the narrator. He links the unwritten corpus of popular literature (which we have just seen includes songs as well) to the collective body of the delinquents who appear to make up the stock characters in the genre. Thus, on one hand, we have the lightness associated with poetic expressiveness. This is familiar to us from a language conscious passage located immediately after the description of Divine's funeral which follows the introductory narrative frame. In that passage the narrator speculates about those parts of the text which are relevant to Divine:

La Divine-Saga devrait être dansée, mimée, avec de subtiles indications. L'impossibilité de la mettre en ballet m'oblige à me servir de mots lourds d'idées précises, mais je tâcherai de les alléger d'expressions banales, vides, creuses, invisibles.<sup>102</sup>

The lightness of words has a semantic dimension here. For the narrator words with

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p. 231.

102

p. 36. The subscribers' edition of this extract contains following interesting variant: 'Je suis le poète tout trouvé. La Divine-Saga devrait être dansée [...]' (*Notre-Dame*, subscribers' edition, p. 29). Here the narrator confirms his status as poet.

precise ideas are heavy. Whereas expressions which might be described as colloquial and without the weight of concepts and ideas - the text uses the term 'banal' - have the ability to lighten the words laden with precise ideas. This concurs with the oblique compliment paid to popular fiction in those passages in the first part of 3.3.4 ('ne nous étonnons pas, nous nous émerveillerons mieux' *Notre-Dame*, p. 27) which also seemed to criticise its pathetic nature from precisely the point of its failure to conform to recognised literary norms (as in the passage which refers to verisimilitude at the start of 3.3.4). The lightness of the words of popular fiction also resembles the song ('chant') and in particular the first example of language consciousness in *Notre-Dame* in which the voice of the inmates who sing songs is able to cross from one sealed cell to the next, penetrating each one ('la voix qui traverse les cellules' p. 10).<sup>103</sup>

However, lightness may also be understood in at least one other way, the multiplication of the number of delinquents ('voyous') and the sensuality of the metaphor for the transmission of the expressions between the hundred thousand delinquents ('de bouche à bouche', rather than 'de bouche à l'oreille') means that the reader has the impression of a physical communion between the mass of delinquents, even of sexual congress between them. This is the fluid and promiscuous element associated with lightness. It is part of the affective and nostalgic response of the narrator to popular fiction as a genre.

To conclude the present discussion of popular fiction, the literary critical relevance of the treatment of this genre in *Notre-Dame* should not be overlooked. Although, as we have already said in the introduction to 3.3.4, Genet's text is by no means a work of criticism, it nevertheless engages with many of the weak points of popular literature: incredible plots, stock character types, sentimentalism, the clumsy narrative devices such as premonition and imposture.<sup>104</sup>

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103

Two other terms related to songs and to popular fiction are 'complainte' (p. 308) and 'histoires contées' (p. 371).

104

The narrator of *Notre-Dame* also uses premonition '([...] puisque les littérateurs expliquent que les yeux des petits Jésus sont tristes jusqu'à la mort de la prévision de la Passion du Christ, j'ai bien le droit de vous prier de voir, dans le fond des prunelles de Notre-Dame, l'image microscopique, invisible à votre oeil nu, d'une guillotine.)' p. 268. An almost identical example is found on p. 225 of *Querelle*.

Popular literature has been championed (and with justification) because it is the only literary genre which provides a snapshot of the forms of literary expression enjoyed and consumed by the majority of people at a given time.<sup>105</sup> It is significant that this sociological valorisation of popular literature is not invoked in *Notre-Dame* which constantly presents an intensely personal reading of the text ('Je continue ma lecture des romans populaires [...]'). The narrator of the text is thus not attempting to portray a community of readers, either in the prison or in the world at large. Therefore it is no more than of incidental interest to know exactly which titles were available in the prison libraries of La Santé and Fresnes in the early 1940s and thus could have been read by Jean Genet (1910-1986). The treatment of popular fiction in *Notre-Dame* does not engage directly with the representation of subjectivity, but it touches on this domain indirectly because it demonstrates ongoing variations in the authority of the narrator. There are authoritative pronouncements on popular fiction in *Notre-Dame*, highlighting both the strengths and weaknesses of the genre and their clarity confirms the self-sufficiency and integrity of the representation of the narrator's subjectivity at individual points. However, it is important that there is no single final evaluation of the usefulness of popular fiction for the narrator of *Notre-Dame*. The lack of such an evaluation warns the reader that the interpretative power of a textual entity such as the narrator stops short of total authority and a necessary concomitant of this is that the changes to the subjectivity of the narrator are also not brought to a halt.

### 3.3.5 Conclusion; The Structural Palimpsest of Language Consciousness in *Notre-Dame* and Beyond

For the sake of clarity, the discussion of language consciousness in *Notre-Dame* thus far

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The introduction to *Popular Literature; A History and Guide* by Victor E. Neuburg (Harmondsworth, Pelican, 1977) contains the following justification for the study of popular fiction: 'It is more than thirty years since a French historian, Lucien Febvre, urged a change in the direction of historical studies, so that what he described as "l'histoire des mentalités collectives" should be given greater prominence. By this phrase he meant the assumptions, beliefs, feelings and modes of thought of men and women in the past. [...] In the continuing process of its exploration it becomes increasingly clear that the study of popular literature has an important role to play, for it can throw light upon what the relatively unlettered members of society were really like - how they thought and felt, their attitudes and values, the way they looked at life' (p. 11).

has been careful to either focus on each aspect of language consciousness separately (such as references to popular fiction as a genre, for example), or to analyse an aspect within the context of a well-defined section of the text (such as references to the picture gallery within the introductory narrative frame). As a consequence, it is possible that *Notre-Dame* might appear to be highly structured and ordered. However, many readers would disagree, describing it as a complex and fragmented text, impossible to reduce to a single structure. The present section aims to illustrate how *Notre-Dame* contains the remains (or, if you will, the nascent outlines) of a major structure. However, it is not sufficient to simply understand the text in terms of structure. It is by leaving structure behind that the present analysis can go beyond the palimpsest.

This conclusion relates primarily to the main body of the text (that is to say to that portion enclosed within the narrative frames). The structure of the text is illustrated by the further references to the narrator's private picture gallery as a metaphor for the creation of text. In the main body of the narrative the characters (Divine, Culafroy and Ernestine)<sup>106</sup> also have galleries (which have different narrative ramifications for each of them). What is more, the metaphor of a character creating a text is also developed in the course of the narrative. In the main narrative it is therefore also a case of the adaptation of the gallery metaphor and not only of its transposition. This adaptation is most sustained in the case of Mignon. After his arrest in his cell, Mignon first imagines elements of characters: 'Dans ses nausées, des taches claires font des îles: c'est le geste d'une maîtresse, c'est le visage imberbe et lisse d'un boxeur, d'une jeune fille' (p. 301). The narrator ends this adaptation by making an explicit comparison between Mignon's practice of imagining characters and his own re-creation of characters:

[...] (il est ainsi semblable à moi qui recrée ces hommes, Weidmann, Pilorge, Soclay, dans mon désir d'être eux-mêmes; mais il est bien dissemblable de moi par sa fidélité à ses personnages, car je me suis depuis longtemps résigné à être moi-même.<sup>107</sup>

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The first references to the narrator and the picture gallery have already been analysed in 3.3.2 Divine reproduces the gallery in her attic room (p. 48) and the gallery metaphor is also used by the narrator in connection with Ernestine (p. 67) and Culafroy and Ernestine (p. 68).

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p. 303.

These two extracts form a sustained comparison between Mignon and the narrator which starts as an implicit comparison and becomes an explicit one (but which acknowledges differences nonetheless). This comparison illustrates the way in which the aspects of language consciousness which have been dealt with separately thus far overlay and are intercalated into each other. Hence the plurality of the metaphor of the gallery, which was threefold in the first instance, because it was used by Culafroy, Divine and Ernestine, but which is now raised to a higher power to become 'multiply plural' in an exponential rather than a linear arithmetical sense because it is adapted by Mignon and compared to the narrator's procedures.

The structure can be further described in this way. The main narrative contains references to the intersection between narrator and cell (as in the introductory narrative frame) and to the penetration of the narrator by information and by men. However, in the main narrative, there is *also* situational vocabulary which appears to refer to the cell as a place and the narrator as an inhabitant of that place, thus appearing to contradict the frame. However, this vocabulary is a modification of situational vocabulary, because, although the verb 'être' is used there is never a straightforward description of the narrator's situation. That is to say that 'être' is always paired with an abstract notion and a failure to 'be' (thus in the main text it is more a case of modulation of the representation of the narrator's subjectivity in the frames): 'De quoi s'agit-il pour moi qui fabrique cette histoire? En reprenant ma vie, en remontant son cours, emplir ma cellule de la volupté d'être ce que faute d'un rien je manquai d'être [...]' (pp. 36-37); or, alternatively the situation is posited as part of a condition as in the following extract: 'De quelle vérité veux-je parler? S'il est bien vrai que je suis un prisonnier, qui joue (qui se joue) des scènes de la vie intérieure, vous n'exigerez rien d'autre qu'un jeu,' (p. 244). Even the most concrete references to the narrator's situation, as in the following reference to 'du fond de ma prison', mention that the text is a transposition or a sublimation of the condemned man's life:

Il faut qu'à tout prix, je revienne à moi, me confie d'une façon plus directe. Ce livre, j'ai voulu le faire des éléments transposés, sublimés, de ma vie de condamné, je crains qu'il ne dise rien de mes hantises. Encore que je m'efforce à un style décharné, montrant l'os, je voudrais vous adresser, du fond de ma prison, un livre chargé de fleurs, de jupons neigeux, de rubans bleus. Aucun autre

passé-temps n'est meilleur.<sup>108</sup>

The modifications of situational vocabulary in these three extracts and those which resemble them in the main narrative of *Notre-Dame* are thus one further layer which is part of the structure. However, it must now be recognised that the structure of the text as I understand it also contains incomplete modifications of structures where an allusion is made to something (situational vocabulary in this case) which, despite appearances, does not completely cancel out what has preceded it. Thus the integrality of the language consciousness in the introductory narrative frame is not completely disrupted by those references which contain the modifications of situational vocabulary.

Perhaps the most fundamental structure in *Notre-Dame* which is both referred to and subverted is the structure of time; that is linear chronology as it is usually measured (in days, months and years). I will analyse the linearity of the narrative with its sections and subsections (around the central narrative thread of Divine's life and death) at the end of 3.3.5.

However, let us look first at the linguistic references to time in the main narrative in connection with fragments of the narrator's personal history. As soon as the main narrative starts there are clear references to linear chronology. For instance, at the start of the main narrative there is a reference to the month and the start of a New Year<sup>109</sup> and there is also a reference to a time scale of eight months<sup>110</sup> which ties in with the imminent release of the narrator in the concluding narrative frame because the frame also

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108

p. 204.

109

'C'est janvier, et aussi dans la prison, où ce matin a la promenade, surnoisement, entre détenus, nous nous sommes souhaité la bonne année [...]' (p. 18). This reference repeated on p. 175.

110

'La veille du jugement, ne m'aperçus-je pas tout à coup que j'avais attendu cet instant pendant huit mois, alors que je n'y songeais jamais ? [...] Hier, dans l'une de ces étroites cellules de la Souricière où l'on attend l'heure de monter dans le cabinet du juge d'instruction [...]' (p. 207). In the subscribers' edition the character *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs* also had a gestation of eight months: 'Mignon l'avait fait un matin d'avril (ce qui le fit naître en décembre) à une fruitière de la rue Lepic, dont nous ne saurons jamais rien' (p. 82, subscribers' edition).

takes place on the eve of the verdict: 'Ma cellule, bercée par cette bonne mort, est aujourd'hui si douce! Si demain j'étais libre (Demain audience.)' (p. 374).<sup>111</sup> Many language conscious passages combine references to the first person singular with references to present time.<sup>112</sup> It is not the specific temporal phrase which is important in each case because it is impossible to distinguish which morning is being referred to within the period of eight months in what can now also be described using situational vocabulary as 'the duration of the narrator's incarceration.' However, the supposition that the narrator is incarcerated under the terms of a sentence imposed by a court can only be entertained for approximately the first third of the text because the reader is subsequently able to deduce that the narrator is on remand and thus in custody *awaiting* the verdict of the court.<sup>113</sup> The narrator is thus not serving time with the teleological implications of the sentence; he is simply waiting, which indicates that even the references to linear chronology are not completely one dimensional.

The apparent objectivity of the period of eight months which encloses the narrative is also associated with passages which describe the narrator getting older as the narrative progresses. There is a link between the specificity of the narrator (now understood as a being who grows older) and the references to time. The site of this link is also the site

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111

There is a further reference on the next page: 'Je n'ai pas envie de me coucher. Cette audience demain, c'est une solennité pour laquelle il faut une vigile. C'est ce soir que je voudrais pleurer - comme un qui reste - pour mes adieux. Mais ma lucidité est comme une nudité. Le vent, dehors, se fait de plus en plus féroce et la pluie s'en mêle. Ainsi, les éléments préludent aux cérémonies de demain. Nous sommes bien le 12 n'est-ce pas?' (p. 375).

112

'Ce matin, après une nuit où j'ai trop caressé mon couple chéri, me voici arraché à mon sommeil par le bruit du verrou' (p. 74); 'Je m'interromps ici pour observer "ce matin" une araignée qui tisse dans le coin le plus noir de ma cellule' (p. 264); 'Aujourd'hui, je vous fais cet aveu: je ne sentis jamais que l'apparence des chaudes caresses [...]' (p. 278).

113

'[...] mon rêve obéissait encore à ma volonté; mais le jour il est dérangé par l'inquiétude de mon procès [...]' (p. 119) and in a subsequent exclamation; 'C'est la peur du jugement. Pèsent sur mes pauvres épaules le poids atroce de la justice de robe et le poids de mon sort' (p. 120).

of the link between the narrator and his character Divine<sup>114</sup> because the three parts of the 'Divinarianes' can be interpreted as attempts to convey the passing of time for the narrator as well as for Divine. In addition to their relevance in the analysis of the linear structure of the narrative (below), the second and third parts of the Divinarianes are preceded by references to the passing of the time for the narrator (and the first and the second enclosed passages in which the narrator speculates on his life). The first one gives an explicit reference to the construction of chronology: 'c'est au lecteur de se faire à soi-même sentir la durée, le temps qui passe et convenir que durant ce premier chapitre elle aura de vingt à trente ans' (p. 78). It goes on to describe ten states ('états pris à l'improviste').<sup>115</sup> It is possible to understand each these states as representing one year in Divine's (and also the narrator's) life. The second part of the Divinarianes is preceded by a passage in which the narrator, speaking in the first person plural, speculates on the ageing effects of living a plurality of fantasy lives - 'Nous occupons nos facultés à nous donner des rôles splendides à travers des vies de luxe; tellement en inventons-nous que nous restons débiles pour vivre dans l'action' p. 201 - (this is a way of describing the creative process): 'Nous sommes blasés. Nous avons quarante, cinquante, soixante ans [...] ' (p. 201). As in the case of the other Divinarianes there is an intersection between the narrator and Divine: 'Les cyclistes de Divine font sourdre en moi une antique épouvante' (p. 204). The terror is antique here because it comes from the narrator's early past he is constructing himself a history as part of the states in the Divinarianes.

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114

'Comment expliquerons-nous que Divine ait maintenant la trentaine et plus? Car il faut bien qu'elle ait mon âge, pour que je calme enfin mon besoin de parler de moi, simplement, comme j'ai besoin de me plaindre et d'essayer qu'un lecteur m'aime!' (p. 225).

115

Only the subscribers' edition has ten, one was excised before the text was reprinted for the Gallimard *OEuvres complètes* (I quote the opening words of each one): 'Divine à Mignon [...] ' (p. 78); ' - Divine est humble' (p. 78); ' - La mort n'est pas une petite affaire [...] ' (p. 80); ' - Un Dur à Divine: " Qu'est-ce que t'aimes le mieux: que je t'encule ou me faire une pipe ?" Divine, goulue, et sincère jusqu'à joindre les mains et arranger sa bouche en rond: " Mon Dur, les deux à la fois" ' [only found in the subscribers' edition] (p. 59); ' - Il est bête comme un bouton...' (p. 80); 'Elle avait constamment sur elle [...] ' (p. 80); ' - Sur le boulevard [...] ' (p. 81); ' - Divine: "J'ai le coeur sur la main [...] " ' (p. 85); ' - La bonté de Divine.' (p. 86) and ' - Quatorze juillet [...] ' (p. 87).



As mentioned above, linear chronology is both affirmed and denied in the narrative structure of *Notre-Dame*. Initially, this structure answers simple questions such as ‘who is the main character in *Notre-Dame*?’ The answer to this question is clearly ‘Divine’ if we glance at the structure of sections and subsections which follows.<sup>116</sup> However, a closer look at the structure will confirm that it is in fact incomplete (all page references are to the ‘Collection Folio’ edition of the text):

Five Sections:

1. pp. 17-103 Divine’s Funeral and Life in Paris.
2. pp. 104-202 Divine’s Lovers
3. pp. 202-295 Divine’s Fame Increases as her Love Life Collapses
4. pp. 295-356 Mignon and Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs
5. pp. 356-374 The Last Divinarian and Divine’s Death

The first and second of these sections are each divided into four subsections:

Section 1 (Divine’s Funeral and Life in Paris):

- a) pp. 17-36 Divine’s Funeral
- b) pp. 37-78 Divine’s Life in Paris and Meeting with Mignon
- c) pp. 78-87 The First Divinarian
- d) pp. 87-103 Divine and the Life of the other ‘tantes’ in Montmartre

Section 2 (Divine’s Lovers):

The differences between the subscribers’ and the Gallimard *OEuvres complètes* edition of the text are important in the description of its structure. If we look back at the earlier version of the text the structure is precisely confirmed (in the first two sections of the text) by the conspicuous technique of highlighting structurally significant paragraph breaks. This technique entails making a four line break (the norm is one line), printing the first word of the new paragraph in small capitals and the first letter of the first word in a font four times the usual size. This non-standard typographer’s convention was not reproduced in later editions of the text. In the subscribers’ edition there were twenty four of these breaks in total. The ‘Collection Folio’ text omits three of them (pp. 17, 68 and 90) adds others (pp. 78-9, 211 and 227-228) and breaks signalled with only three blank lines. The following breaks in the subscribers’ edition are also modified: two breaks of a triangle of asterisks (Folio, pp. 247 and 376), one break where the new paragraph starts one third of the way down the page (p. 152) and one break which leaves a whole page blank before the dramatic description of the entry of Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs (p. 104). It is not possible to state categorically whether this typographer’s convention corresponded to a specific notation in the manuscript. The Austin typescript/manuscript may give us the elements of an answer.

- a) pp. 104-142 Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs
- b) pp. 143-152 Gabriel
- c) pp. 152-171 Rivalry with Mimosa over Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs
- d) pp. 171-202 Seck Gorgui

(Sections 3-5 do not have any clear subsections.)

If we look at the above list of the first five sections of the main narrative, it is possible to distinguish that even this simplified picture of the narrative is not linear. Divine's funeral begins the main narrative and her death ends it thereby notions of overlap, of recurrence and of circularity are introduced. They indicate a dynamic which transcends the most complex structural palimpsest - which is itself an extrapolation into another dimension of the simple structure (of beginning, middle and end, for instance). However, even this list of the first five sections of the main narrative is a simplification. To illustrate this we only need to look at the additional narrative strands within the first subsection of the first section. According to the list this concerns Divine's funeral; however, it also contains references to other narrative scenes and episodes such as Divine's life in the attic room ('le grenier'), the life of Ernestine (Divine's mother) and her attempt on Divine's life when (s)he was young and called Louis Culafroy and, finally, the fantasy life of the priest who officiates at Divine's funeral. The same complexity is found in each subsection and section.

In conclusion, it has been the aim of 3.3 to analyse the language conscious passages within *Notre-Dame*. These passages refer to the production and interpretation of language. Once this had been done, it was important to emphasise that the structure of the text, does not represent the totality of the complexity of the references to language within the text. It is therefore necessary to signal that this totality is impossible to represent as a complete structure or even as a palimpsest (which is a multi-level structure), however complex it is.

It is also clear that language consciousness is centred around the narrator and the use of the first person singular. However, complete transparency is also not possible in this area because the narrator makes use of the first person plural and it is impossible to enumerate the elements which make up this plurality in every case (on some occasions it is a question of a collective reference to the inmates of the prison, but 'nous' also refers to the narrator and his lover 'Jean' as well as to the reader and to the 'tantes' of Montmartre among many other possibilities). As mentioned in the introduction to the present section, language consciousness is thus part of a dynamic, rather than a static

structure. It is in *Notre-Dame*, perhaps more clearly than in any other of Genet's early works of prose fiction, that the tension between language (the variety of constructions) and consciousness (a force which traditionally orders what is perceived) emerges.

### 3.4 Language Consciousness in *Pompes funèbres*

#### 3.4.1 Introduction

Language conscious passages in *Pompes* will enable us to analyse both interpretations of the text and the representation of the 'narrator'. The narrator is important because he is also a character in *Pompes* and his development and change affects how the text is narrated and what it is called; the choice is between novel on one hand, and poem on the other. Representations of the narrator's subjectivity and narrative authority are closely intertwined in this text. The most striking feature is the partial undermining of the discursive aim of *Pompes* which is to commemorate the narrator's lover Jean D. by means of historical references to the Second World War during which his death occurred. This type of closed interpretation, discursive aim and commitment to commemorative fiction is partially undermined by quasi-autobiographical and poetic modes, associated with ever more radical representations of the narrator's subjectivity.

#### 3.4.2 The Avowed Aim

*Pompes* is different from the other four works of Genet's early prose fiction because the name of the dedicatee is also the name of a major character in the text (this may be contrasted with *Notre-Dame* for example, where Maurice Pilorge is immediately supplemented by Weidmann and Ange Soleil; moreover, Pilorge's name is not carried by one of the characters in the text. See 3.4.2). *Pompes* is dedicated to Jean Decarnin who is referred to in the text as Jean D. I am going to assume that the relation between the two is simple: that 'D.' stands for Decarnin (I will reconsider this relation in the following section). We should, however, bear in mind that the relation between dedicatee (Jean Decarnin) and the character (Jean D.) is commemorative because the dedicatee is dead. At the start of *Pompes*, the death of Jean D. is foregrounded as both the emotional centre and the *raison d'être* of the text: '[...] la mort de Jean D. qui donne prétexte à ce livre' (p. 8). Let us first look at how the importance of Jean D. is constructed. This will tell us about the narrator's subjectivity and authoritative language which gives an interpretation of the plot and meaning of the text.

At the very start of *Pompes* there is a language conscious passage which concerns all the aspects mentioned immediately above: ('il [ce livre] a pour but avoué de dire la gloire de Jean D.' p. 9). Let us look at the different aspects of this passage. First, there is the notion that the book can have an aim which is stated plainly. This

straightforwardness resembles the way in which I have already linked the dedicatee (Jean Decarnin) with one of the main characters in the text (Jean D.). Secondly, there is the activity of avowal which is an intrinsically personal act and in this case it can be traced back to a source: the narrator. So avowal has the particular narrative effect of consolidating both the person who avows as well as the what is avowed. And the third aspect is precisely the aim that is avowed. It concerns the telling of the posthumous glory of Jean D. One of the main questions for the narrative of *Pompes* is the form that the telling will take.

The opening of the text seems to imply that the telling will be a historical contextualisation of Jean D.'s life and death. The narrator begins by recalling Jean D.'s death (pp. 38-45) and continues throughout the text with references to episodes in the narrator's life with Jean D. (see for example: pp. 57-63, 141-143 and 151-153). In short, this seems to be a type of straightforward commemoration; this is because from the start Jean D.'s death is closely linked to the wider historical context. The extract above describes it as situated within the larger tragedy. *Pompes* opens with quotations from the banner headlines which announced the Liberation to the people of Paris. This importance accorded to a historical event is unique in Genet's early prose fiction.<sup>117</sup>

It is possible to sum up the avowed aim of *Pompes* in the following terms: language will represent the individuality of the deceased Jean D. using a mode of realistic representation which puts him back in a living context using dates and references to extra-textual historical events. Indeed the first fifty pages of *Pompes* (in both the subscribers' and the public editions)<sup>118</sup> contain more dates than any other of the other four works of Genet's prose fiction (see pp. 7, 13 (two dates), 14, 38 (four dates) and

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Philip Watts discusses historical and political discourses in his article: 'Political Discourse and Poetic Register in Jean Genet's *Pompes funèbres*', *French Forum* 17,2 (May 1992) 191-203. Watts' article ranks alongside Leo Bersani's as one of the most original and sensitive readings of *Pompes*. He shows how the narrative constantly plays politics off against poetry at many different levels. I would agree, but admit subjectivity into the relationship between politics (which I term novelistic discourses) and poetry. Subjectivity also introduces into the discussion an awareness of language and the way in which subjectivity is represented.

118

We will see that in the case of public editions of *Notre-Dame* and *Miracle* a date and place were added to the end of the texts.

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### 3.4.3 One Secondary, More Unforeseeable Aim: Autobiography Post Mortem

Despite the clarity of the historical contextualisation of the life and death of Jean D. by means of realistic representation, the avowed aim is not the dominant aim in *Pompes*. This is illustrated in the way that the avowed aim is linked to uncertainty. This uncertainty emerges when the avowed aim is put into the context of the whole language conscious passage in which it appears. Thereby a link is made between the avowed aim and the situation of the narrator:

Je ne m'attacherai jamais assez aux conditions dans lesquelles j'écris ce livre. S'il est vrai qu'il a pour but avoué de dire la gloire de Jean D., il a peut-être des buts seconds plus imprévisibles. Écrire, c'est choisir l'un entre dix matériaux qui vous sont proposés.<sup>119</sup>

The tentativeness of the whole passage is remarkable. We see that the avowed aim is expounded in a subordinate clause with a concessive use of 'si'. The narrator also acknowledges the possibility of secondary aims or sub-goals, though does not elaborate them within the language conscious passage itself. Nor is any indication given as to the number of secondary aims there are.<sup>120</sup> This is perhaps indicative that these aims will be less explicit than the avowed aim.

Immediately after the passage above and following its logic the narrator links the uncertainty of the avowed aim with his own subjectivity. First, he asks himself why he chooses one event over another of equal importance and then, in another question:

Pourquoi suis-je limité dans mon choix et me vois-je dépeindre bientôt le troisième enterrement de chacun de mes trois livres? Avant même que je connusse Jean, du bâtard de la fille-mère j'avais choisi l'enterrement que vous lirez plus

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p. 9.

120

After reading the whole text, the following narrative strands may conform to the ten subjects ('dix matériaux'): the maid and the funeral of her child, 'le récit des événements des toits' (p. 275) with Erik and Riton, the Berlin executioner and Erik, the mother of Jean D. and Erik in Paris, Hitler and Paulo, the maid and the captain of the 'Milice', the narrator alone in Paris, the narrator as a thief, Pierrot and suppression of the prison revolt and Erik on the Russian Front.

loin [...]'<sup>121</sup>

This passage might be described as hyper-language conscious because it extends reference from *Pompes* to an *oeuvre* (later *Notre-Dame* is even mentioned by name). In this language conscious passage there is a rare moment of potential equivalence between Jean Genet (1910-1986) and the narrator. Therefore it would seem that the narrator's subjectivity is at its most concrete and singular at this moment. It is also at this moment that the limits of *Pompes* as a work of fiction are transcended and a reference is made to a wider corpus of three works which includes it.

It is possible to consider this as straight autobiography (in the sense that it is a text about the life of Jean Genet (1910-1986)). Such an interpretation is backed up by the hyper-language consciousness. However, this passage also sows a grain of doubt as to the purity of the autobiography that is being proposed. Paradoxically, it is at this acme of its singularity that the narrator's subjectivity can admit the other through a correspondence of names between Jean the narrator and Jean the character and dedicatee. It is significant that the initial which stands for the surname 'Decarnin' is omitted here. As a consequence of this, it is possible to discern an overlap between the two Jeans.<sup>122</sup> So at the moment when we thought that the narrator was at his most pure and singular he is *also* intermeshing his subjectivity with another. It is not a case of autobiography as a rival to the avowed aim, rather we are dealing with precisely what is presented in the language conscious passage as one of the *unforeseeable* secondary aims; that is to say it was not avowed. Here, it is a case of what we could call 'autobiography post mortem'. Autobiography in which the narrator portrays his own death in a text where he is and

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121

p. 9.

122

The three extracts which follow explicitly undermine a notion of glory, as in the avowed aim ('dire la gloire de Jean D.'). 'Ce livre est sincère et c'est une blague. Je le publierai afin qu'il serve la gloire de Jean, mais duquel?' (p. 194); 'Supposons que je tue à l'instant Jean Genet et qu'aussitôt de ce mort naisse Jean Genet... Je coupe ici ma vie. [...] Depuis que j'écris ce livre tout entier dévoué au culte d'un mort, dans l'intimité de qui je vis, je connais une sorte d'exaltation qui me précipite, voilée par l'alibi de la gloire de Jean, vers une vie de plus en plus intense [...]' (pp. 201-202) and, more elliptically here because Erik is the name used, '[...] il savait que la foule connaissait l'existence d'Erik Seiler, Erik Seiler que lui seul pouvait être. La renommée suffit, encore qu'elle soit de nature infamante, s'opposant donc à la gloire si la "fama" est la gloire' (p. 239).

continues to be a character. So what might have appeared at the outset as a falling back into a traditional genre (straight autobiography) is in fact a modification of this genre which entails a radical representation of subjectivity. This representation does not aim to supplant the historical contextualisation of the life and death of Jean which continues in other passages which follow. However, references to Jean D. in subsequent passages are made more complex and overdetermined: it becomes possible to read Jean D. in the text not only as Jean Decarnin but also as 'Jean Décédé' or even 'Jean Décharné' which includes the narrator as one of the dead.

I will now give another example of autobiography post mortem, showing how it relates very closely to the production, reception and interpretation of language. This particular type of autobiography provides a convincing interpretation of a passage which may have merely seemed unmotivated before. However, we must also recognise that autobiography post mortem is not a master discourse or metalanguage, but competes with other interpretations, rather than definitively supplanting them. This episode is found at the start of the text and is part of the opening of the narrator's visit to the house of Jean D.'s mother. At first the narrator is almost stoical. Jean D.'s mother offers her commentary on the narrator's situation; the narrator does not react to this in detail but merely repeats the last word as a question: 'Elle me dit: "Vous ça vous a exposé." "Exposé?" (p. 10). Following this there occurs an important failure of narration (in my approach failures are as important as completed narration which tends to be taken for granted): '[...] et sans me regarder elle dit une phrase dont je ne compris que les derniers mots: "... des bougies"' (p. 10). The narrator fails to reply and puts forward the following reason: '[...] afin d'être moins vivant.' This concurs with the notion of autobiography post mortem and is consolidated in the phrase which he manages to construct despite himself; a phrase which is dislocated from a possible source in his rational mind:<sup>123</sup>

[...] dans mon esprit lamentable, illogique et de plus en plus porté vers le vague,

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123

Other examples of what may be termed 'the loss of the narrator's rhetorical control' are: 'Je ne hais pas Jean. Je veux aimer Riton. (Je ne puis dire pourquoi, *spontanément*, j'appelle Riton ce jeune milicien inconnu.)' (p. 51); 'Je ne sais quoi provoqua en moi l'éclosion de cette idée qu'il gênait, d'être assis sur la chaise de paille, son "oeil de Gabès."' (p. 15); '[il] le [son corps] plissa de vagues très subtiles et que me vint aussitôt cette pensée: "Le jardinier est la plus belle rose de son jardin"' (p. 50).



ces deux mots ["exposé" and "des bougies"] qui concernaient sans doute les bougies du buffet s'organisèrent dans cette phrase: "Vous vous exposez au milieu des bougies."<sup>124</sup>

The narrator thus utters a phrase disassociated from himself in which words organise themselves ('s'organisèrent'). We can see in this example how the language conscious passage intersects with a radical interpretation of subjectivity where the narrator is describing himself as already dead. The phrase that is constructed represents the body of the narrator laid out for the night-time vigil according to Catholic tradition.<sup>125</sup>

#### 3.4.4 Genre and Subjectivity

In the language conscious passages of *Pompes* genre is foregrounded in terms of a contrast between poetry and novels. Genre is linked to subjectivity in a concrete way in *Pompes* because the choice between poetry and the novel is also a choice between whether the narrator calls himself 'romancier' or 'poète.'<sup>126</sup> There are only two occurrences of the term 'roman' in *Pompes* (pp. 103-4 and 119) and in the more important reference the term is both a foil to poetry and a link with the narrator's

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p. 10.

125

Autobiography post mortem brings a new dimension to the narrative of *Pompes* because ancillary meanings are appended to dominant ones. For instance the dominant reference of the appellation 'la mère de Jean' is Jean D.'s mother; however, it may *also* be understood as the name of the mother of Jean the narrator: (no 'D' is present and the woman is never called Mme. Decarnin - though she is once referred to as 'Gisèle' (p. 214). This ancillary meaning adds another level to the theme of betrayal because the narrator's mother is now encouraging him to fall in love with Erik, the German, one of Jean D.'s sworn enemies.

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There are also several other references to poetry as a linguistic register: poems are intercalated within the text (see p. 61) but there are also lyrical addresses to Jean which are not separated from the text. (E.g.: the passage beginning 'Jean! Jeune arbre aux cuisses d'eau! Ecorce blasonnée! Dans le creux de ton coude se dérouleraient des fêtes interminables [...] and ending 'Le vent dort debout' (pp. 217-218)). And finally, there are also other language conscious references to poems and to poetry as a genre. (E.g.: 'Enfin ce monde sans gaîté ni beauté, que je sors de moi lentement, avec l'idée de l'organiser en un poème que j'offrirai à la mémoire de Jean [...] (p. 198)). Other references of this sort are found on pp. 186, 176 and 157.

subjectivity:

A propos de ce héros que fut Jean D., j'aurais voulu parler encore sur un ton précis, le montrer en citant les faits et les dates. Cette formule est vaine et trompeuse. Le chant seul dira le moins mal ce qu'il fut pour moi, mais le registre des poètes est assez réduit. Si le romancier peut aborder n'importe quel sujet, parler de n'importe quel personnage avec toujours une précision rigoureuse et obtenir la diversité, le poète est soumis aux exigences de son coeur qui attire à lui tous les êtres marqués à l'angle par le mal et par le malheur, et tous les personnages de mes livres se ressemblent. Ils vivent, à peine modifiés, les mêmes moments, les mêmes périls, et pour parler d'eux mon langage inspiré par eux redit sur un même ton les mêmes poèmes.<sup>127</sup>

This is a key language conscious passage in *Pompes* and should be compared with the statement of the avowed aim and secondary more unforeseeable aims. They have one linguistic element in common; where the statement of the avowed aim uses uncertainty, the passage above uses approximations and conditions ('j'aurais voulu [...]'), 'dira le moins mal [...]', 'assez [...]' and 'Si le romancier [...]'). However, a clear distinction emerges between the language of the novelist and that of the poet. What is more, the language of the poet is favoured by the narrator. In contrast to the statement of avowed aim the narrator uses hyper-language consciousness in an unambiguous way to consolidate the choice of poetic language: 'tous les personnages de mes livres se ressemblent [...]' (p. 104).<sup>128</sup> The use of the plural ('livres') and the possessive (for example 'mes') also personalises the poet's work which is 'soumis aux exigences de son coeur' (p. 104).

The novel is associated with a precision of linguistic expression and citation. Describing the novelist's technique in this way necessarily links it to a body of facts or a linguistic corpus which existed before the citation was made (in the same way that the body of Jean is supposed to have existed before his death). Thus the narrator implicitly draws a parallel between the avowed aim of telling the commemorative glory of Jean D. and the novelistic technique of disclosing by citation: 'le montrer en citant les faits et les dates [...]'. We have seen that the avowed aim is partially undermined by secondary, more unforeseeable aims; however, it appears that the novel is abandoned more

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pp. 103-104.

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Although the phrase 'mon livre' is found in *Pompes* prior to this extract, (for example on pp. 16, 17 ['mon histoire'] and 49).

completely in the passage above.

Thus, as far as genre is concerned, this passage appears to illustrate a move from novel to poem and from novelist to poet. The differences between characters and events does not appear as central as the style in which these characters are represented and this style is a direct consequence not of extra-textual reality but of the demands of the poet's heart. The narrator/poet is describing a self-sufficient circular pattern of inspiration: the poet's heart attracts certain beings ('tous les êtres marqués à l'angle par le mal et le malheur') who in turn inspire the poet's language ('mon langage inspiré par eux'). The poet's heart is the acknowledged centre of the creative process, attracting poetic material which in turn inspires it. This relation between the poet and his inspiration is a self-perpetuating cycle.

It may be thought that the above passage signals an irrevocable change in the way that the work is conceived and the way in which it will be written. However, as in the case of the avowed aim, the affirmation of the shift from novel to poetry with the help of hyper-language consciousness is not confirmed. This is because the neutral term 'livre' also still means that *Pompes* is not necessarily defined by the choice between novel and poetry or a combination of them. This means that the space occupied by autobiography post mortem is still intact. Even the avowed aim soon reappears; we have to look no further than the paragraph which follows the passage that we have just analysed: '[...] cette phrase éclairait encore les contours de Jean, les précisait, et le montrait comme un héros de la juste cause contre le mal, comme chevalier, comme le très pur contre la bête' (p. 104). Jean is called a hero and there are repeated references to the precision with which he is represented; both of these aspects are consistent with the historical contextualisation of the avowed aim.

### 3.4.5 Conclusions

The originality of *Pompes* lies in its overdeterminedness and the accretions of the different ways of interpreting the narrator's subjectivity, the genre of the text and the language of interpretation and representation itself.

Language consciousness is useful as a critical term in *Pompes* because it does not have to be unitary and individualised. Language consciousness is not one particular individual's consciousness of language, but allows us to explore the interaction between language and subjectivity. This is exemplified in the way that the narrator's subjectivity is merged with the subjectivity of the dedicatee in autobiography post mortem. The

narrator is not 'himself' but he continues to speak about himself although what he says may just as well apply to another. The overdeterminedness of *Pompes* is in this double or triple applicability of a particular utterance. The language conscious passages act like a series of gates opening and closing possibilities for plural interpretations directing the flow of interpretation, dividing it and occasionally joining it together before separating it in a different way.

As far as interpretative language is concerned, we have seen that the language conscious passages in the text do not demonstrate the progressive emergence of a poetics of *Pompes* that the reader can abstract from the text (nor a putative poetics of Genet's early prose fiction). The narrator of *Pompes*, unlike the narrator in *Tristram Shandy* does not bask in the absolute power of the narrator to determine the shape and the direction of the narrative.<sup>129</sup> What they *do* show is a number of shifts in the representation of the narrator's subjectivity and the genre of the text. No particular absolute value can be accorded to the final shift which is one of narrative transposition:

Cette phrase m'a été offerte il y a trois mois par Jean, et je la pose sur la bouche d'un milicien qu'un soldat allemand vient d'enculer. Riton murmura: "Maintenant [sic] j'ai l'impression que je t'aime plus qu'avant." Erik ne comprit pas.<sup>130</sup>

Despite the emphasis on the function of the narrator as ventriloquist in this extract - he literally puts words into other people's mouths - the narrator also posits himself as Erik. It would be more correct to say that he posits an undefined part of himself as Erik (we have learned that it is impossible to speak of the narrator and the characters as single indivisible units). Soon after this extract Erik is killed by Riton, so we could consider this to be the narrator's description of his suicide. However, as we have seen as part of autobiography post mortem the narrator refers to himself as already dead. *Pompes* both undermines and uses the fundamental qualities that are usually taken for granted in the case of characters: life and singularity.

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'And in this, Sir, I am of so nice and singular a humour, that if I thought you were able to form the least judgement or probable conjecture to yourself, of what was to come on the next page, - I would tear it out of my book' (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983; p. 63).

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p. 304.

### 3.5 Language Consciousness in *Miracle de la rose*

#### 3.5.1 Introduction

*Miracle* (like *Journal* discussed in 3.6) engages with autobiography more than the other three works of Genet's early prose fiction. Autobiography is difficult to define as a genre. In the present section I will go on to question and modify the definition of autobiography with reference to *Miracle*, but at this point in the introduction I use the term in its traditional sense: the recounting of the writer's personal experience in a text.<sup>131</sup>

The potential that personal pronouns have for modulation is a concrete example of how this traditional view of autobiography affects the present analysis of *Miracle*. For instance, in *Notre-Dame* many (though not all) of the language conscious passages contain the first person singular pronoun, referring to a narrative voice. This pronoun is then modulated by the use of the first person plural pronoun which refers to a combination of the following: narrator, main character, author and narrative voice, which varies according to the passage.<sup>132</sup> Modulation of this sort is usually absent from autobiography because the first person singular is occupied by a single autobiographer; Jean Genet (1910-1986) is the candidate in the case of *Miracle*. Similarly, the first person plural should be occupied by other prison inmates who share parts of the autobiographer's experience.<sup>133</sup>

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This is the theory of autobiography formulated in the first of Philippe Lejeune's books on the (autobiographical) subject. Lejeune writes: 'J'entends par ces mots [une personne réelle], qui figurent plus haut dans ma définition de l'autobiographie, une personne dont l'existence est attestée par l'état civil et véritable. Certes, le lecteur n'ira pas vérifier, et il peut très bien ne pas savoir qui est cette personne; mais son existence est hors de doute: exceptions et abus de confiances ne font que souligner la créance générale accordée à ce type de contrat social.' (*Le Pacte autobiographique* (Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1975) p. 23.

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This is analysed in 3.2.1 Introduction to the Specificity of Language Consciousness in *Querelle de Brest*.

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'A mon arrivée (à Fontevrault), je fus donc saisi par le mystère d'un de mes anciens camarades de Mettray, qui avait su, notre aventure à nous tous, la pousser jusqu'à sa pointe la plus ténue: la mort sur l'échafaud qui est notre gloire' (p. 10).

In 3.5.2 (Autobiographical Foundations) I will examine the first twenty pages of the 'Collection Folio' edition of *Miracle* (henceforth referred to as the 'opening') and the prefatory note, analysing the traditional autobiographical occupation of the first person pronouns (singular and plural) by a singular subjectivity. In addition, the occupation of the pronouns will be analysed in terms of the rhetorical stability needed at the start of a work of fiction. It establishes a status quo which can be subsequently explored or even undermined. Thus, in this limited sense, I consider the autobiographical opening of *Miracle* to be analogous to the introductory narrative frame of *Notre-Dame* discussed in 3.3.2.

Language consciousness which speculates on the mediation of experience *by language* does not occur until page twenty of the text. 3.5.3 (Language Consciousness - **a Marginalised and Marginalising Discourse**) will enquire about the place of plurality in a narrative constellation where the first person singular and plural appear to be occupied in such a complete sense. In addition, it traces the process by which both language consciousness and autobiography are relativised: it is no longer a case of only language consciousness as a marginal discourse within the larger work of autobiography. I suggest that *both* language consciousness and autobiography are estranged as part of a text which uses these and references to other genres (such as poetry, popular fiction, letters, speeches, factual accounts and even film) in order to write about the prisons of Fontevrault and Mettray.

3.5.4 (Complex Poetry) considers the various manifestations of poetry in *Miracle* and its relativisation of autobiography and language consciousness in the text.

The first person singular pronoun predominates in *Miracle* and 3.5.5 (Conclusions) as a whole aims to examine the complexities of this 'je' in detail. This conclusion puts forward the reasons for developing 'je' as a complex site within the whole of this complex text. The traditional view of autobiography does not sufficiently account for the complexity both of pronoun and text and indeed reduces them.

### 3.5.2 Autobiographical Foundations

The first page of *Miracle* is typical of the opening because it inaugurates what can only seem to be a traditional autobiography. The first sentence is general and without a personal viewpoint: 'De toutes les Centrales de France, Fontevrault est la plus troublante' (p. 9). However, it refers explicitly to Fontevrault prison as disturbing ('troublante'). Inevitably this reference sets up an expectation as to the location of the disturbance. The disturbance has to occur somewhere and the most familiar locations are a mind or a

sensibility. This expectation is fulfilled immediately in the second sentence which begins with the words: 'C'est elle qui m'a donné la plus forte impression [...] ' (p. 9); these words valorise the subjective judgement in the first sentence by means of the subjectivity in the second.<sup>134</sup> This subjectivity is situated in a mind which describes the reception of an impression.

The subject immediately goes on to establish a connection between his own feelings and those of other inmates ('et je sais que les détenus qui ont connu d'autres prisons ont éprouvé [...] une émotion, une souffrance, comparables aux miennes' p. 9); this connection is then consecrated in the first person plural ('nous'). However, it is important that the consecrated 'nous' is also a fixed point against which the subject's experiences may better be defined. This process continues in the following phrase: '[...] mais à toutes ces raisons, pour moi s'ajoute cette autre raison, qu'elle [Fontevrault] fut, lors de mon séjour à la Colonie de Mettray, le sanctuaire vers quoi montaient les rêves de notre enfance' (p. 9). This phrase merits analysis because it signals the beginning of one of the main techniques by which the subject is consolidated: the use of personal history.

In the other three works of Genet's early prose fiction characters or narrators frequently remain undetermined and fluid because there is either no discernable logic to their appearances within the text, or because there is often an oscillation between the first person singular and plural which means that their identity is constantly shifting.<sup>135</sup> However, in *Miracle* (and *Journal*) the subject is an autobiographer who appears to be locked into a particular representation of time and space - his own time and space. The

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It should be noted that *Journal* also uses a similar sequence. In this case the opening sentence is an apparently simple statement of factual observation ('Le vêtement des forçats est rayé rose et blanc'; p. 9). The second sentence is an explicit gesture of individual will (but commanded by the heart) which fashions a flower from the apparently straightforward adjective 'rose' in the first sentence: 'Si commandé par mon cœur l'univers où je me complais, je l'élu, ai-je le pouvoir au moins d'y découvrir les nombreux sens que je veux: *il existe donc un étroit rapport entre les fleurs et les bagnards*' (p. 9).

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One of the principal manifestations of this shifting is analysed in 2.3.4 The Double Gesture and it concerns how a single gesture can form the basis on which two characters are organised.

sentence which follows the quotation above exemplifies this. It continues the reference to Fontevrault:

Je sentais que ses murs conservait [...] la forme même du futur. Alors que le gosse que j'étais à quinze ans s'entortillait dans son hamac autour d'un ami [...] il savait que sa forme définitive résidait derrière eux, et que ce puni de trente bergeres [ans] était l'extrême réalisation de lui-même, le dernier avatar que la mort fixerait.<sup>136</sup>

Any potential undeterminedness or oscillation in the subject (both found in *Notre-Dame*) is thus neatly subsumed into two categories: Fontevrault adult prison/man/thirty years old, on one hand, and Mettray reform school/boy/fifteen years old, on the other. In the quotation above the autobiographer (whose arrival at Fontevrault is described in detail in the opening) recalls and recounts that during his childhood at Mettray, Fontevrault represented the very form of the future. We can see in this quotation at the end of the first page of the text, how self-sufficient the autobiographical subject's occupation of the first person plural can be. The prison walls of Mettray are reproduced in the prison walls of Fontevrault, but the kid ['le gosse que j'étais'] is already definitively formed by Mettray (his personal history). Once enclosed in the prison walls of Fontevrault at the age of thirty he will remain the same; there will be no further avatars; he is the final realisation of himself (we will see later how this calling of a halt to the successive incarnations of the subject is an example of the stability required at the opening of a text, rather than the final word on subjectivity in *Miracle*).

The first twenty pages of *Miracle* recount the autobiographer's transfer from La Santé prison to Fontevrault and his arrival there.<sup>137</sup> These pages also forge the link between feelings and experience on one side and the autobiographical subject on the other. I will go on to look briefly at two further manifestations of the link. However, this subsection must take account of the important role played by the differences between the

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pp. 9-10.

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The noun 'arrivée' and the verb 'arriver' (and cognates such as 'arrivant') occur seven times in the opening of the text pp. 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 19 and 22. Six references to arrival - all except 'arrivée' on p. 19 - occur at or near the start of paragraphs, indicating that that very structure of the opening is permeated by the trope of the arrival. The individual paragraph thus reproduces in microcosm the structure of the text as a whole.



subscribers' and public editions of the text.<sup>138</sup> We saw in 1.6 how the variants between the subscribers' and public editions almost all consist of excisions to the former text. However, there is one 'addition' in the public edition of *Miracle*: it is a prefatory note. This note reinforces the link between the experience of prison and the autobiographer as Jean Genet (1910-1986) before the main body of the text. I quote the note in full:

*Avec Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs, Miracle de la rose* marque le début de l'oeuvre de Jean Genet. Ce roman est daté de 1943. Il reflète les passions du prisonnier, ses souvenirs, sa vie et celle de ses compagnons qu'il transforme en légende, en oeuvre d'art. Le récit commence à l'arrivée de l'auteur à la centrale de Fontevrault. Mais la présence d'un condamné à mort, Harcamone, qu'il a connu jadis, est une occasion d'évoquer la maison de correction de Mettray, où Jean Genet avait été enfermé à quinze ans.<sup>139</sup>

The note makes three links between Jean Genet (1910-1986) and the autobiographer. The first is a reference to the text as reflecting passions, memories and life using the term 'légende' which harks back directly to Genet's first widely published and apparently 'straight' autobiographical text: *Journal*.<sup>140</sup> Secondly, the note refers to the *author's* arrival at Fontevrault (this phrasing may be contested because there is no biographical confirmation of this).<sup>141</sup> Thirdly, there is a reference to the age of Jean Genet (1910-

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*Miracle* contains the greatest number of variants (totalling some twenty two thousand words) between the subscribers' and the public editions of the text.

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no page reference.

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I have explained in the introduction to the present thesis how the public at large read all of Genet's texts as autobiographical in the sense of the recounting of past experience. However, this was to fundamentally reduce the complexity of the texts. The following parenthesis on 'légende' from *Journal* demonstrates the complexity of the chronology of the fiction which is associated with it (to take but one example): '(Par légende je n'entendais pas l'idée plus ou moins décorative que le public connaissant mon nom se fera de moi, mais l'identité de ma vie future avec l'idée la plus audacieuse que moi-même et les autres, après ce récit, s'en puissent former. Il reste à préciser si l'accomplissement de ma légende consiste dans la plus audacieuse existence possible dans l'ordre criminel)' (p. 233).

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A biographical footnote: there is some doubt as to whether Jean Genet (1910-1986) was ever an inmate at Fontevrault. This extract is taken from a postcard sent to Marc

1986) when he was at Mettray. This reference to the fifteen year old Genet then appears to be confirmed on the first page of the text in a phrase analysed above ('le gosse que j'étais à quinze ans' p. 9). However, I hope to show in 3.5.2 how the numeral specificity of the age is not of prime importance. Fifteen in this context simply means 'young' just as in modern interpretations of the synoptic gospels the phrase 'forty days' is understood to mean 'a long time'. In sum, then, the three links between Jean Genet (1910-1986) and the autobiographer in this prefatory note added in 1951, despite being open to criticism, lead the reader of *Miracle* to expect a straight autobiography in the way that *Journal* had been read in its public edition from 1949 onwards.

Let us now consider two further manifestations of the link between subjective feelings in *Miracle* and the autobiographical subject. These two examples are interesting because, while language consciousness usually foregrounds the possibilities of language as a medium for communication (speculating on the production and the reception of a passage of text, or the text as a whole), these examples describe the failure or non-activation of language (in particular poetic and explicitly fictional language). In both cases poetic language concerns the narrator's ability to embellish objects or actions by the use of metaphor which aggrandises the narrator or imbues what he sees with eroticism which is attractive to him.

The black maria ('le panier à salade') is described in one of the seven references to the arrival at Fontevrault in the opening of the text, or rather, the autobiographical subject examines how his experience of the vehicle has been denuded of a charm ('déshabillé de ce charme [...] p.12) that it had when he first had occasion to ride in it. At that time the charm transformed it, 'faisait de lui une voiture d'exil, un wagon fou de grandeur [...]' (p. 12). In the writing present, however, there is a sense of loss and what he is left with is described in a single-sentence paragraph: 'C'est là, en entrant dans la voiture cellulaire, que je me sentis être devenu un visionnaire exact, désenchanté' (p. 12).

The exactitude in the quotation above recalls the avowed aim of *Pompes* (3.4.2)

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Barbezat on 8th May or April 1944 from Fontevrault: 'Je termine ici mon livre. L'endroit ne pouvait être mieux choisi. Tout m'évoque...' (*Lettres à Olga et Marc Barbezat*, p. 90). This is also mentioned by Edmund White (1993, pp. 288-289) who writes that no stay in Fontevrault is noted in Genet's 'precisely documented prison record' (p. 289). White adds that 'much of Genet's authority as the narrator of *Miracle* depends on the veracity of his personal account' (p. 289). I would argue that the autobiographical subject cannot be reduced to Jean Genet (1910-1986).

which was to 'dire la gloire de Jean D.' (p. 9) and it is significant that this stated aim is also accompanied in *Pompes* by a problematic relationship between the narrator and language: 'Néanmoins, dans mon esprit lamentable, illogique et de plus en plus porté vers le vague, ces deux mots [...] ' (p. 10). In a later reappraisal of the avowed aim the narrator clarifies his initial approach to his subject: 'A propos de ce héros que fut Jean D., j'aurais voulu parler encore sur un ton précis, le montrer en citant les faits et les dates' (p. 103). This quotation thus invokes the history of a character (who was also a real person) in a manner which is similar to the personal history of the autobiographer in *Miracle*.

The second example of the failure or the non-occurrence of poetic language is more marked, although it also concerns a reference to the black maria four pages after the one quoted above. Here the subject attempts in vain to recall a youth who boarded the vehicle with him: 'mais alors que je voudrais orner ma désolation avec son souvenir, m'attarder sur son visage, il me fuit' (p. 16). The subject then succeeds in recalling the movements made by the youth in order to be chained to an older and stronger man, but he is soon tired ('je suis vite lassé', p. 16). I quote the sentence which follows: 'Développer ce fait bref [...] n'ajoute rien à sa connaissance, détruit plutôt le charme de la fulgurante manoeuvre' (p. 16). The futility of the verb 'développer' here accords with that of the verb 'ornier' in the quotation above. The second quotation maintains that it is sufficient to know a fact; to develop it is to destroy its charm. We recall that the first reference to the black maria analysed above also referred to the loss of charm ('deshabillé de son charme', p. 12) and subsequently the autobiographical subject described himself as an exact visionary ('un visionnaire exact', p. 12).

Both these examples, added to the autobiographical foundations laid in the prefatory note and on the first page of the text, confirm the exact, unitary, historical and prosaic nature of the autobiographical subject. These examples of inauguration, consecration and consolidation are reproduced at the level of the content of the text in the repeated references to 'arrival' in the opening of the text. The linear progress of the narrative is thus interpolated into a series of returns to the beginning and to the arrival which is examined from many different perspectives.

### 3.5.3 Language Consciousness as a Marginalised and Marginalising Discourse

It is important to note that the personal circuit between the autobiographical subject and the speculation on experience does not exhaust the narrative possibilities of *Miracle*. The

personal circuit is occasionally broken and language consciousness is found at the moments where it is interrupted or weak.

We have already seen that there are no language consciousness passages in the first twenty pages of *Miracle*. What does the apparent incompatibility between language consciousness and foundational autobiography tell us about language consciousness in *Miracle*? Perhaps language consciousness has effects which are contradictory to the autobiographical subject; that is to say that it works in a way contrary to the exact, unitary, historical and prosaic autobiographical subject. Indeed, it could be advanced that language consciousness works *for* language and *against* consciousness, especially if consciousness presents itself as self-sufficient and unitary. In this section I propose to examine how language consciousness marginalises the self-sufficiency of the autobiographical subject. This would suggest that language consciousness is parasitic, only able to exist once the autobiographical subject has been grounded and that it is not able to solidify and then supplant the subject.

The language conscious passage beginning 'Je vais tenter d'écrire ce que me fut Harcamone [...]' (p. 20) is not distinguished from the rest of the text by a typographical convention; it is simply cast at the beginning of a paragraph which would appear to be no different from any other in *Miracle*. However, this first language conscious passage *is* different from the opening of the text. It continues: ' [...] et, à travers lui, ce que me furent Divers, et Bulkaen surtout que j'aime encore et qui m'indique finalement mon destin' (p. 20). It is here that the autobiographical subject is displaced temporarily because there is speculation on the way language and writing mediate experience. Not only that but Harcamone, who is like a historical entity during the opening of the text, is also different because he is the main element connecting the prisons of Fontevrault and Mettray. In this passage he also performs an expressly fictional function by mediating the names of other characters such as Divers and Bulkaen. What is more, there is a spiral of mediation in the lines that follow. Bulkaen, one of the characters who comes to the narrator through Harcamone, indicates the narrator's destiny to the narrator. The narrator then sketches a cosmology in which Bulkaen is referred to as 'le doigt de Dieu'<sup>142</sup> and

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The formulation is borrowed from the French Bible: Exode 9,14-15: 'Les poux étaient sur les hommes et sur les animaux. Et les magiciens dirent à Pharaon: C'est le doigt de Dieu!' (*La Sainte Bible*, Paris, Société biblique française, (no date) [nouvelle édition d'après la traduction de Louis Segond]).

Harcamone as God. However, the important aspect of language consciousness here, is that the cosmology is *self-created*: '(je parle de ce ciel que je me crée et auquel je me voue corps et âme)'. Dedicating oneself to a personal heaven and having one's destiny dictated by one of the characters sent from this personal heaven is of course not the opposite of autobiography - it has elements common to it, such as circularity, which we saw as a feature of the opening of *Miracle*. However, there are two significant differences here. First, the narrator describes himself as receiving something (his destiny). Secondly, references to mediation abound, not only between the autobiographical subject and his experience but also between one element of that experience (Harcamone) and others (Divers and Bulkaen). Therefore, although the prefatory note ('Harcamone, qu'il a connu jadis') and the opening ('Seul, Harcamone avait été avec moi à Mettray'; pp. 19-20) give the impression that Harcamone is the unique single link between Mettray and Fontevrault, it transpires that both Bulkaen and Divers were also inmates there. They are both subsequently 'recognised' by the narrator within the space of four pages.<sup>143</sup> It must be stressed that this apparent inconsistency is not a case of the autobiographical subject deliberately leading the reader astray. It does not belong to the domain of discursivity at all, in which inconsistencies are judged negatively as failures in argumentation. The autobiographical subject can never be untouched by such a profusion of references to mediation. The autobiographical subject passes away, but its passing is not a permanent death in the sense of the term in the empirical world; in due course the subject will return. It is more apt to describe the autobiographical subject as an opposition between the discourses of the opening and the rest of the text. The first discourse, concerning Harcamone, appears to be based on fact and experience and is governed by the verb 'connaître'. The second, concerning Bulkaen and Divers, is a much more creative process of recognition (governed by the verb 'reconnaître') which is concerned not only with a recollection of the past but also with

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'Bulkaen ne descendait jamais à la Salle de Discipline [...] Mettray, où il passa sa jeunesse, nous enivrait l'un et l'autre, et nous réunissait, nous confondait dans les mêmes vapeurs du souvenir d'heures exquises' (p. 51) and 'S'il avait été au repos pendant qu'il commandait la manoeuvre je n'aurais pas reconnu le visage du prévôt [...] et je reconnus Divers' p. 54.

the fictional possibilities created by the recognition *at the moment* which it occurs.<sup>144</sup>

This sort of use of language consciousness fundamentally changes our interpretation of the text. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that language consciousness, occurring as it does in well-delimited passages and not active all the time, is a marginal discourse. The end of the first language consciousness passage on page twenty of *Miracle* demonstrates this marginality because it is linked to a documentary-style account of armed members of the public hunting for escaped child-inmates from Mettray.<sup>145</sup> Here is the link: 'Par Harcamone, Divers et Bulkaen, je vais encore revivre Mettray qui fut mon enfance.' Although there is no overt typological difference here, the names are being used in a sense slightly different from language consciousness concerned with mediation (and quoted above). The names mediate the autobiographical subject's (it is appropriate to return to this appellation now that we have returned to autobiography) experience of his past. There is no reference to language or writing and concrete experiential verbs are employed ('revivre' and 'retrouver').

We have seen an oscillation of the autobiographical subject in this first language

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Terence Cave also explores various fictional possibilities of recognition in the introduction of his book: *Recognitions* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988) pp. 1-9. In *Miracle*, the verb 'reconnaître' is used in relation to Harcamone outside the opening and its autobiographical foundations. Indeed it is used in one of the most oneiric moments in the text: the first miracle of the rose when Harcamone's chains turn to flowers. It occurs in the pluperfect subjunctive, a mood which conveys a sense of this event as part of an improbable imaginary and gratuitous hypothesis: 'comme si Harcamone eût reconnu Genet et que je fusse la cause de son atroce émoi [...]' (p. 26).

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The documentary account begins in the subsequent paragraph with the words: 'Se peut-il que le monde ait ignoré l'existence [...] de trois cents enfants [...] à l'endroit le plus beau de la plus belle Touraine?' In *Miracle* the account could be summarised by the following words: 'chasse à l'enfant' (which do occur in it). These words would have been known to the majority of contemporary readers on account of the revolt by inmates of the Belle-Isle [sic] children's penitentiary on 27th August 1934 (a short article in *The Times* of 29th August 1934 describes how 'fifty-six boys, inmates of Belle Ile [sic] Reformatory, attacked their guards while assembled in the dining hall [...] and escaped into the country [...]. The guards and local inhabitants immediately organised search parties, remaining out all night, captured 47 of the fugitives, the other nine are still at liberty.' p. 9). The words 'chasse à l'enfant' also form the title of a 1936 poem on the same subject by Jacques Prévert (set to music by Joseph Kosma. See *Album Jacques Prévert*, Paris, Gallimard, 1992) p. 119). The poem is reprinted in the Collection *Paroles* (Paris, Gallimard, 1993, first published in 1949) pp. 86-87.

conscious passage in *Miracle*. The subject first waned under the influence of mediation and then waxed again. I argue that this oscillation is enabled by the mediating function of language consciousness, so language consciousness is not simply a counter-discourse to autobiography in its most traditional sense. Autobiography will return before and after the language conscious passages that will be analysed in this subsection. However, the relativisation and marginalisation of autobiography by language consciousness means that self-sufficient autobiography is but one tone in the text rather than the master discourse. Language consciousness too is a tone which is even less prominent, but it is worthy of being the central focus of the present discussion because it is a relativising and a relativised discourse: it relativises other discourses and relativises itself.

What more can be said about language consciousness as a tone? If we acknowledge that as a tone it cannot take the place of the narrator and thus cannot be embodied, its attributes will be of a linguistic and stylistic order, rather than the characteristics of a person. This linguistic and stylistic understanding of language consciousness is important from the start of the text onwards: the first language conscious passage in *Miracle* includes the verb 'écrire', thus foregrounding the language in which the narrator will write: 'Je vais tenter d'écrire ce que me fut Harcamone [...]' (p. 20).

Let us now consider language conscious passages after the opening of *Miracle*; they draw attention to the possibilities that other discourses offer for the writing of Mettray and Fontevrault. The most important of these discourses are: poetry, speeches, letters, lists, songs and popular fiction and even film. The language conscious passage in each case introduces a citation from or reference to each one, thus integrating these different discourses (or genres) into the text in terms of what each can offer for the writing of both prisons. Let us take first the apparently incongruous example of a list of names:

Fontevrault, comme Mettray, pourrait s'écrire par une longue liste de ces couples formés par des noms:  
 Botchako et Bulkaen.  
 Sillar et Venture.  
 Rocky et Bulkaen.  
 Deloffre et Toscano.  
 Mouline et Monot.  
 Lou-du-Point-du-Jour et Jo.  
 Divers et Moi.  
 Bulkaen et Moi.

Rocky et Moi.<sup>146</sup>

This quotation opens the possibility that Fontevrault and Mettray can be written as a list of couples. This possibility does not then remain abstract and unfulfilled, the list of couples duly follows. If we look more closely at the list, we see that certain names (Rocky and Bulkaen) occur more than once; therefore the representation of Mettray and Fontevrault in the list entails a certain degree of shifting and disturbance of the couples which compose them. This is confirmed by their representation in the rest of the text. Another way of understanding the repetition of names is a certain promiscuity and doubling of the names of Rocky and Bulkaen in particular. That it to say that these two names are part of two different couples simultaneously. Yet another possibility is that some of the couples relate to Fontevrault and the others to Mettray. However, this last possibility is almost completely excluded when the subscribers' edition of *Miracle* is consulted because it developed entire subplots set in Fontevrault with couples in the list whose relationship is not elaborated in the public edition of the text.<sup>147</sup> In sum, then, the list is an attempt to write Fontevrault and Mettray. However, I suggest that this attempt at writing the prisons is also incomplete: Harcamone is missing from the list and the capitalised disjunctive pronoun 'Moi' is an example of a 'name' which is completely opaque.

This raises the question of relativisation. It might be considered preposterous that the above list could ever summarise Mettray and Fontevrault. This possibility takes two things for granted (two things which turn out to be not sure at all). The first is that the reference to Mettray and Fontevrault above is automatically a reference to the experience of the prisons by the autobiographical subject, of the boy aged fifteen and the man aged thirty. However, what if Mettray and Fontevrault were being considered as no more than names in the quotation? The bond between the names and the prisons is loosened because

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p. 22

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This happens in the case of Toscano and Deloffre (four substantial references pp. 174-5, 292, 412 and 459), Rocky and Hersir (three substantial references pp. 333, 367 and 373) and the mysterious character called Jo-la-Voix-d'Or (fifteen references pp. 145, 146, 151, 221, 224, 228, 263, 270, 308, 318, 330, 362, 405, 477 and 479). All page references in this note are to the subscribers' edition of the text.



it is no longer one dimensional. Fontevrault and Mettray thus have the potential to function in a manner similar to Rocky and Bulkaen in the main body of the list who are doubled and promiscuous. The second thing taken for granted regards the possibility that a list can summarise Mettray and Fontevrault (understood as prisons now). What the whole quotation does in raising the possibility of such a summary by a list is to question the notion of summary as a whole. That is to open the possibility of such an apparently limited formal device as a list summarising or being able to write Fontevrault and Mettray. Just as in the case of multiple dedications in *Notre-Dame* and several different characters or issues being described as the goal of the text of *Miracle*<sup>148</sup> the possibility of summary is but one of many. The reason that it is made at all is that the specific form of the fixed list of couples (which as we have seen has a certain amount of internal fluidity) is equally as valuable as the others. It could be argued that instead of improbably suggesting how Mettray and Fontevrault could be summarised by the list of the couples' names, the sentence which introduces the list simultaneously introduces a particular discourse (the summary) and sets its limits.

#### 3.5.4 Complex Poetry

It is possible to distinguish poetry in *Miracle* from language conscious passages in a concrete way. That is to say, between the prose text and fragments of verse which are quoted within it.<sup>149</sup> However, this subsection does not foreground verse quotations, but rather looks at the overlap between language consciousness and poetry in the way that language conscious passages refer to a discourse called poetry. These passages frequently contain the terms 'poésie', 'poétique', 'poète', 'poème' and 'chant' (p. 26).

There are precedents for this approach; we have already seen the overlap between

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Other summaries are analysed in detail in the course of this section. They include a reduction of the book to the liberation of the autobiographical subject from a state of torpor (p. 39) and the proposition that Harcamone is the sublime goal of the book (p. 56).

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A significant seven stanza poem about Harcamone and his penis was excised from the subscribers' edition of the text (p. 318). There are also prison songs transcribed on pp. 188-189 and the following reference to *Le Condamné à mort*: '([...] c'est Bulkaen que j'avais prévu au milieu des fougères, quand j'écrivis le "Condamné à mort") (p. 142).

poetry and language consciousness in *Querelle* (see: 3.2.3; Gil and Poetry) and in *Pompes* (3.4.4) where a key language conscious passage (pp. 103-104) developed a tentative distinction between two modes of fiction: the novel and poetry. This distinction was personified in the figures of the 'romancier' and the 'poète' each of whom exert different demands on the text: the former, principally in terms of exactitude and the latter in terms of an almost obsessive repetition of emotionally charged characters and situations.

Poetry in *Miracle* is another factor in the relativisation of autobiography because it provides an additional category which, although it appears to undercut the autobiographical subject at first, actually co-exists with it. Poetry, therefore, relativises autobiography by infection or miscegenation rather than by straight substitution in a given number of cases. Indeed, the autobiographical subject never calls himself an autobiographer (although there are several references to the mode of his vision which were discussed in 3.5.2 and which could be summarised in the phrase 'visionnaire exact' (p. 12)).<sup>150</sup> There are, however, at least four occasions when the noun 'poète' is used in language consciousness passages which also have a strong touch of the autobiographical subject. I have chosen to present two of them; one is an excision from the subscribers' edition and the other is from the public edition.<sup>151</sup>

One of the most interesting of these occasions is a parenthesis excised from the subscribers' edition of the text where the first person narrator, attempting to become an authentic autobiographical subject, assures the reader as to the veracity of the name of

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Some examples of this mode of vision: 'Je vis la prison comme peut la voir n'importe quel voyou, c'est un cachot où j'enrage d'être enfermé, mais aujourd'hui, sur le mur du mitard, au lieu de lire: "Jean le Tatoué", une malformation des lettres gravées dans le plâtre me fait déchiffrer: "Jean le Torturé"' (p. 35); 'J'eus l'impression de sortir d'une caverne peuplée d'êtres merveilleux, que l'on devine plutôt [...], pour entrer dans un espace lumineux où chaque chose n'est que ce qu'elle est, sans prolongement, sans aura.[...] Dêvêtue de ses ornements sacrés, je vois nue la prison, et sa nudité est cruelle. Les détenus ne sont que de pauvres gars aux dents rongées par le scorbut, courbés par la maladie' (p. 43); 'Au début de ce livre, j'ai parlé d'une espèce de désenchantement de la prison. Il s'opérait à mesure que j'examinais les délinquants et les criminels avec le seul regard de la raison pratique' (p. 149).

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The other two are found on pp. 290 and 322. The subscribers' edition contains four further references on pp 91, 293, 415 (quoted in 3.3.5.) and 456.

an inmate at Mettray:

Larochedieu (une fois pour toutes, j'affirme que ces noms sont exacts et qu'ils furent mes camarades tous ces gosses dont je parle ici, je prononce le serment solennel, et que l'on me croie car les poètes croient au ciel et le redoutent, que j'ai, de quinze à dix-huit ans vécu cette vie prodigieuse).<sup>152</sup>

This passage is interesting because at the very moment when the first person singular narrator attempts to enforce his own authority regarding the name Larochedieu, he brings into play a character (the poet) which could lead the reader to suspect that the name is a fiction, chosen for its own beauty. It is a paradox that at the very moment of an attempt to gain maximum authority and credibility with the reader, the narrator names himself, calling himself a poet. The co-existence in this passage of the first person singular narrator striving for authenticity and the poet indicates that there might indeed be a relationship between them.

Let us briefly examine another occurrence of the noun 'poète' to see whether this relationship can be elaborated. The following passage is part of the pre-empting of the narration of the killing of the little girl and the prison guard by Harcamone, for which he is first sentenced to prison and then to death.<sup>153</sup> After these killings are acknowledged (they are narrated later) there is the following passage:

Ainsi dans la vie certains actes. Les fautes parfois - qui sont des faits - font surgir la poésie. Beaux ces faits n'en sont pas moins un danger. Il me serait difficile - et impoli - d'exposer ici l'examen mental d'Harcamone. Je suis poète en face de ces crimes [...]<sup>154</sup>

This passage begins as the last one ends with a reference to life ('vie'). It must not be forgotten that we are dealing here with a simulacrum of life in both cases (that is to say with life mediated by language). This passage, though it lacks the vigorous vocabulary of the preceding one ('j'affirme, je prononce'), nonetheless attempts to close down a

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p. 299; subscribers' edition.

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The narrative device of pre-empting a death is explored with relevant quotations from *Querelle* in 2.3.7, *Gesture* and 'la mise à mort'.

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p. 59.

particular line of enquiry regarding the killings which have just been acknowledged. That mode of enquiry is forensic and judicial; it would seek to establish Harcamone's motivation and motive for these killings (in using the term 'killing' I have tried to reproduce the amorality in the passage, an issue which has already been examined as part of the gestural representation of death in 2.3.7.). The words 'Il me serait difficile [...]' occur at the precise moment of the refusal by the first person narrator to set out Harcamone's mental examination. This refusal is grounded in both a personal incapacity and a subjective matter of decorum which are paradoxically presented in an *impersonal* construction. However, the source of the authority is revealed immediately afterwards as the first person narrator pleads in his defence that he is a poet. The poet has other concerns; the passage continues: 'et je ne puis dire qu'une chose, c'est que ces crimes libèrent de tels effluves de roses qu'il en restera parfumé, et son souvenir et le souvenir de son séjour ici, jusqu'aux plus reculés de nos jours' (p. 59).

In the light of these two passages it seems that the poet and the autobiographical subject are linked. It might have been assumed that they were fundamentally incompatible, the first concerned with the linguistic repetition of emotionally charged characters and situations and the second with the exact representation of the facts as is the case in *Pompes*. In *Miracle*, however, the autobiographical subject, in moments when it wants to use its own authority or emphasise its own truthfulness, does not invoke itself; it does not name itself, but names another, the poet. This is because the autobiographical subject bases the appeal on something which is undetermined (in the sense that it does not have a history or a body) but which is close to the text in a way that the autobiographical subject cannot be because it carries the baggage of personal history. What the autobiographical subject is in fact doing is recognising tacitly and pragmatically that the highest instance within the text is a textual instance - undetermined in all other respects.

### 3.5.5 Conclusions

The introduction to this section noted the importance of redefining autobiography in the case of *Miracle*. This redefinition uses the marginalising function of language consciousness to look back at the text and relativise autobiography in the way that it is traditionally conceived. We have seen that early theorisations of autobiography have been quite content to present it as something unitary which seamlessly links subjectivity and text, that is to say, something which links the individual author to the work. This has

been the rationale for attempts at defining autobiography as a genre. Recently (post 1980 and especially post 1985), in connection with the impact of Jacques Derrida's works on contemporary philosophical, literary critical and cultural debates, the problematic status of autobiography has increasingly come to be recognised.<sup>155</sup> The reasons for this are manifold but can be attributed in part to the incommensurability between subjectivity and text.

In his *Derrida and Autobiography* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995) which is both an assessment of Derrida's works on and of autobiography as well as a re-evaluation of the importance of redefined autobiography in philosophical texts, Robert Smith considers autobiography to be more 'contingent', 'erratic' and 'deregulated' than subjectivity. Regarded in this way, autobiography has a specific ironic role to play in relation to Smith's investigation of reason in philosophical texts. I agree with Smith's redefinition of autobiography. However, the present detailed discussion of one specific autobiographical work dictates its own requirements.

It is a convention of the present thesis that the notation Jean Genet (1910-1986) is used to refer to the real Jean Genet, as distinct from the many and various narrative manifestations of subjectivity. Thus, when plausible dates are used in the opening of *Miracle* (and repeated within the text)<sup>156</sup> the reader is led to believe that the autobiographer is identical to the narrator, who, in turn is identical to the main character. The assumption is that these three form links in a strong chain. This would be the traditional concept of autobiography first sketched by Philippe Lejeune in *Le Pacte*

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Autobiography can be said to have been an issue in Derrida's works since *Of Grammatologie* (Paris, Les Éditions de minuit, 1967); however, there is always a delay in the influence of texts permeating outside their professed domains (usually considered to be principally philosophy and literary criticism in Derrida's case). Therefore although Derrida's more autobiographical texts date from the mid-seventies (*Glas* - Paris, Galilée, 1974 - for example shares its date of publication with Lejeune's *Le Pacte autobiographique*) it was not until the eighties that many of their implications for the theory of autobiography were realised. This process has continued in the present decade with the publication of 'Circonfession' (in *Jacques Derrida*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1991) which is recognisable as more conventionally autobiographical while problematising autobiography at the same time.

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For example in 3.5.4 the first passage where the subject refers to himself as poet and the passage quoted in 3.5.2 where he says 'le gosse que j'étais à quinze ans' (p. 9).

*autobiographique* (Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1975).

However, I would suggest that, despite appearances, we are not dealing with absolute equivalence here. The autobiographical subject is not co-terminous with Jean Genet (1910-1986). However, the challenge for this conclusion is how to phrase and describe the difference between the autobiographical subject and Jean Genet (1910-1986) and the role that language conscious passages play in articulating this difference.

The difference could be most straightforwardly described in terms of a difference of representation. In *Miracle* the reader reads the representations of feelings and feels through reading which is different from (and emphatically not inferior to) experiencing feelings in the empirical world. Derrida's understanding of the difference would give a special mediating role to what he calls 'écriture'.<sup>157</sup> Smith also refers to the work of Michael Ryan as representative of a certain type of Marxist criticism which would argue that: 'Marxism, like deconstruction, would question Lejeune's founding axiom which posits the subject of autobiography as isolatable, constitutive and self-identical' (quoted in Smith op. cit.; p. 56).<sup>158</sup> All of these cases have the same result: autobiography 'gives off the effects of finitude' (Smith, p. 7).

We have already seen that the autobiographical subject is grounded and founded in the opening of *Miracle*. Dates are used to great effect in the manner of objective historical discourse before the text (in the prefatory note - which we have seen was added in the preparation of the public edition of the text) and after the text in the words: 'La Santé. Prison de Tourelles, 1943' (p. 376). These dates appear to situate the autobiographical subject and the author Jean Genet (1910-1986) in the same time continuum in which historical events are placed and which we share in 1997, 54 years later. The date of 1943 as an end marker seems to take on a unique value as it is

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Cf. Jacques Derrida *L'Écriture et la différence* (Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1967) pp. 293-339 'Freud et la scène de l'écriture'. Smith 'aims to revitalise autobiography by means of a new determination through writing' (p. 7).

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Original reference: Michael Ryan, 'Self-evidence' *Diacritics* (June 1980), 10, 14.

(discounting the prefatory note because it is an addition)<sup>159</sup> the only date which is printed in connection with the main body of the text which functions in this way. However, this marker of certainty is not without its problems. For instance, the opening of the text, as we have seen, concerns the autobiographical subject's arrival at Fontevault. Moreover, there are many references in the rest of the text to the subject's continued incarceration at Fontevault and to his writing his book in that location.<sup>160</sup> These many references within the text are in direct contradiction to one date and two places which follow it. They appear to indicate that Jean Genet (1910-1986) was in a different place. What status do the final references to date and to the places have after this comparison? It is now possible to understand how a marker of certainty has the potential to undermine any remaining belief in the link between objective historical discourse and the autobiographical subject and how the subject is sent tumbling into the realms of fiction, which is of course where it belongs, as part of what Smith calls the 'problematics of a narrative of the subject' (p. 57).

Regarding Derrida's fragmentary and self-problematizing writing about himself in *Circonfession*, Smith writes: '[t]he only way to keep memory is not to keep it to oneself, nor to 'keep oneself to oneself'. An intercalated style, unique but never entirely one's own, imposes itself upon the autobiographer' (p. 45). From the preceding discussion we can see that this description can apply to all of *Miracle* which contains language conscious passages, that is to say all of the text bar the first twenty pages. Smith's description could be criticised as a meaningless paradox; but the potential opposites in the phrase: 'unique but never entirely one's own' do not cancel each other out. Smith is affirming that it is possible for an autobiographical text (now understood in its new multiple sense) to correspond to both potentially opposite elements in the

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The note is the only example of Jean Genet (1910-1986) apparently referring to himself outside his texts in the third person as an 'author'. This perhaps gives reason to suspect that the note was added by the editors at Gallimard during the preparation of the public editions.

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'[...] qui me conduisit d'abord en cellule de punition où j'ai commencé la rédaction de ce récit' (p. 49); '[...] j'avais commencé la rédaction de ce livre sur les feuilles blanches qu'on me remettait pour la confection de sacs en papier.' (p. 55) and 'Alors que j'écris cette nuit, l'air étincelle' (p. 101).

phrase. Language consciousness can help us to apply Smith's apparently absurdly paradoxical description to *Miracle*.

We have seen how language consciousness is a marginalised and marginalising discourse, and an important aspects of this is that it is not active at all times. However, when it is active it draws attention to how it is represented in language (to its specific syntax, genre and tone), and to the way that they mediate experience. In this sense language consciousness can be said to be exquisitely fictional because it draws attention to ways in which experience is not self-sufficient. Language consciousness marginalises autobiography, but does not take its place. It is in language conscious passages that the reader realises that writing and reading of the text is dependent on different people and that language is the connection between them.<sup>161</sup> Even though the autobiographical subject goes on to reassert itself (such as in the 'liberation episode')<sup>162</sup> it cannot escape the language conscious passage which preceded it. After page twenty and the first language conscious intervention the autobiographical subject cannot assert itself in the same manner as in the opening of the text (that is unique because it is not preceded by a language conscious passage). In this way language consciousness has a cumulative influence much greater than the total number of words that it occupies in the text would suggest.

Towards the end of the text there are increasingly inventive means used to re-establish the autobiographical subject's singularity. For instance a page is headed with the following words in block capitals: 'JE PRENDS LA PEINE A MON COMPTE ET JE PARLE' (p. 344). At one level, the aim, here is to create a direct confessional mode. Elsewhere, the narration of the execution by the gobs of spit launched at his face by the other inmates<sup>163</sup> is enclosed in speech marks in an attempt to enable the

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It could be argued that a difference based on function applies even when the author re-reads his or her own text because the re-reading is necessarily more critical.

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'[...] je n'ai voulu par ce livre qui montrer l'expérience menée de ma libération d'un état de pénible torpeur' (p. 39).

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The gobs of spit are turned into roses in a transformation reminiscent of the first miracle which does the same with the links of Harcamone's chains. The narrator then cuts off one



autobiographical subject to reclaim some sort of 'authentic' voice. However, it is a ripe paradox that the method used to attempt to annul the mediation of language is unique to written language: typography. Therefore there is no triumph of the poem over the novel. The attempt at restoring singularity is in vain, the text is irredeemably plural.

### 3.6 Language Consciousness in *Journal du voleur*

#### 3.6.1 Introduction; the Specificity of *Journal* and the Relevance of Jean-Paul Sartre's Foreword

*Journal* is Jean Genet's most famous prose work. This is partly because, although it was written as the last of the five early texts, it was the first work to be published in an edition accessible to the general public, in 1949 (its publication history is discussed in 1.5.1). However, the principal reason for its fame was the notoriety of Jean Genet (1910-1986) himself at this time, particularly in Left Bank intellectual circles. And *Journal* is a work which appears to engage with aspects of Genet's life story most directly.<sup>164</sup> Its fame has been durable and, perhaps more than any other of Genet's works, it has become canonical and exemplary (both in terms of his *oeuvre* and in terms of writing in French in general).<sup>165</sup>

What is more, during the first thirty-seven years since the publication of *Journal* in a widely available edition (1949-1986), both critics and the public have been confident about the limits of its relevance; this is indicated by the fact that only one article devoted to the text was published before 1986.<sup>166</sup> These limits were established by *Saint Genet*

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This engagement would seem to be evident from its title alone, although Jean-Paul Sartre suggests in his foreword, that *Journal* marks itself out from autobiography. This text is the only work of Genet's early prose fiction with a foreword written by another writer. Sartre, who had yet to begin *Saint Genet, comédien et martyr*, is extremely concise here (just over 300 words). On the question of autobiography he writes: 'Son autobiographie n'est pas une autobiographie [...]' and 'Ses souvenirs ne sont pas des souvenirs [...]' (no page ref.).

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Among the corpus of illustrative quotations in *Le Robert électronique*, there are 262 from Genet's work, illustrating all aspects of language use in French. 258 citations are taken from the early prose fiction. Of this number only 14 come from *Notre-Dame*, 24 from *Miracle*, 45 from *Querelle*, 51 from *Pompes* and no less than 124 from *Journal*.

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Carlo Emilio Gadda, 'Il faut être coupable - sur Genet' (1980). Only two other articles are not comparative and are three pages long instead of two or less; they are by J.-J. Rinieri (1949) and D. Sutherland (1964). Other articles appeared in newspapers and literary reviews (many in 1965 accompanying the publication of the translation of *Journal* in the United States of America and one accompanying the German translation; see W.D. Heist (1962)). Cf. R.C. Webb (1982) pp. 125-135 for summaries of the shorter articles.

(first published in article form in 1950) which can be described as the companion volume to *Journal*. *Saint Genet* limits *Journal* in terms of Sartre's notion of 'Genet's' struggle to become a writer, after being disadvantaged by an illegitimate birth and by his choice of a life as a thief and homosexual. In the Introduction to the present thesis *Saint Genet* is also described as Genet's autobiography as written by Sartre. This is because it simultaneously demonstrates a greater reliance on his version of Jean Genet's biography than *Journal*, as well as a significantly more complete treatment of 'Genet' the subject than Genet's text. It is perhaps because Sartre was already envisaging a detailed autobiography of Genet in 1949 that he refrains from using this term in his foreword to describe *Journal*. Whether this is or is not the case, we shall be looking more closely at exactly how he understands Genet's text in a moment.

Of course, 1986, the last year of the interpretations of the text determined by selective use of the biography of Jean Genet (1910-1986) - in the manner of those written by Bettina Knapp, Tom Faw Driver and Joseph McMahon which were reviewed in 1.4 - was also the last year of Jean Genet's life. The death of an author usually provokes a return to his or her texts and critical responses to *Journal* certainly benefitted from being liberated from the concerns of biographical detail (after 1986 there was no longer the possibility of the critic being contradicted by Jean Genet (1910-1986), the living autobiographer). Consequently, criticism of *Journal* tended to become more text-based and sustained in its discussion of the fictional possibilities of language in the text (including those which related to the possibility of autobiography).<sup>167</sup>

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Cf. C. Davis, 'Genet's *Journal du voleur* and the Ethics of Reading' *French Studies*, volume 48, number 1 (January 1994) 50-62; D. Lloyd, 'Genet's Genealogy, European Minorities and the Ends of the Canon' in Janmohamed A. R. and Lloyd D. (eds.), *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 369-393; S. Meitlinger, 'L'Irréel de jouissance dans *Le journal du voleur* de Jean Genet', *Littérature* 62 (May 1986) 65-74; M. Sheringham, 'Experience and Narration in *Journal du voleur*' in Gibson R. (ed), *Studies in French Fiction in Honour of Vivienne Mylne*. London, Grant and Cutler, 1988, pp. 289-306 and D.H. Walker, 'Antecedents for Genet's Persona' in Keefe T. and Smyth E., (eds.), *Autobiography and the Existential Self*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1995, pp. 147-168. The first dissertations devoted to the text were also submitted at this time: P.-M. Héron, *La poétique de Jean Genet dans Journal du voleur*, unpublished maîtrise dissertation, University of Paris IV, 1990 and B. Unger, *Jean Genet: 'Journal du voleur', le mythe du sujet*, unpublished maîtrise dissertation, University of Valenciennes and of the Hainaut-Cambrésis, 1993.

The present discussion of language consciousness continues, in the same manner as the five recent articles and essays mentioned in the last footnote, to disrupt the familiarity which is always associated with a famous work. This will be achieved by critically interpreting Sartre's foreword, outlining a basic narrative structure of the text and, principally, by elaborating and stretching the notion of how it is autobiographical (by means of lesser known passages). This final element is by far the most complex and demands the most space here. It examines language conscious passages in terms of how they chart the representation of subjectivity by language, how they reflect and contribute to the changes in this subjectivity and how they interact with other notions such as morality, time, solitude and the appellations with which the narrator refers to himself ('voleur', 'écrivain', 'poète', 'créateur' and 'artiste').

In his foreword Sartre limits himself to two key themes in *Journal*. He first presents '[l]e thème inquiétant du double' and then moves on to the idea of the sacred in the text. In summary, Sartre's brief note contains the promising suggestion that the representation of real events in the text is not straightforward; however, the idea of the sacred which he advances to explain this complexity is then linked, reductively once again, to a single true version of personal history.

Let us now look at the foreword in more depth. For Sartre, doubling occurs at all levels in the text. First, between Genet<sup>168</sup> and his image; however, the doubling also mirrors itself because when Genet sees himself reflected in others he reveals to the others something about themselves: '[...] il s'aperçoit et met au jour du même coup leur plus profond secret'. The non-narcissistic perspective on doubling which transcends the personal circuit between the narcissist and his image<sup>169</sup> is one of Sartre's main

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We have to assume that Sartre is referring to Jean Genet (1910-1986). In 2.1.3 I discuss how both the complexity and the imprecision of Sartre's argumentation in *Saint Genet* depend on the different ways in which he uses the proper name 'Genet'. In addition to Jean Genet (1910-1986), it also refers to the narrator in the early prose fiction, the characters, 'Genet's' *pour-soi* at various stages in its development and 'Genet's' situation as an outsider in a social structure founded on inheritance.

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However, they are never completely self-sufficient because there is always a goddess (Aphrodite) or the reader of the myth looking on.

arguments in *Saint Genet* for the relevance of Genet's texts to others and to the just person ('le juste'). In his foreword to *Journal*, Sartre makes a connection between reflective doubling (that is the doubling of the human being and his or her image)<sup>170</sup> and autobiography. And it is at this point that he is simultaneously able to argue for the difference between *Journal* and other texts such as Michel de Montaigne's *Essais*. Sartre refers to Montaigne's enterprise schematically as: 'le projet bonhomme et familier de se peindre'. Here Sartre introduces the notion that Genet is not familiar to himself (as Sartre believes Montaigne to be) and that Genet's truth (the truth that he writes) is sacred truth: 'Bien sûr il dit tout. Toute la vérité, rien que la vérité: mais c'est la vérité sacrée.' For Sartre, Genet's truth presupposes the reader's faith in a world view.

The quotation above introduces the concept of the sacred which is the leitmotif in the rest of Sartre's foreword. How exactly is Sartre using this concept? In the first instance it grounds the difference between writing in *Journal* and elements which are a feature of autobiographical texts. For instance, in relation to the objective (factual) history in the text, Sartre argues: 'vous croyiez qu'il vous racontait des faits et vous vous apercevez soudain qu'il vous décrit des rites [...]'. Sartre turns away from *Journal* as a notation of the experiences of a human being in the empirical world in a way with which I would agree (it is a way which accords with the title of his *Saint Genet*, but which contradicts its critical practice anchored in Sartre's highly schematic version of the biography of Jean Genet (1910-1986); see 2.1.3). However, Sartre does not develop his concept of the sacred in detail. What he does suggest is that Genet's lack of familiarity with himself produces a defamiliarised autobiography. Nonetheless, Sartre is careful to leave open the possibility for truth which can be accessed to by the reader: 'Si pourtant vous savez voir, à la jointure, la ligne mince qui sépare le mythe enveloppant du mythe enveloppé, vous découvrirez la vérité, qui est terrible.' Thus the defamiliarisation is not complete because in these final words of the foreword, Sartre indicates that the reader has access to truth. However, the truth is not revealed to the reader by a (divine) external agent; it is the result of a discovery made by the reader. Immediately before the quotation above Sartre describes Genet's writing practice in the following terms: 'il parle de sa vie comme un évangéliste, en témoin émerveillé...'. From this quotation it seems that Sartre

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In the terms of Sartrean philosophy this is the difference between 'pour-soi' and 'pour-autrui'.

continues to adhere to the paradigm of the life story, a paradigm problematised, but a paradigm nonetheless. While Sartre is correct to point to the sacred in the text, I would argue that it is too closely linked to the revelation of the truth in terms of a life story to accord with the way in which I hope to mark *Journal* out from autobiography in the present section. There are no direct references to the Gospels in *Journal*; I will argue that this text is a book with a chronological component which divorces itself from the life history of an individual (the narrator), putting forward a poetic, visionary and non-objective view of the world which is partially crystallised around two gratuitous hypotheses. The first is a sequel to *Journal* called 'Une Affaire de mœurs' (which was never written) and the second is the use of the text as a book of laws for the future of the narrator (who cannot transcend the text).

At the start of the final paragraph of *Journal* (to which I will return in the Conclusion - 3.6.4) the text is described in the following terms: 'Héroïsé, mon livre, devenu ma Genèse, contient - doit contenir - les commandements que je ne saurais transgresser [...]' (p. 306). Here the text attributes to the first book of the Old Testament, which is historical in the fundamental sense of cosmogony, qualities of the *second* book, Exodus, which is principally a book of laws (containing laws, ordinances and the ten commandments). The text reads the history in Genesis as juridical; both it and *Journal* become books of laws for the future.<sup>171</sup> A perceptive critic like Sartre could not fail to pick up the reference to history. Indeed, there is a reference earlier in his foreword to the text as a 'cosmogonie sacrée' - the history of the creation of the world. However, the juridical sense of this reference and the misreading of Genesis in *Journal* are not elaborated by Sartre and they are overwritten by the subsequent reference to personal history and Genet as the writer of his own Gospel in the manner of Saint Jean (Genet).

### 3.6.2 Narrative Frames: 'Les fêtes du baigne intime'

We have already seen, most clearly in the case of *Notre-Dame* in 3.3, but also in relation

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We have already seen in 3.5 how *Miracle* referred to Exodus in describing the character Bulkaen as 'le doigt de Dieu'. There is also a language conscious passage which includes speculation on an alternative title for *Miracle*; this passage also refers to Genesis twice: 'Un verset de la Genèse nous dit que: "Les enfants de Dieu, voyant que les filles des hommes étaient belles, prirent pour femmes celles qui leur avaient plu." Et le livre d'Enoch: "Les anges se choisirent chacun une femme [...]' (p. 192).

to *Miracle* in 3.5, how an individual work of Genet's early prose fiction has an elementary structure composed of a narrative frame which encloses the main body of the text. *Journal* also has a narrative frame and it is principally organised around the penal colony in Guyana as an imagined emotional place<sup>172</sup> (we recall that the narrative frame of *Notre-Dame* is organised around the imprisoned narrator). The importance of this emotional element dictates the title of this subsection.

In *Journal* the narrative frame is distinguished from the main body of the text in a clear typographical manner because there is a break between pages 13 and 14 of the 'Collection Folio' edition of the text. The concluding narrative frame is indicated by the extra blank line at the paragraph break on page 305 of the 'Collection Folio' text (also found in the subscribers' edition). In common with *Notre-Dame* and *Miracle*, the introductory narrative frame is much more developed than the concluding one. Here the former is five pages long and the latter just over one page.<sup>173</sup>

The penal colony in Guyana was the destination of deportees from France and as such it has a particular place within the penal history of the Republic. However, it is not depicted in great detail in *Journal*; there are no scenes in the text which take place there.<sup>174</sup> Indeed, in the introductory narrative frame it is described as defunct.<sup>175</sup> As

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Many of the twenty five references to the Guyana prison colony outside the introductory narrative frame accord with the understanding of it as an emotional locus. For example: 'Ainsi mon trouble se prolonge-t-il jusqu'à cette région de moi-même: la Guyane' (p. 16). Guyana is the ultimate punishment because the narrator and the other characters risk being sent there if they commit a murder; see pp. 95 and 161 (see also pp. 289 and 292).

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Michael Sheringham (1988) suggests the following further divisions: pp. 14-161, 162-180 (the Lucien section) and 181-306 (Sheringham, p. 291). All references are to the Collection Folio edition of the text. As in the case of my analysis of the narrative structure of *Notre-Dame* in 3.3.5, divisions of this sort are always approximate in Genet's early prose fiction.

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In 1994 L'Arbalète published Genet's incomplete film script and play called *Le Bague* both of which are set in the colony. I quote from Albert Dichy and Laurent Boyer's introduction to the text: 'Plus qu'un lieu d'élection, le bague constitue sans doute le sanctuaire de l'imaginaire de Jean Genet. [...] des fêtes secrètes du bague qui hanta Genet durant environ quinze ans [1950 to 1964 inclusive], auquel il consacra des milliers de pages, usant et épuisant tour à tour les formes du poème en prose, du récit, du film, du théâtre, sans qu'il ne réussisse ni à le mener à publication ni à l'abandonner totalement'

a consequence, Guyana should be considered as a place in the imagination which is not only tied to a visible historical reality or representation: 'Le baigne - nommons cet endroit du monde et de l'esprit [...]' (p. 305). *Journal* illustrates that the word 'monde' here is not understood principally in terms of the geography of the globe.

Another example of the primacy of a location in the imagination occurs in a passage from the main body of the text, in which the narrator first refers to himself as a winged ginestra ('genêt ailé'), but then takes off and leaves the planet altogether:

De la planète Uranus, paraît-il, l'atmosphère serait si lourde que les fougères sont rampantes [...]. Si la métempsycose [the transmigration of souls] m'accorde une nouvelle demeure, je choisis cette planète maudite, je l'habite avec les bagnards de ma race.<sup>176</sup>

In addition, the role that the penal colony of Guyana plays in the text raises the possibility that other locations such as Spain, however concrete their representation in the text, are no less important as affective constructions than as geographical locations. The narrator of *Journal* frequently refers to an internal geography which is not completely mappable (even in terms of a chronology based on dates; for example, by specifying that

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(pp. 5-6).

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'Cependant que j'écris ce livre les derniers forçats rentrent en France' (p. 11). There is an important connection between the Guyana penal colony and Mettray which is described frequently in *Miracle* as 'le baigne d'enfants détruit [sic]' (p. 20). Furthermore, just like Mettray, Guyana is compared to a maternal space which envelops males within its folds: 'Ce lieu semble contenir la sécheresse et l'aridité la plus cruelle et voici qu'il s'exprime par un thème de bonté: il suscite, et l'impose, l'image d'un sein maternel, chargé comme lui de puissance rassurante, d'où monte une odeur un peu nauséabonde, m'offrant une paix honteuse. La Vierge mère et la Guyane je les nomme Consolatrices des affligés' (p. 289). Compare this passage from *Miracle*: 'Il m'arrive de parler de la Colonie en disant: "La vieille", puis "la sévère". Ces deux expressions n'eurent sans doute pas suffi à me la faire confondre avec une femme mais, outre que déjà elle qualifient habituellement les mères, elles me vinrent, à propos de la Colonie, alors que j'étais las de ma solitude d'enfant perdu et que mon âme appelait une mère. Et tout ce qui n'est qu'aux femmes: tendresse, relents un peu nauséabonds de la bouche entrouverte, sein profond que la houle soulève [...]' (pp. 253-254).

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p. 49.



the narrator was at a particular location within a certain period of time).<sup>177</sup> An example of this unmappability occurs at the end of the text whose final words are: 'Je me propose d'y rapporter, décrire, commenter, ces fêtes d'un bain intime que je découvre en moi après la traversée de cette contrée de moi que j'ai nommée l'Espagne' (p. 307). Spain, that is to say the narrator's attitude towards others (especially Stilitano) and towards language during his stay there, is just as important as the concrete representation of people, places and local colour.<sup>178</sup> The similarity between Spain and the penal colony in Guyana is also illustrated at the level of sound, in the resemblance between the words in French: 'Espagne', 'bain' and 'Guyane'.

The penal colony is the foundation of the specificity of language consciousness in *Journal*. If we look at the first lines of the text, the reference there to 'univers' presents the Guyana penal colony as an imaginary space chosen by the narrator. It is also a poetic, linguistic<sup>179</sup> and an aesthetic jurisdiction, in which the linguistic connections made in the text are legitimated (such as the connection between convicts and flowers, for example):

Le vêtement des forçats est rayé rose et blanc. Si commandé par mon cœur l'univers où je me complais, je l'élu, ai-je le pouvoir au moins d'y découvrir les nombreux sens que je veux: *il existe donc un étroit rapport entre les fleurs et les bagnards*<sup>180</sup>

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One example of such a specification is: 'La vie dont j'ai parlé plus haut, c'est entre 1932 et 40 que je l'aurai vécue' (p. 162).

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*Journal* embraces the anecdote and the picturesque fragment more than any other work of Genet's early prose fiction and in this it moves closest to becoming popular fiction. Perhaps this abundance of true-to-life representations is another reason for its popularity.

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The introductory frame contains the following reference to the intersection between eroticism and language: 'Les jeux érotiques découvrent un monde innommable que révèle le langage nocturne des amants. Un tel langage ne s'écrit pas. On le chuchote la nuit à l'oreille, d'une voix rauque' (pp. 9-10).

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p. 9.

In the analysis of his foreword we have seen how Sartre emphasises the role of sacred vocabulary in *Journal*. However, as far as the introductory narrative frame is concerned, the erotic charge of the Guyana penal colony and its convicts is far more important. The narrator of *Journal* is enthralled by the convicts in a way which is similar to the narrator's surrender to the males in the personal picture gallery in *Notre-Dame* (see 3.3.2). He is also troubled (sexually) by the oscillation between the convicts and the attributes that he gives them. Thus, once again, as in the case of *Notre-Dame*, there is an element of reflexivity in the narrator's emotion. The present discussion of language consciousness allows this reflexivity to appear because language consciousness is concerned with those moments in the text where the function of the reader is imitated, that is to say where a reaction to text is given. The first footnote on the first page of *Journal* illustrates this point with reference to the insistent comparison (quoted above) between flowers and convicts: 'Mon émoi c'est l'oscillation des unes aux autres' (p. 9). 'Émoi' means agitation or trouble in the emotional domain. From an etymological point of view, the word can be traced back to two verbs, one in Old French 'esmayer' and further back to the Latin verb 'exmagare' which means to 'deprive of (one's) force'. The force removed here can be considered not only in a concrete sense, as the force by which the individual acts, but also as the force which keeps the self or Ego ('le moi') together. I suggest here that (and go on to illustrate in subsequent subsections) the word 'oscillation' describes more than the narrator's trouble or emotional agitation. The narrator's subjectivity can also be described by that word with the understanding that it implies a potentially continuous oscillation between two elements.<sup>181</sup>

The word 'émoi' in Genet's texts always has a sexual component.<sup>182</sup> In the

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In *Limited Inc* Jacques Derrida writes: 'I want to recall that undecidability is always a *determined* oscillation between possibilities (for example of meaning, but also of acts)' (Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1988, p. 148). *Glas* indicates how oscillation may function with the proper name, because 'Genet' is both the name of Jean and his mother, and also with homonymic puns such as 'seing' and 'saint' and 'sein.'

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'[...] Querelle sentit dans tout son corps la présence du meurtre. Cela vint d'abord lentement, à peu près comme les émois amoureux [...] (p. 52, *Querelle*); 'J'aime secrètement, oui, j'aime la police. Je ne lui dirai pas mon émoi quand je passais à Marseille, cours Belsunce, devant la cantine réservée aux policiers' (p. 247, *Journal*).

introductory narrative frame, the effects of the destruction of the penal colony on the narrator are described in the following terms: 'En moi-même la destruction du bagne correspond à une sorte de châtement du châtement: on me châtre, on m'opère de l'infamie' (p. 11). This castration is therefore a given at the start of the text. The narrator will dwell on the sexual resonance of the colony despite its destruction already having deprived him of his strength by castrating him. The eroticism in the text is thus intended to be doubly estranged from reality. All this points to the self-consciously fictional elements of *Journal*, stressing the artifice of the representation of the narrator's self.

### 3.6.3 Language Consciousness and the Representation of Subjectivity

This subsection is the core of 3.6 because it discusses the main body of the text in detail. Let us give a summary of the main points of the discussion which centres on the intersection between language consciousness and a number of themes and structural features in the text. The first is morality and more specifically, the use of the narrator's past life for moral ends.<sup>183</sup> This sort of theme is language conscious because at intervals in the text there is detailed speculation about the language in which the moral utilisation of the narrator's past life is conducted. The mere use above of the phrase 'the narrator's past life', indicates that morality has concrete implications for the representation of both the narrator's self and the representation of time. We will see how there is a gradual move away from the moral utilisation of the narrator's past life, to a focus on the writing present and the notion that *Journal* is a work of art, estranged from morality. The focus on the writing present and the text as a work of art has definite consequences for the representation of the narrator's subjectivity because it is frequently represented in non-material and relational terms. The solidity of the narrator's self dissolves. What is more, there is an implicit shift of focus from the narrator as a thief to the narrator as an artist, poet and creator (the French equivalents of all these appellations are implied within the first one hundred pages and they actually occur later in the text; see pp. 242, 193 and 235).

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'Ce journal que j'écris n'est pas qu'un délassément littéraire. A mesure que j'y progresse, ordonnant ce que ma vie passée me propose, à mesure que je m'obstine dans la rigueur de la composition - des chapitres, des phrases, du livre lui-même - je me sens m'affermir dans la volonté d'utiliser, à des fins de vertus, mes misères d'autrefois. J'en éprouve le pouvoir' (p. 69).

The shift from a moral to an aesthetic interpretation of the text in the language conscious passages does not occur abruptly. We have seen the shift in temporal focus from past to present. Subsequently, there is a crisis at the level of the narrative flow of the text (from pages 115 to 120) where short fragments predominate (they are very similar to the 'Divinarianes' in *Notre-Dame*). In the one hundred pages following this narrative collapse there is a further questioning of the moral value of the text in language conscious passages which occur at intervals in the text. On page 233 there occurs the start of another shift which introduces a focus on the ways in which it might be possible for the narrative to have an impact on the future. This emphasis on the future has concrete effects on the representation of subjectivity in the text. For instance, the narrator calls himself many names; his conception of himself becomes plural. It includes the following terms: 'artiste' (p. 242), 'créateur' (three occurrences on p. 236) and 'poète' (two occurrences on p. 235). The narrator also defines the relationship between himself and characters more clearly. In addition, he is represented as being ever more solitary.

The final phase of language consciousness in *Journal* is particularly interesting. It raises the possibility that the text is working towards the dissolution of both the text as work of art and the text as a work with moral import. The final language conscious passages (which run right into the concluding narrative frame) focus on an original notion of transcendence in which the text has formulated a series of laws or commandments for use in the narrator's future outside the text. Indeed, the laws or commandments are the only aspect of this future which can be represented within the text. It is then possible to look back at the text in the light of transcendence and recognise important language conscious moments within it which refer to autobiography (in which there is an equivalence between the narrator and Jean Genet 1910-1986) and a carrier of meaning in the external world (a photograph, birth certificate or notebook for instance). These retrospective examples of transcendence involving other cultural objects will be examined as part of the conclusions of the present section in 3.6.4.

Before we move on to the detailed discussion of language consciousness in *Journal* following the key elements of the representation of subjectivity (the narrator as thief or writer), the representation of time (past, present and future) and the appellation of the text (moral work or work of art), the relationships between *Saint Genet* and *Journal* must be outlined. I have already mentioned the links between *Journal* and *Saint Genet* in 3.6.1 in terms of the publication history of the early prose fiction; however, I believe that critics have not been sufficiently sensitive to comparisons between Sartre's and Genet's

texts on a structural level. At specific points in the analysis in the present subsection, I will make parallels between their texts. The aim of the comparison is not to trace the complexities of cross fertilisation between the works - that would be a task fraught with as many difficulties as an explanation of the precise motivation of the excisions which I avoid in the introduction to the present thesis - rather, it is my aim to show how Sartre does not acknowledge the importance of the structure of *Journal* for his own study. However, the most important point is that he also does not follow the structure of *Journal* in its entirety. He omits that part which focuses on transcendence and the future. This is because Sartre has to call a halt - not looking to the future but looking back in order to achieve the totalising aims of his study which provides a definitive account of how Jean Genet (1910-1986) became a writer and had his *OEuvres complètes* published by Gallimard from 1951 onwards (as we know the first volume of these complete works is Sartre's own study).

The first example of language consciousness in the main body of the text is found at the end of the four-page discussion of violence which opens the main body. It reads:

Une telle définition - par tant d'exemples contraires - de la violence vous montre-t-elle que j'utiliserai les mots non afin qu'ils dépeignent mieux un événement ou son héros mais qu'ils vous instruisent sur moi-même.<sup>184</sup>

This statement is clear in intent and unambiguous in formulation. The narrator reduces the depiction of external events and heroes (who are the main characters) to what they teach the reader about the narrator's subjectivity. The term 'instruire' carries moral weight, grounded in literary history because it is part of the dyad frequently used in seventeenth century France: 'instruire et plaire'.<sup>185</sup> However, the didactic force of the narrator's subjectivity is a direct product of a large number of contradictory examples in

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p. 17.

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'En ces sortes de feinte, il faut instruire et plaire,/ Et conter pour conter me semble peu d'affaire' (La Fontaine, *Fables*, Le Pâtre et le Lion, VI, vv. 5-6). I am grateful to David Shaw for this reference. The most probable source of the dyad is Aristotle's *Poetics*, Chapter 4, 'The Origins and Development of Poetry' (translated and introduced by T.S. Dorsch, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1965). The relevant passage reads: 'The reason for this is that learning is a very great pleasure, not for philosophers only, but for other people as well, however limited their capacity for it may be' (p. 35).

the discussion of violence which precedes it. The main example is René's narration of how he fleeces old 'closet' homosexuals who approach him for sex. The example is contradictory because while the narrator advises René on the finer points of technique (' - Laisse venir le gars, laisse-le tourner autour de toi', p. 16), the narrator also imagines himself both as victim and criminal ('Mon trouble semble naître de ce qu'en moi j'assume à la fois le rôle de victime et de criminel', p. 16). He instigates the attack, yet is also the victim of it. As far as the passage itself is concerned, the reflexivity mentioned immediately above (the narrator as victim and criminal) is a source of stability in the grounding of the self: the narrator is both producer and receiver of an act. The resulting representation of the narrator's subjectivity is solid.

The following passage develops the notion that the narrator's life has moral value and situates it clearly in the narrator's past:

De cette période je parle avec émotion et je la magnifie, mais si des mots prestigieux, chargés, veux-je dire, à mon esprit de prestige plus que de sens, se proposent à moi, cela signifie peut-être que la misère qu'ils expriment et qui fut la mienne est elle aussi source de merveille. Je veux réhabiliter cette époque en l'écrivant avec les noms des choses les plus nobles. Ma victoire est verbale et je la dois à la somptuosité des termes mais qu'elle soit bénie cette misère qui me conseille de tels choix.<sup>186</sup>

As far as morality is concerned, the retrospection in this passage is directed towards a portion of the narrator's life which is described in chronological terms. The passage addresses the action of language upon a unit of time in the past ('époque' and 'période'). This action can be best summarised as the articulation of the unit of time. This unit expressed in language is also generalised in the term 'misère' (poverty) and in the same phrase it is also appropriated by the narrator ('qui fut la mienne'). Thus the narrator makes the poverty his own at the precise moment when his language articulates the unit of time which sums up the poverty. The movement in this passage can therefore also be described as a movement from the impersonal, indicated by the demonstrative pronoun ('cette période' and 'cette époque'), to the personal ('la mienne').

This passage focuses on the process of creation and its relationship with the self. The passage could be described as the narrator's appropriation of his language, thus binding his concept of self to the linguistic expression of a period in his past. There is

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p. 65.

a profusion of phrases, particles and prepositions which refer to the self: 'à mon esprit', 'à moi', 'la mienne', 'Ma victoire', 'qui me conseille'. In the last sentence the narrator's victory is a linguistic and verbal one; however, its origin is traced to poverty (both the emotional and material poverty that he lived through in the past). This poverty is described here as guiding his linguistic choices and is another example of the consolidation of the link between the self and linguistic expression in the passage.

As indicated at the start of the present section, there is a shift away from the emphasis on the narrator's past and on the moral worth of the text and the solidity of the narrator's subjectivity. The following passage in *Journal* (quoted by four of the five modern critics who favour a text-based approach: D. Lloyd, M. Sheringham, S. Meitlinger and D.H. Walker; see 3.6.1) announces the shift and the direction that the narrative will take:

Avec des mots si j'essaie de recomposer mon attitude d'alors, le lecteur ne sera pas dupe plus que moi. Nous savons que notre langage est incapable de rappeler même le reflet de ces états défunts, étrangers. Il en serait de même pour tout ce journal s'il devait être la notation<sup>187</sup> de qui je fus. Je préciserai donc qu'il doit renseigner sur qui je suis, aujourd'hui que je l'écris. Il n'est pas une recherche du temps passé, mais une oeuvre d'art dont la matière-prétexte est ma vie d'autrefois. Il sera un présent fixé à l'aide du passé, non l'inverse. Qu'on sache donc que les faits furent ce que je les dis, mais l'interprétation que j'en tire c'est ce que je suis - devenu.<sup>188</sup>

The most distinctive thing about this passage is its valorisation of the narrator's present life. It does not immediately stress the moral value of the present life, but stresses the way in which the past life is relativised. The most interesting phrase here is: 'matière-prétexte' which carries both the sense of something coming before the text as well as the slightly deprecating sense of an 'excuse' for the text. The term also echoes vocabulary of a phenomenological slant because it tacitly puts forward a notion that the text is produced from 'raw material'.

The start of the present subsection outlined a crisis of representation which was situated from pages 121 to 124 of *Journal*. This crisis is prefigured in two important

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The Collection Biblos reprint of the text contains a misprint at this point; the word 'notation' is erroneously replaced by the word 'notion' (p. 59).

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pp. 79-80.

ways which lead on from the passage above and which emphasise the writing present ('un présent fixé à l'aide du passé'). The first is a concrete alternative to considering the text as a moral work, a view which waned in the quotation from pages 79-80 above. This alternative is found in a footnote which insists on a description of the text as 'un chant d'amour' and 'un livre d'amour'.<sup>189</sup> I quote the note in full:

1. Le lecteur est prévenu - c'est bien son tour - que ce rapport sur ma vie intime ou ce qu'elle suggère ne sera qu'un chant d'amour. Exactement, ma vie fut la préparation d'aventures (non de jeux) érotiques, dont je veux maintenant découvrir le sens. Hélas, c'est l'héroïsme qui m'apparaît le plus chargé de vertu amoureuse, et puisqu'il n'est de héros qu'en notre esprit il faudra donc les créer. Alors j'ai recours aux mots. Ceux que j'utilise, même si je tente par eux une explication, chanteront. Ce que j'écris fut-il vrai? Faux? Seul ce livre d'amour sera réel. Les faits qui lui servirent de prétexte? Je dois en être le dépositaire. Ce n'est pas eux que je restitue.<sup>190</sup>

Here it is a case of love as eroticism ('aventures érotiques'). Moreover, the note absorbs love into morality in the phrase: 'vertu amoureuse'. This concept of a song of love or a book of love is not developed further in *Journal* and therefore represents one alternative branch to the moral text or the work of art which is not pursued at length. However, it is possible to include the ten sustained sexual excisions (some of which were quoted and analysed in 1.6.1) as part of this attempt. Their omission in the public edition of the text would be another reason to favour the subscribers' edition.

However, the second prefiguration of the crisis is at least equally as important. It concerns an unorthodox representation of the narrator's subjectivity:

Quelques pages plus haut j'écrivais: ... "une campagne au crépuscule". [...] elle [la campagne] devenait si douce, maternelle et bonne, que je craignais de ne rester moi-même afin de me fondre mieux dans cette bonté. Il m'arrivait souvent de descendre d'un train de marchandises [...]. Je supposais la campagne parfois théâtre d'un fait divers où je plaçais ces héros qui, avec le plus d'efficacité, symboliseront jusqu'à la mort mon véritable drame: entre deux saules isolés un jeune assassin qui, une main dans la poche, braque un revolver et tire dans le dos d'un fermier. La participation imaginaire à une aventure humaine donnait-elle aux

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B. Sichère (1986 and 1987) has suggested that the whole of Jean Genet's *oeuvre* could be called 'un chant d'amour' (p. 121).

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pp. 112-113.



végétaux tant de réceptive douceur? Je les comprenais.<sup>191</sup>

From the outset this passage puts forward a certain instability of the narrator's self, which risks melting ('fondre [...] dans') into the countryside around it thereby abolishing the boundaries between what is inside and outside the self. In the second sentence there appears to be a return to a more conventional representation of the countryside as the theatre in which events take place (the narrator states that he arranges the characters in the tragedy which is about to be played out). However, this tragedy, which is also the narrator's tragedy, will include death. And it is at this point that the narrator appears to pass from the human world completely in the sense that he introduces a distinction between the human world and plant kingdom. The final sentence indicates that his sympathies lie with the plant kingdom (more specifically, with the field of grass and with the two isolated willows). What is more, we have to recall that the narrator mentions that he has been conveyed to the place, not in a passenger, but in a goods train. The narrator is therefore linked at his arrival with the world of inanimate, material and non-human objects. His sympathies with the plant kingdom need to be understood in terms of this.

Now that we have provided an account of both prefigurations of the crisis, let us move on to the crisis itself. It begins with an interruption of the narrative flow, introduced by the following language conscious passage: 'Ce livre décevra sans doute. Afin d'en rompre la monotonie, je veux bien essayer de conter quelques anecdotes, rapporter quelques mots' (p. 115). This passage warns the reader in a more explicit way than both prefigurations above, that *Journal* is about to undergo a modification of form. There follow seven distinct fragments of increasing length which break the narrative flow (and then partially restore it on account of their increasing length). Let us give an example of the second fragment which can almost be described as a joke at the expense of Stilitano. His interlocutor asks him if he liked Greece, Stilitano replies: '- C'est pas mal. Mais c'est en partie détruit' (p. 115). Fragments such as this one *are* significantly different from the rest of the text because of their frivolity. The fragments continue until page 119 which begins to take up the thread of the narrative again. The narrator is at crisis point in the narrative as well. He makes his way to the Polish-Czechoslovakian

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p. 101. It is also possible to understand this representation of subjectivity in Sartrean terms as the impossible 'en-soi pour-soi'. The fatal desire of humans towards matter.

border (in the company of Michaelis) but both are arrested. It is at this point of the narrator's impotence that he discovers that Michaelis loves him and he rejects that love. It is also at this point that there is a sustained language conscious analysis of the text (pp. 121-124).

The crisis begins with a deprecation of language consciousness: 'Parler de mon travail d'écrivain serait un pléonasme' (p. 121), but this is precisely what the narrator goes on to do. However, this deprecation still serves to introduce the first (and only) reference to the narrator as writer ('écrivain'): so the *thief's* journal does not tell the whole story. The narrator goes on to compare two attitudes to writing. Of the first the narrator says: 'Cependant si j'examine ce que j'écrivis j'y distingue aujourd'hui, patiemment poursuivie, une volonté de réhabilitation des êtres, des objets, des sentiments réputés vils' (p. 122). This first attitude is familiar to us as the attempt to write a moral work. Of the second he writes: '[...] mais aujourd'hui que je me relis, j'ai oublié ces garçons, il ne reste d'eux que cet attribut que j'ai chanté, et c'est lui qui resplendira dans mes livres d'un éclat égal à l'orgueil [...]' (p. 122). The second attitude which emerges in the course of time privileges the writing as a product at the expense of the model who inspired it. In this second attitude there is an equivalence, however cursory, between the self and the text: 'que je me relis', reading the text is thus reading the self. The narrator thereby consolidates the initial proposition that he is a writer, which risked being lost on account of the deprecation which accompanied it. The fact that both attitudes to writing are his own, implies that (self-) criticism (even self analysis) is part of the 'travail d'écrivain'. In language conscious terms, criticism is the representation of a reception of a type of writing which emulates the function of the (ideal) reader.

We will recall that in the return to the narrative thread immediately before the start of the crisis, the narrator found himself the object of another man's (Michaelis) love and stopped loving Michaelis at that very moment. In the same way, the narrator who calls himself (however tentatively) a writer proceeds to announce his own death as a writer:

En embellissant ce que vous méprisez, voici que mon esprit, lassé de ce jeu qui consiste à nommer d'un nom prestigieux ce qui bouleversa mon coeur, refuse tout qualificatif. Les êtres et les choses, sans les confondre, il les accepte tous dans leur égale nudité. Puis il refuse de les vêtir. Ainsi ne veux-je plus écrire, je meurs

à la Lettre.<sup>192</sup>

This passage describes a turning away from writing which ends in a type of death that it is useful to elaborate.<sup>193</sup> This is because, viewed in the light of what follows it, the death is not permanent. What is described is the (temporary) passing away of an attitude to language in which the abject (for the ideal reader) is embellished. What is being proposed is a different relationship between the writer and the subject of writing (that is to say characters and objects: the phrase ‘les êtres et les choses’ is used here). The first element of the narrator’s different relationship with the subject of his writing after the death of an earlier attitude to writing is solitude. Indeed, the first element is part of what could be described as the narrator’s resurrection. The narrator’s solitude is introduced by a reference to empirical reality in the 1940s from which the narrator then distances himself: ‘les journaux m’enseignent que le monde est inquiet. On reparle de guerre [...]. En moi-même je rentre. [...] Je les [the noises from the world at war outside] éloignerai encore par les couches multiples, et toujours plus épaisses, de mes aventures d’autrefois’ (pp. 122-123). While the narrator’s raw material is still described here as ‘aventures d’autrefois’, its use is no longer to create a moral work (even though, as we will see, the possibility of such a work is not abandoned until much later). Instead, the narrator uses the adventures to isolate himself from the world outside his own subjectivity. The reference above to the cocoon and the safety it offers is confirmed by this description of

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p. 122.

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The phrase ‘[...] je meurs à la Lettre’ is used (omitting the capitalisation) by Gisèle A. Child Bickel as the subtitle for one of the sections in her book *Jean Genet. Criminalité et transcendance* (1987). The section (and the book) ends thus: ‘*Les Paravents* est la pièce qui va le plus vers le vide, l’anéantissement total de la vie: à sa mort, il ne restera plus rien de Saïd, car même sa survie dans une chanson est douteuse. Et donc, si même la parole du vide devient, chez Genet, un échec pour traduire cette expérience, il ne lui reste plus qu’à garder un silence total. Les paroles qu’il écrivit quinze ans avant sa dernière pièce s’avèrent, après coup, prémonitoires: ‘Je meurs à la lettre’ (p. 129). This passage slips from an analysis of fictional survival in a play by Jean Genet (1910-1986) to a conclusion about the author. More important than the unexpected posthumous publication of *Un Captif amoureux* which contradicts Child Bickel’s notion of Genet’s ‘silence’ is the mistake of reading the first person singular pronoun in the phrase from *Journal* simply as the expression of the author. In that passage it is a case of the temporary passing away of a narrative self.

the world: 'Le monde était un torrent, un rapide de forces unies pour me porter à la mer, à la mort' (p. 123). The open and untamed space of the sea (and the countryside mentioned above) contrasts with the enclosed domestic space of the narrator's cocoon.<sup>194</sup> A psychoanalytic description of this passage is also possible: the fatally dangerous open space is maternal (there is a homonymic connection between 'la mer' and 'la mère' familiar to us from *Querelle* and 3.2.4 (this maternal element is also found in the countryside passage: 'elle [la campagne] devenait si douce, maternelle et bonne, que je craignais de ne rester moi-même [...] ' p. 101)). This space is contrasted with the cocoon which is a nurturing space, but its most important aspect is that it is self-created.

The penultimate moment in the crisis refers to pride ('l'orgueil') for the second time (the first reference - p. 122 - concerned a shift in the emphasis of writing, from the model which inspires it to writing as a product ('l'attribut que j'ai chanté' (p. 122)). This pride comes to the narrator because he is aware of his own poverty. The narrator now addresses his readers in the plural:

Vous qui me méprisez n'êtes pas fait d'autre chose que d'une succession de pareilles misères, mais vous n'en aurez jamais la conscience, et par elle l'orgueil, c'est-à-dire la connaissance d'une force qui vous permet de tenir tête à la misère - non votre propre misère, mais à celle dont l'humanité est composée.<sup>195</sup>

Here it is no longer a case of the work being moral because the narrator transfers the importance of his own poverty to himself. He valorises himself and his own awareness, comparing the latter very favourably with the reader's lack of awareness. By implication the narrator is more qualified through his awareness to comment on the human situation in general than the reader.

The final moment in the crisis is analogous to the generalising of poverty above. The narrator makes a reference to an *oeuvre* of '[q]uelques livres et quelques poèmes' and then proceeds to announce the end of writing (we recall that the crisis began with the narrator indirectly calling himself a writer for the first time in *Journal*): 'J'ai trop écrit,

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This discussion of space recalls the analyses of Mary Ann Frese Witt evaluated in 1.4.

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p. 124.

je suis las' (p. 125).<sup>196</sup>

It must be stressed that the crisis that we have now finished analysing in *Journal* should not be understood as the permanent renunciation of morality. This renunciation, like the death(s) of the narrator, is ongoing. In an important language conscious passage the narrator states:

[...] ma vie doit être légende, c'est-à-dire lisible et sa lecture donner naissance à quelque émotion nouvelle que je nomme poésie. Je ne suis plus rien, qu'un prétexte.<sup>197</sup>

Before it was a case of the narrator's past life (that is to say the material which was transformed into the moral work) being a 'matière-prétexte', now it is a case of his whole life being described as an excuse. The lowest ebb of the representation of morality in the text is most probably represented by the following passage:

La bonne volonté des moralistes se brise contre ce qu'ils appellent ma mauvaise foi. S'ils peuvent me prouver qu'un acte est détestable par le mal qu'il fait, moi seul puis décider, par le chant qu'il soulève en moi, de sa beauté, de son élégance; moi seul puis le refuser ou l'accepter.<sup>198</sup>

As in the case of the extracts above, the discussion about morality has been personalised. Here the narrator is at his most uncompromisingly aesthetic. It is no coincidence that a Sartrean concept, 'mauvaise foi', should be used here, nor that this extreme aestheticism should be allied to an emphasis on the narrator's subjective judgements (this aestheticism corresponds to Sartre's description of 'Genet' in the third book of his study, 'L'esthète').

There is one further shift in the language conscious passages in *Journal*. The

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Here are some other examples of the use of the same metaphor: 'Ma lassitude - je ne croyais pas que ce fût la fatigue - m'empêchait de me reposer', p. 172; '*Je ne me sens pas la force d'en entreprendre un nouveau récit*', p. 188; 'Je viens de mal décrire cette opération qui consiste à prendre pour soi la peine des autres mais [...] c'est trop tard, je suis trop las pour que j'entreprenne de vous le montrer mieux', p. 191; 'Aujourd'hui que je suis riche mais las je prie Lucien de prendre ma place'. Moreover three of the narrator's lovers: Pépé, Stilitano and Armand are described with the term 'las' or its cognates (see pp. 41, 67, and 287 and 288).

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p. 133.

198

p. 218.

following passage contains the shift which anticipates the concluding narrative frame and begins by calling an end to writing (73 pages before the end of the text):

Depuis cinq ans j'écris des livres: je peux dire que je l'ai fait avec plaisir mais j'ai fini. Par l'écriture j'ai obtenu ce que je cherchais. Ce qui, m'étant un enseignement, me guidera, ce n'est pas ce que j'ai vécu mais le ton sur lequel je le rapporte. Non les anecdotes mais l'oeuvre d'art. Non ma vie mais son interprétation. C'est ce que m'offre le langage pour l'évoquer, pour parler d'elle, la traduire. Réussir ma légende. Je sais ce que je veux. Je sais où je vais. Les chapitres qui suivront (j'ai dit qu'un grand nombre est perdu) je les livre en vrac.

(Par légende je n'entendais pas l'idée plus ou moins décorative que le public connaissant mon nom se fera de moi, mais l'identité de ma vie future avec l'idée la plus audacieuse que moi-même et les autres, après ce récit, s'en puissent former. Il reste à préciser si l'accomplissement de ma légende consiste dans la plus audacieuse existence possible dans l'ordre criminel.)<sup>199</sup>

The narrator can now speak about the text as if it were already a finished product at the end of a literary career. This finality enables the narrator to make a series of clear oppositions concerning the value of the text. Oppositions between what he lived and the tone in which he reports it, between anecdotes and the work of art and, finally, between his life and the interpretation of his life. The use of the future tense of the verb 'guider' is important because the narrator is starting to sketch here how the work will transcend its own boundaries. Of course, it is not a case of literal transcendence, a projection of the work (into another medium for instance), rather it is the hypothetical application of the principles acquired in the writing of the work (after the artificial finality with which the passage begins) to the narrator's 'future'. The narrator goes on to elaborate the relation between the text and the future in the term 'légende' which is related, not to the past in its usual sense, but to the future in an explicit way (it will be recalled that the term 'légende' was used differently, as a synonym of 'lisible' above). The text (the word 'récit' is used at this point) is thus valued in terms of its potential influence in an unspecified future period.

As a conclusion to 3.6.3 I will quote the whole of the concluding narrative frame which is eminently language conscious. I divide it into two sections. The first section is as follows:

Ce livre ne veut pas être, poursuivant dans le ciel son trajet solitaire, une oeuvre d'art, objet détaché d'un auteur et du monde. Ma vie passée je pouvais la dire sur un autre ton, avec d'autres mots. Je l'ai héroïsée parce que j'avais en moi ce qu'il faut pour le faire, le lyrisme. Mon souci de la cohérence me fait un devoir de poursuivre mon aventure à partir du *ton* de mon livre. Il aura servi à préciser les indications que me *présente le passé*, sur la pauvreté et le crime puni j'ai posé le doigt, plus lourdement, et à plusieurs reprises. C'est vers eux que j'irai. Non avec la préméditation réfléchie de les trouver, à la façon des saints catholiques, mais lentement, sans chercher à escamoter les fatigues, les horreurs de la démarche.

Mais comprend-on ? Il ne s'agit pas d'appliquer une philosophie du malheur, au contraire. Le bagne - nommons cet endroit du monde et de l'esprit - où je me dirige m'offre plus de joies que vos honneurs et vos fêtes. Cependant ce sont ceux-ci que je rechercherai. J'aspire à votre reconnaissance, à votre sacre.<sup>200</sup>

We can see from the very start that the concluding narrative frame proposes that the book does not want to be a work of art. It reaffirms the links with the narrator's subjectivity and the world. After re-establishing this link the narrator speaks in the first person to affirm the choice of both a tone (the heroic)<sup>201</sup> and a technique (lyricism). It is important to note the reflexive self-sufficiency of this personal circuit: the narrator is the creator of the narrative, he makes his own past life heroic by means of his own technique of lyricism. Here it is a case of a veritable act of appropriation. The phrase 'poursuivre mon aventure' is an important one because it signals the point at which the passage begins to consider not the use of the past, but the use of the *tone* of the book in the future. It is because of this that the narrator can use the future tense of the verb 'aller' to describe a move towards poverty and crime, which at one level would suggest that the narrator is moving back into the subjects of his past life. However, the narrator is careful

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pp. 305-306.

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In an autobiographical analysis of two photographs of himself earlier in the text, the narrator stresses that he desired *vicarious* heroism experienced through identification with another character: 'Par ces deux images je puis retrouver la violence qui alors m'animait: de seize à trente ans, dans les bagnes d'enfants, dans les prisons, dans les bars ce n'est pas l'aventure héroïque que je recherchais, j'y poursuivais mon identification avec les plus beaux et les plus infortunés criminels' (p. 97).

to describe the spirit in which journey will be undertaken and to define it in contrast to the spiritual journey of the Saints towards sainthood. For the narrator, the journey and its experiences will be of greater importance than the destination. In the second paragraph more details about the journey follow. However, although there was a reference in the previous paragraph to '[m]on souci de cohérence', the narrator rejects in advance any sense of a logical and teleological application of a philosophy.

In his 1988 essay, Michael Sheringham argues that the portion of the second paragraph of the passage above (beginning with the words 'Le bague [...]') 'reveal[ed] clearly Genet's awareness that the real issues - for instance reconciling his private world with the public one - remain unresolved' (Sheringham, p. 306). The essay is an excellent account of the opposition between narration and experience in the text. However, in the particular case of this portion of the passage, I discern an important difference between the 'bague' for which the narrator is headed and the honours and celebrations of the reader's world which he will seek out ('rechercherai') and to which he aspires ('j'aspire à'). This difference is that attributes in the reader's world are limited to that world, whereas in the case of the penal colony the narrator is referring *both* to a place in the reader's world (Guyana) *and* a place in his own mind. There is also something more factual and objective about the statement that he is heading for the penal colony ('où je me dirige') in comparison with the statements of intent which govern the references to the reader's world.

As a consequence, I would not choose the same portion of the passage as Sheringham as the single end point of a reading of *Journal*; instead, I propose to read on to see what the next paragraph offers. I quote both the second and final section of the concluding narrative frame:

Héroïsé, mon livre, devenu ma Genèse, contient - doit contenir - les commandements que je ne saurais transgresser: si j'en suis digne il me réservera la gloire infâme dont il est le grand maître, car, sinon à lui, à qui me référer? Et du seul point de vue d'une morale plus banale ne serait-ce logique que ce livre entraînant mon corps et m'attirât en prison - non, je précise encore, selon une procédure rapide commandée par vos moeurs; mais par une fatalité qu'il contient, que j'y ai mise, et qui, comme je l'ai voulu, me garde comme témoin, champ d'expérience, preuve par 9 de sa vertu et de ma responsabilité?

Ces fêtes du bague, j'en veux parler. La présence autour de moi de mâles blessés c'est déjà un grand bonheur qui m'est accordé. Je le signale à peine cependant, d'autres situations (l'armée, le sport, etc.) m'en peuvent offrir un pareil. Le second tome de ce "Journal", je l'intitulerai "Affaire de moeurs". Je me propose d'y rapporter, décrire, commenter, ces fêtes d'un bague intime que je découvre en moi après la traversée de cette contrée de moi que j'ai nommée



l'Espagne.<sup>202</sup>

Parts of the first paragraph above were considered as part of the discussion of the penal colony in 3.6.2. It is now becoming clear that the Guyana penal colony does not only play a role as a poetic and imaginative centre in the text; it is also important in terms of the narrative. It was mentioned in 3.6.2 that the narrator reads the cosmogony and genealogy of Genesis as if it were predominantly a book of laws like Exodus. Perhaps the inserted phrase '- doit contenir -' indicates that the narrator is just as much expressing a wish regarding what his book *should* contain, as he is stating what it *does* contain. Once again there is a further reference by the narrator to the authority of his text ('le grand maître') and once again - in common with the start of the concluding narrative frame - the text is personified.

I would situate one end point of *Journal* in the question which starts with the words 'Et du seul point de vue [...]'. The question concerns whether the book will lead the narrator into prison in the future. This, of course, is a question which the text cannot answer because the narrator is dependent on and a product of the text. What the narrator can specify and what *Journal* as a whole has done is to discuss the process by which the hypothesis might be fulfilled. However detailed this discussion is, it is not the same as saying that the narrator will go to prison. It is important to note that it is not a case of whether the narrator will go to the Guyana penal colony, but whether he will go to prison, which in Genet's early prose fiction usually means prison in Europe. Here the narrator is not referring to the imaginary penal colony. In accordance with this more autobiographical discourse (which we still must remember is fictional in the extreme, because it is discussing a hypothetical proposition without giving an answer) the phrases which discuss how the process might be fulfilled, foreground the narrator's realistic qualities (many of which are also part of Sartrean philosophy). They are: the fact of having put ('j'y ai mise') one's fate into the book, as well as remaining as a witness (the phrase: 'témoin émerveillé' is found in Sartre's foreword - see 3.6.1) and the reference to responsibility ('ma responsabilité'). It can be said that this paragraph represents the end point of the more realistic autobiographical discourses in the text which stress the link between the narrator and Jean Genet (1910-1986).

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pp. 306-307.

However, the *Journal* has a second end point which is of equal status although it comes after the first. The reference to 'Ces fêtes du bagné [...]' directly renews the link with the penal colony (mentioned in the passage two paragraphs above) as a place in the mind as well as in the world, but it foregrounds the notion of the penal colony in the world at this point because the last reference to 'bagné' is associated with the concrete vocabulary of a place to which the narrator is heading ('où je me dirige'). The narrator can speak of the place to which he is heading in terms of the present (the injured males around him - each one of them presumably bearing the sexual charge which is so essential for the colony). However, the most perfect expression of the penal colony as a world is another text. This other projected text announced at the end of a text which the narrator has already sworn to be the last (p. 232), is the complement (in the world of the prison colony) to the unanswered question in the paragraph above (regarding whether the narrator will be incarcerated) which belongs to the more realistic and autobiographical world of French and European prisons.<sup>203</sup> It is only at this point that the text moves towards another understanding of 'bagné' and mentions the term 'bagné intime' because the projected text, like *Journal*, cannot exclude the life of the emotions and the imagination.

### 3.6.4 Conclusions

We have seen how the narrator does not hesitate to describe himself in terms of inanimate objects or even abstract relations.<sup>204</sup> As a consequence, the self is configured in a radically different way. However, there are passages in the text which appear to be difficult to interpret other than in a straightforwardly autobiographical way. The first of

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A biographical footnote: the petition by Jean Cocteau and other intellectuals to annul Jean Genet's two years of unspent convictions probably began to circulate about a year after these words were written. Genet (1910-1986) could not have known about the petition and its success at the time of writing.

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We have already seen some examples of this in the first type of language consciousness. I quote three further examples: '[...] jusqu'à la fin ne suis-je qu'un chapelet d'émois [...]' (p. 132); '[...] puis cessant d'être le ballon me voici devenu "le coup d'envoi", et je cesse de l'être pour devenir l'idée qui va du pied au ballon [...]' (p. 133) and 'Près d'eux, je les contenais, contenant l'idée d'eux-mêmes, j'étais leur conscience réfléchissante' (p. 295).

these is a shock to the reader because it occurs in the narrative flow when Barcelona is described. Suddenly the flow is interrupted by the following new paragraph: 'Je suis né à Paris le 19 décembre 1910' (p. 48). The statement of one's birth date appears as the inaugurating act of autobiography (to use the ontological vocabulary which is constantly undermined in *Journal*), grounding the self within the uniqueness of time and place. However, announcing one's own birth date is simultaneously to ask questions in an indirect way about the authority of a historical narrative. Strictly speaking, it is impossible for a person to confirm their place and date of birth in a court of law, because although they were there at a given moment in time, they did not possess sufficient mental capacity to record that moment. This proclamation of provenance is problematised in *Journal* in other ways than the fact that the father was unknown and that the child was entrusted to the 'Assistance Publique'. Provenance is a problem, or rather a matter for interpretation, because it depends on a material document which is outside the domain of the text: the narrator's birth certificate.<sup>205</sup> This document is the motive and the support for that portion of the narrative. However, the apparent certainty of the birth certificate is undermined because it does not enable the narrator to discover anything more about his origins. He is met by a refusal. This prompts him into an extraordinary flight of the imagination across time and space which moves to the Morvan, thence back in time to the age of Gilles de Rais who lived close by, thence to the vegetable kingdom and, finally in a passage analysed in 3.6.2, away from planet earth altogether; his destination is Uranus (the homosexual connotations of the name Uranus are not developed).

The use of a physical artefact (the birth certificate) in this way occurs on several occasions in the text. For instance, both photographs of the narrator function in the same way (on pp. 95-97). They ground an apparently infallibly authentic narrative about the self. The photographs are both described in terms of the visual image that they carry and as a consequence it would appear that they are the best evidence in the establishment of

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The more directly autobiographical passages of *Journal* do not narrate the abandonment of the child by his mother; this is left for the reader to infer from the context. However the narrator does explore abandonment and its cognates in his imaginary encounter with his mother who he imagines is an old thief (p. 22). Colin Davis (1994) has discussed the explicitly fictional aspects of this encounter and indicates how Sartre's selective quotation of the passage in *Saint Genet* elides it (pp. 51-54).

the link between the narrator and Jean Genet (1910-1986). After all they are: 'photographies de l'identité judiciaire' (p. 95). However, this certainty is gradually dismantled as part of a process of defamiliarisation outlined by Sartre in the foreword to the text. For the narrator, the first photograph already represents a stranger: 'Je parlais avec bonté d'un autre Jean que moi-même' (p. 95). It is the photograph itself which enables the kindly tone, but what is said in the kindly tone attacks the objectivity of the photograph. This initial reflexivity between the narrator and the photograph of the narrator signals the start of a whole series of expressions of the doubling of the narrator, a stranger to himself and yet self-sufficient because the secondary beings (like 'Jean' in the photograph) are his own creation. Here are some examples of these reflexive passages: 'Tant de solitude m'avait forcé à faire de moi-même pour moi un compagnon' (p. 96). In the following passage the narrator proposes ingestion of the other (who is also part of the self) as a method to maintain duality and a stable external form (as in the photograph). Evidently, the metaphors here owe a great deal to Catholic liturgy (transubstantiation) as well as to conception and pregnancy:

[...] sans modifier les dimensions de mon corps mais parce qu'il était plus facile peut-être de contenir une aussi précieuse raison à tant de gloire, c'est en moi que j'établis cette divinité - origine et disposition de moi-même. Je l'avalai. Je lui dédiais les chants que j'inventais.<sup>206</sup>

The next object (after the photograph) which suggests transcendence in the texts is found in a new paragraph on page 285 which begins with the assertion: 'Dans chaque ville importante de France, je connais au moins un voleur avec qui j'ai travaillé [...]' (p. 285). The narrator goes on to name some of them, referring to a notebook in which their names are recorded. This notebook is then referred to as a piece of evidence to underwrite the authority of the narrator: 'Le carnet que j'ai dans la poche est la preuve écrite que j'eus de tels amis' (p. 287). However, it is at this same moment that the narrator notes his solitude and the fragmentary nature of their relations; the passage continues: '[...] mais leur vie est aussi incohérente apparemment que la mienne et je ne sais réellement rien d'eux' (p. 287). The narrating subject who asserted himself in such a vigorous manner at the start of the paragraph is also affected; he fades, becoming indistinct. This leads us towards the conclusion that the self in *Journal* is dependent on

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p. 96.

tone and that tone is a linguistic construction which is frequently initially linked to a singular narrating subject. However, the subject should not be seen as the origin of the tone.

Perhaps the most conclusive references to objects which will link the narrator with Jean Genet (1910-1986) (and which also transcend the text in the ways that we have seen above) concern the many references to other works in Genet's *oeuvre*. It is frequently the case that references are made in *Journal* to 'mes livres' rather than to the singular with specific reference to the text ('ce récit'). Therefore at these moments the narrator harks back to himself as an author<sup>207</sup> not only of *Journal*, but of a whole *oeuvre* which includes a poem (p. 54) *Miracle* (p. 181), *Notre-Dame* (p. 259) and the ballet 'Adame Miroir (p. 302). These references would seem to provide comparisons, elaborations and reinterpretations of characters and situations. However, when they are examined closely, they seem to be a gratuitous mention of the other works of Jean Genet, rather than an essential part of the narrative structure or a centre of poetic resonance.<sup>208</sup> These references are a type of hyper-language consciousness which transcends the work in which they are written. In terms of their extreme nature they would seem to accord with the climax of *Saint Genet, comédien et martyr*, where 'Genet' becomes a writer. However, we should not forget that they are narratively and poetically infertile for *Journal* because they are directed outside it.

Considered together, these examples of transcendence in *Journal* (references to the narrator's legend, to a sequel to the text, to objects and to other works) which are all

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**The term 'auteur' is used only twice in the text: '(un texte - reconciliation avec Java - est supprimé par les soins de l'auteur commandé par sa tendresse pour le héros)' (p. 285). This parenthesis takes the place of a reconciliation excised from the subscribers' edition which begins with the narrator insulting Java and ends with sex. The second occurrence is found at the start of the concluding narrative frame: 'Ce livre ne veut pas être, poursuivant dans le ciel son trajet solitaire, une oeuvre d'art, objet détaché d'un auteur et du monde' (p. 305).**

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On the other hand the references to characters which occur in other texts are inconspicuous, integrated into the narrative and do not aim to transcend it. They are found on pp. 56 (Rasseneur from *Miracle*); p. 81 (a nameless naval ensign from *Notre-Dame*, p. 10); 119 (Erik from *Pompes*) and 267 (Seck Gorgui from *Notre-Dame* [spelt 'Sek' in *Journal*]).

directed outside the text in some way, offer the only possibility of a single organising principle for the text, but only if applied in retrospect. If we look at the language consciousness which does not attempt to transcend the text, *Journal* appears to be organised around constantly renewed episodes or scenes which are often in a contradictory relation to one another. *Journal* is a text which is creatively and beautifully deformed by forces pulling it in several different directions at once. There are the combined forces of transcendence towards the narrator's future and towards extra-textual artefacts; there are those forces which seek to rehabilitate the narrator's past life for a moral end and also those which stress the self-sufficiency and finality of the writing of the text itself as a work of art. The achievement of *Journal* is perhaps that no single one of these forces is allowed to dominate the text, regardless of how much space it occupies within it.

### 3.7 Conclusions on Language Consciousness

This conclusion has two main aims. The first is to draw attention to the similarities and differences between the results of the analysis of language consciousness in all five works of Genet's early prose fiction. The second aim is to widen the discussion, in anticipation of the General Conclusions which follow, to examine how it is possible to elaborate the relationship between language consciousness and subjectivity and language (in particular the language of representation and interpretation). To achieve these aims this conclusion will address three main areas, narrator, narrative function and genre, relating the first and the second aims to each of them in turn.

So often literary criticism takes the meaning of the term 'narrator' for granted. The term is one of the tools of the trade in literary criticism and is applied to the majority of fiction in prose. The problem with the prevalent use of term is that the balance of power between self and function is rarely discussed. The narrator's self can manifest itself in different ways; for instance the narrator frequently acts in the same way as other characters in the text and is often represented in a distinct physical way; that is to say that we see him or her performing actions in world represented in the text. If I were to situate each of the narrators in Genet's five works of early prose fiction on a scale between pure textuality and ontology (I will say below why it is impossible to find Genetian a narrator occupying the extreme of either scale) the results would be as follows: the most textual is the narrator of *Querelle*, who is not represented in the text in a physical way. The second most textual narrator is that of *Notre-Dame* who is most concrete during the limited duration of the narrative frame which encloses the main body of the text. The narrator of *Pompes* stands at mid-point between textuality and concreteness (he is a character in the text, but there appears to be a constant flight from his occupation of the first person singular pronoun which shifts away to be used by other characters). The narrators of *Miracle* and *Journal* are both concrete and the narrator of *Journal* only marginally more so because in that text there are fewer digressions into the lives of groups of characters of which the narrator is not a part.

If the narrator is not positively identified in a text, then this dissimulation is usually seen as part of a deliberate narrative strategy. However, what distinguishes the

narrator from the rest of the characters is his<sup>209</sup> function which I will cursorily describe as the mediation between the reader and the text. The narrator seeks to channel the reader's interpretation and exclude certain other interpretations. For conventional literary criticism, ontology and function can be found in the same textual entity and do not affect each other. On some occasions the narrator is considered as a character, on others the embodiment of the author and on yet others an impersonal mediating force.

However, we can never take the narrator for granted in Genet's early prose fiction because each of the five texts draws attention to the specific way in which each narrator is constructed in terms of *both self and function*. Their interrelation demands to be taken notice of in criticism of Genet's texts, but has been ignored up till now. The narrator's self is not straightforward and always synonymous with personality or individuality, with ontology. We have already seen in 1.4 how many previous critics of Genet's work have simply equated the narrator with Jean Genet (1910-1986); this leads them to create and discuss a spurious ontology of the narrator. In their texts the narrator is often referred to as in the same terms as a person in empirical reality. Even the most perceptive critics who base their analyses on the language of the text (the fifth category in 1.4) fall into this mode of writing about the narrator in Genet's texts. Take the following extract from Philip Watts's generally excellent article 'Political Discourse and Poetic Register in Jean Genet's *Pompes funèbres*' (1992):

As a character in his own work, Genet is constantly confronted with media images and is decidedly writing against them. In an attempt to distance his writing from the language of society, Genet predicates what he calls a 'registre des poètes.'<sup>210</sup>

The naming of the narrator in this extract bypasses a source of the complexity of *Pompes* which is the way that the narrator undermines a straightforward notion of autobiography. The narrator is indeed called Jean Genet (Jean Genêt in the subscribers' edition); however, as we have seen, the narrator also writes about himself as dead, instead of recollecting his past life with Jean D. My language-conscious approach to Genet's early prose fiction avoids positing an equivalence between the narrator and Jean Genet (1910-1986). In the main body of this chapter we have seen how the narrator acts; however,

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<sup>209</sup>

Only the narrator of *Querelle* is of indeterminate gender.

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p. 191.



his actions have a textual effect without necessarily tying him to a particular identity or name: after all, the narrator shares the use of the first person singular and plural with the characters. Therefore, instead of discussing the narrator as 'Genet [who] predicates', my own concrete references to the narrator in this chapter concern his textual effects. Here are some examples of references to the narrator's actions in the present chapter: 'the narrator is a poet who writes books' (3.4.5), 'the narrator is in control and Ernestine is a character' (3.3.4) and 'the narrator is dependent on and a product of the text' (3.6.3).

Let us now move on to an examination of language consciousness from the point of view of narrative function. This examination is tantamount to investigating the implications of language consciousness by asking what it does in the text. At first sight it would seem that a language conscious passage has no narrative function at all; this is because the narrator takes a rest from the activity of telling for its duration in order to speculate temporarily on the production or reception of the language which mediates between the text and the reader. However, I have shown how we must not make an absolute formal distinction between the language conscious passage and the rest of the text which envelops it; the introduction to this chapter (3.1) warns against considering language consciousness as simply a discrete discourse. Rather, I would prefer to consider language consciousness as *combining* a speculation on aspects of language with the narration of the plot. This combinatory approach coincides with two points made in the body of the chapter: first, language consciousness is not a metalanguage which is able to comment authoritatively on the text from a point inside it. And secondly, taken as a **whole, language conscious passages provide neither a poetics of the text in which they** occur nor a putative poetics of Genet's early prose fiction. Language consciousness is closely linked to the plot of *Notre-Dame* and especially to that of *Querelle* because interpretative authority and a speculation on language is devolved to characters.

The final aspect of language consciousness that will be treated in this conclusion is its intersection with genre. Genre can be understood in terms of the other types of writing that are referred to in language conscious passages. *Notre-Dame* refers to and uses popular fiction as a foil for an investigation of the text itself. *Pompes*, *Miracle* and *Querelle* all refer to poetry in different ways. *Pompes* opposes poetry to the avowed aim of the text to commemorate the death of Jean D. with references to his life and the narrator's past life with him. *Miracle* uses the term 'poète' to relativise autobiography and *Querelle* expresses the isolation of Gil as an apprenticeship of poetry.

The references to the genres of popular fiction and poetry are explicitly signalled

by the text and they may be considered as a theme within it, linking novelistic fiction with other genres. Furthermore, it is also possible to broaden the notion of genre by considering language consciousness as the complex interdependence, particular to each text, between language (above all representation and interpretation) and consciousness (forms of subjectivity). As a consequence, it is possible to regard language consciousness as both an intersection between literature and literary criticism and between literature and philosophy. In these more theoretical implications of genre and language consciousness, I am using a combinatory approach once again. Language consciousness is not literary criticism but it shares with literary criticism a concern about authority and interpretation. It implies the following questions: who comments on what and by what authority? In Genet's texts interpretation is never taken for granted as communicated by an omniscient narrator who holds sway over the text clearly directing the interpretation. Language conscious passages in Genet's early prose fiction often have interpretation as their subject; not only in the sense that a particular textual issue is at stake, but also in the sense that the forms and the language of interpretation are important in themselves.

Language consciousness is associated with the intersection between literature and philosophy because, although Genet's texts are not analytically or discursively philosophical, they experiment with different representations of subjectivity. This experimentation is exemplified by the dynamic way in which the concept of language consciousness is interpreted in this chapter and thesis. It is not only a discourse, nor is it the expression of a singular subjectivity - language consciousness is not ontological; it is in fact a relationship between interpretative language (meaning) and forms of subjectivity. Fictional writing in particular offers possibilities of exploring the limits of both in new and interesting ways.

Let us finally review two examples of this type of exploration which were analysed in the present chapter. First, there is the innovative form of writing autobiography post mortem in *Pompes*. This type of writing subverts a datum as fundamental as death. Secondly, the introductory narrative frame of *Notre-Dame* speculates on the creation of a fictional text in terms of a debate between creation as spontaneous production *ex nihilo* (this could be called the divine mode of creation) and creation as being possessed by inspiration and material from outside (because of its association with the muse, this could be called the antique and human mode of creation). In having both modes active at once, the introductory narrative frame thus not only deals with the genesis of the narrative but plays out the tension in the narrator's way of writing

about his own subjectivity in terms of God or man. The result is a most interesting combination of the divine and the antique human, transposed into the contemporary setting of a prison cell.

## 4.0 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

‘[...] dass über das Nichts und das Sein [...] keine Auskunft erteilen lässt, die in der Form von Aussagesätzen griffbereit vorliegen kann’ (Martin Heidegger, *Zur Seinsfrage*).<sup>1</sup>

### 4.1 Outline

Before proceeding with the general conclusions of the present thesis, it is necessary to clarify the relation that they have with the rest of the thesis. 4.0 will distinguish itself from the rest of this thesis by the brevity and schematic nature of its references to the corpus. I intend this section neither to be the prolongation of the textual analysis in the main body of the thesis, nor a substitute for it. The general conclusions are intended to briefly develop some of the theoretical implications of the interdependence of subjectivity, representation and language. This interdependence was outlined in 1.2 and partially elaborated in the conclusions of the second and third chapters (2.4 and 3.7). The aim is a theoretical elaboration of the study of Genet’s early prose fiction rather than a detailed comparison between my corpus and other texts by Jean Genet (1910-1986).

Due to the fact that these three concepts are not usually considered together, it will be necessary to allow their specificity to emerge. However, because the main purpose of these General Conclusions is to emphasise the interdependence and the exact nature of the connections between them, they cannot be considered in isolation. To solve this dilemma of simultaneous singularity and interdependence I have chosen to look at the same material from three different view points putting the accent on language, representation and subjectivity in turn. Thus the sections are titled as follows: 4.2 Language (Subjectivity and Representation), 4.3 Representation (Subjectivity and Language) and 4.4 Subjectivity (Representation and Language). Bivalency is a feature of all of these concepts because they can be understood both at an individual and collective level.

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First published in *Freundschaftliche Begegnungen, Festschrift für Ernst Jünger* (Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1955; p. 9-45) with the title ‘Über "die Linie"’ and later renamed: *Zur Seinsfrage [On the Question of Being]*. I use the first publication as my reference text. The translation of the epigraph of this chapter is: ‘that no information can be given about nothingness and Being [...] which can be presented tangibly in the form of assertions.’

## 4.2 Language (Subjectivity and Representation)

First and foremost it is necessary to emphasise the importance of language. Secondly, it is important to foreground language modification. Genet's early prose fiction and the other theoretical and philosophical texts which I will introduce here (by Martin Heidegger and Roland Barthes) actively go beyond the dictionary as far as the use of individual words is concerned. They also include other types of language use and the discourses of other genres at the level of the paragraph and the page.

From the title of Martin Heidegger's essay *Zur Seinsfrage* [*On the Question of Being*] there would seem to be no doubt as to the question that the philosopher wants to address. However, the first title of Heidegger's essay was 'Über "die Linie"' a punning reference to a text by Ernst Jünger.<sup>2</sup> I could propose a third title of the essay: 'Zum Sagen und Schreiben der Seinsfrage' - 'On How to Speak and Write the Question of Being'. This is because the language with which he speaks about Being is constantly emphasised.<sup>3</sup> Three terms are used to refer to language: 'Rede' 'Sprache' and 'Sagen'.<sup>4</sup> Heidegger constantly struggles with language and, put end to end, his references to language demonstrate a dissatisfaction with merely expressive and scientific language ('blosses Ausdrucksmittel' (p. 17); 'wissenschaftliche Aussagen' (p. 25) as well as

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*Über die Linie*, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, 1950.

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Here are some examples of Heidegger's discussion about language (in addition to the epigraph of 4.0): 'Die Position des Nihilismus ist, so scheint es, in gewisser Weise durch das Überqueren der Linie schon aufgegeben, aber *seine Sprache ist geblieben*. Ich meine hier die Sprache nicht als blosses Ausdrucksmittel [...]' (p. 17); 'In den genannten Grundworten waltet ein anderes Sagen als das wissenschaftliche Aussagen' (p. 25); 'In welcher Sprache spricht der Grundriss des Denkens, das ein Überqueren der Linie vorzeichnet?' (p. 26); 'Die Rede vom "Sein" jagt das Vorstellen einer Verlegenheit in die andere, ohne dass sich die Quelle dieser Ratlosigkeit zeigen möchte' (p. 29) and 'Einmal um anzudeuten, dass es keineswegs leichter ist, "das Sein" zu sagen, als vom Nichts zu sprechen; sodann aber, um erneut zu zeigen, wie unabwendbar hier alles auf das rechte Sagen ankommt [...]' (p. 30).

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Language is considered in both its verbal and written forms (though Heidegger does not dwell on the relationship or distinctions between them at this point - Jacques Derrida in his *De la grammatologie* (1967) made them the cornerstone of his philosophy of language).

‘Auskunft’ and ‘Aussagesätzen’ (p. 31)). However, this dissatisfaction does not lead to a fatalistic or defeatist attitude to language; Heidegger will not seek to negate it in an absolute way. Rather, at the same time as the dissatisfaction, *Zur Seinsfrage* elaborates language as a remainder (‘*seine Sprache ist geblieben*’ p. 17) as another language (‘*ein anderes Sagen*’ p. 25) and as the right language (‘*das rechte Sagen*’ p. 30).

It is possible to view the difference between these two types of language as a move away from language which is an emanation, directed outwards from one being to another (the prefix ‘aus’ is a common feature denoting the language with which he is dissatisfied). Heidegger strikes through Being and thus also strikes through this type of language use. Therefore the expectations raised by Heidegger’s second title appears to promise that his work will address the question of Being will not be fulfilled in the form of an answer. Language has been modified and the new form will be elliptical, non-categorical (and the same applies to Being). To illustrate this, the only positive formulation of Being in *Zur Seinsfrage* is highly elliptical:

[...] um es im Bilde zu sagen, das Sein der Schirm ist, den die Vergesslichkeit eines Philosophieprofessors irgendwo hat stehen lassen.<sup>5</sup>

Here, Heidegger expressly refers to his composition of an image (‘das Bild’) of Being based on absence and invisibility (and Nietzsche’s writing). This image of Being is oxymoronic because it has been announced as visual, but does not have a concrete existence. In a modern technological mode, we could call it ‘virtual’.

Let us now consider the importance of language in this study of Genet’s early prose fiction. I use the term ‘subjectivity’ in the present thesis in a similar way to Heidegger’s use of the term ‘Sein’ in *Zur Seinsfrage*. They are the first conceptual terms in the titles of this thesis and Heidegger’s essay. ‘Sein’ is the key problematic of Heidegger’s philosophical work and I would argue that the traditional definition of subjectivity is at the heart of the fundamental problem in Genet studies: whether and how the work and the life of Jean Genet (1910-1986) are connected. This is because many critics have viewed the texts as expressions of the subjectivity of Jean Genet (1910-1986). However, as explained in 1.2, this thesis does not treat subjectivity as coterminous with individuality and personality. Although ‘subjectivity’ is written in the singular in its title,

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p. 36. To say it in an image, Being is the umbrella that the forgetfulness of a philosophy professor left standing around somewhere.

the present thesis explores the plurality of the concept because it applies to several different textual entities such as narrators, characters (who describe themselves in the first person singular) and even the ideal reader (all of these textual entities differ according to the work in which they appear).

Furthermore, the importance of language is underscored because subjectivity is discussed in linguistic terms. This thesis is concerned with the writing of the self in Genet's texts and *Gesture and Language Consciousness*, the two pillars of the present thesis, are *linguistic* features, not themes (other theses have provided sustained accounts of the following themes: the sacred, the feminine, the symbolism of the mirror, myth and the organic imagination. See 6.2). *Gesture* in particular is linked to a specific guide-word ('*geste*'). Although language consciousness is more difficult to pin down to a specific vocabulary, it may still be summarised in terms of language use because it concerns passages which refer to the production or reception of a passage, episode, or the whole text. Chapters two and three of this study have analysed the range of the appearances of these linguistic features in Genet's early prose fiction, linking them constantly with subjectivity, but also with processes which are inextricably linked to language such as: representation and interpretation.

Let us now move on to the modification of language. I will look first at how language is modified in Heidegger's text (both at the level of the word and in terms of genre) and then go on to look at a philosophical reading of the later work of Roland Barthes by Mary Bittner Wiseman, before discussing the modification of language in Genet's early prose fiction in comparison with them.

Heidegger's modifies language at the level of the word and concept of 'Sein' by striking it through with a cross, the first stroke of which runs from top left to bottom right and the second from top right to bottom left. Strictly speaking, this bold use of a graphic figure is a non-lexical modification of language (we cannot find the meaning of the striking through in a dictionary). The effect of this striking through is to signal the provisionality of the concept which can neither be entirely affirmed or denied.

Heidegger can also be said to modify language in terms of genre and this modification is as important as the question of Being. Indeed this modification of language in which Being is spoken or written is the only answer to the question of Being and it is not an answer in the traditional sense as it is more of a critique of the premises of the question and a modification of that question, rather than a response to it which respects it and leaves it intact. Elliptical language (towards which *Zur Seinsfrage* tends)

is not credible according to a strict interpretation from the point of view of analytical philosophy. However, the only positive formulation of Being quoted by Heidegger resembles poetry more closely than it does the scientific discourse of philosophy.

In her 'Rewriting the Self: Barthes and the Utopias of Language',<sup>6</sup> Mary Bittner Wiseman uses texts written in the last ten years of Barthes' life to explore experimental uses of language which are associated with 'a theory of the material subject' (p. 295) which is different from 'Aristotelian, Cartesian and eighteenth century' notions of self.<sup>7</sup> I will return to how we can understand these conflicting notions of the self in 4.4 Subjectivity (Representation and Language); however at this point a working definition will equate the Aristotelian, Cartesian and eighteenth century notions of the self with the traditional definitions of subjectivity based on individuality and personality found in the *Oxford English Dictionary* and quoted in 1.3. My aim here will not be to analyse Barthes's contributions to the debate in detail but to pick out those elements in Bittner Wiseman's analysis of his texts<sup>8</sup> which can then be compared to my analysis of Heidegger's essay before relating them both back to the theoretical implications of the concepts of Subjectivity, Language and Representation in Genet's early prose fiction.

Once again, as in the case of Heidegger's *Zur Seinsfrage*, to ask questions about the self necessarily entails a consideration of the language in which the enquiry takes place. As Bittner Wiseman sees it, Barthes's problem was how to experiment with language and elaborate an alternative notion of the self from a position which is inside language. Bittner Wiseman quotes Barthes who outlined a strategy to overcome this in a 1977 lecture to the Collège de France:

Human language has no exterior: there is no exit. We can get out of it only at the

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Published in *Literature and the Question of Philosophy*, Anthony J. Cascardi (ed.) Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987 (pp. 292-313).

7  
I quote from Anthony J. Cascardi's synopsis of Bittner Wiseman's essay, p. 292.

8  
*Leçon inaugurale de la chaire de sémiologie littéraire du Collège de France, prononcée le 7 janvier 1977*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1978. However, Bittner Wiseman also refers to *Le Plaisir du texte*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1973; *La Chambre claire; Note sur la photographie*, Paris, Gallimard and Éditions du Seuil, 1980.



price of the impossible: by mystical singularity... But for those of us who are neither knights of the faith nor superman the only remaining alternative is... to cheat with speech, to cheat speech.<sup>9</sup>

The subjects of Bittner Wiseman's essay are the activity of cheating with speech and the elaboration of a genre, a linguistic space where the cheating can be performed. Bittner Wiseman calls these utopias of language. I am going to concentrate on the first of these utopias; 'The Theatricalization of Writing' where the assertive and referential functions of language are cheated (as in *Zur Seinsfrage* there is a movement away from language as expressive communication). The strategy of cheating closely resembles the effect of the striking through of 'Sein' in Heidegger's essay where Being is crossed through and initially negated, but is visible underneath. As if to underline the virtual quality - a term I applied in the analyses of Heidegger and Genet's texts - of these strategies for cheating language. Bitter Wiseman writes: '[t]he effort simultaneously to use language and to disengage it from its assertive function involves acting [...]; actors quintessentially utter sentences without asserting them, and writers who use language nonreferentially are, so far forth, like actors' (p. 300). And for Bitter Wiseman Barthes is one of these writers.

What can Heidegger's *Zur Seinsfrage* and Bittner Wiseman's analysis of Barthes' later writings tell us about the modification of language in Genet's early prose fiction? In Genet's texts language is modified both at the level of the individual word and at the level of genre. Concrete modifications of dictionary definitions do occur, but they are rare; the most conspicuous example is the use of the term 'gesticulation' which denotes a character's gestures considered as a whole, rather than the standard notion of much or excessive gesturing. However, the use of the term 'geste' can be said to be modified from standard usage because, as we have seen, gestures in Genet's early prose fiction are neither inextricably linked to human movement nor are they understood primarily in terms of their visual appearance. So the modification of the term 'geste' is a modification which brings language into a connection between gesture and subjectivity.

How about modification at the level of genre? The conclusion of *Language Consciousness* has shown how Genet's texts can be seen to intersect with both philosophical and literary critical discourses. Indeed, there is debate about whether to call the texts novels, or some other term such as autofictions. Earlier critics such as Thody

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9

p. 297.

(1968) and Coe (1968) followed the convention established since the publication of the public editions of the texts and made a distinction between four novels and one autobiography (*Journal*).

Whether we choose to call these texts novels or early prose fiction, the ability of these texts to integrate other genres and discourses cannot be in doubt. In the case of Genet's texts, we find poems,<sup>10</sup> aphorisms,<sup>11</sup> cinematographic tableaux,<sup>12</sup> letters,<sup>13</sup> speeches,<sup>14</sup> lists<sup>15</sup> and songs.<sup>16</sup> The fluidity of the genre of these texts affects the representation of subjectivity and as we will discuss in 4.4, different genres coincide with different forms of the narrator's subjectivity. For instance in *Pompes* the narrator is both a novelist and a poet.

The terms 'modification' and 'shifting' recur at a structural level throughout this thesis. This is because one of the features of Genet's texts is that once relations have been set up (for example between Subjectivity, Gesture and Language Consciousness, or between subjectivity, representation and language) the texts explore different permutations of them, which form and deform the concepts. It is only possible to set down the starting

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10

*Pompes*, pp. 61 and 106-107 (a prayer-poem); *Miracle*, p. 131.

11

*Pompes*, p. 50.

12

*Notre-Dame*, pp. 78-87, 202-204 and 356-359.

13

*Notre-Dame*, pp. 376-377; *Miracle*, p. 89.

14

*Miracle*, pp. 207-210.

15

*Journal*, p. 60; *Miracle*, p. 22.

16

*Notre-Dame*, p. 85; *Journal*, p. 196; *Miracle*, pp. 188-189.

points and the home keys of the narrative extemporisations in Genet's texts which never come to an end and provide a definitive answer. In this thesis I have attempted to provide a complete series of representative snapshots of various answers.

#### 4.3 Representation (Subjectivity and Language)

At one level it would seem that the link between representation and language must be taken for granted in Genet's five works of prose fiction. Hence it could be argued that it is impossible for the texts to provide anything other than representation in language. However, this is far from being the case in Genet's early prose fiction and in the texts by Heidegger and Mary Bittner Wiseman referred to in these General Conclusions. Representation is never taken for granted in these three texts because what is being represented is never straightforward. Language is complex, subjectivity is too, therefore their representation is affected by their complexity or, more correctly, is an integral part of their complexity.

Returning to Heidegger's only positive formulation of Being in *Zur Seinsfrage*: '[t]o say it in an image. Being is the umbrella that the forgetfulness of a philosophy professor left standing around somewhere.' I considered this above as a piece of elliptical language. The virtual nature of this formulation not only modifies language but also puts representation into question. Here, Being has no location and it is not a goal of rational thought, indeed it is literally associated with aimlessness; the only way that it is anchored is by a reference to a statement by another philosopher which itself elliptical. Thus representation is not completed in a concrete sense where one thing is identified as another, or where a signifier latches on to the signified (however temporarily). The umbrella mentioned as part of the copulative phrase with 'être' is arbitrary, any object which could have been forgotten would have served the same purpose. There is a relation between Heidegger's and Nietzsche's text but this is a citational, punning relation and not a representation in the conventional sense. However, it is clear from the dissatisfaction with language and the indications of another type of language discussed in the previous section that representation too must be problematised and must even fail, but that this failure is not absolutely negative; links can and must be made in other ways.

In Genet's early prose fiction representation is associated with the visible or visualisability which manifests itself in a concrete way in references to visual genres (such as photography and film) and in an indirect way in relation to the visual element in gesture.

As far as the references to photographs and films are concerned, it must be granted that the medium for the communication of these different genres and types of artistic production is of course limited to French prose. However, there is both a sustained commentary on the specificities of these genres on their own terms and in comparison with prose. Another added feature is the speculation on the limits of linguistic representation which are linked to different forms of subjectivity as well as to a foregrounding of visuality over text. The supreme example in this domain are the carnets of Querelle and Divine which are made up of pictograms and which form part of the devolution of narrative authority (and power to engage in representation) away from the narrative authority itself to a character who commands a means of expression to which the narrator is not privy.

Let us now consider visual representation in gesture. Contrary to expectations gestures are not always expressions of the individual character which can be said to belong to that character on account of their visual distinctiveness. The visual component of gesture is nearly always referred to, but the particular feature of Genet's early prose fiction is that it is hardly ever completed and distinct (The Double Gesture is the exception, but these gestures are still not dependent on one character). It is therefore the failure of language to represent or mediate gesture clearly which is the most interesting aspect of gesture in Genet's early prose fiction and one of the main aspects dealt with in the chapter on gesture.

I will reserve the main substance of the discussion of subjectivity until the next section; however, it should be stressed that one of the most important reasons for the complexity of representation in Genet's early prose fiction is that language must represent subjectivity and this subjectivity takes many forms as does language and that the two concepts inevitably have an effect on representation which is never a simple process in Genet's texts. Representation in these texts must also take into account the failures of the representation of subjectivity.

#### 4.4 Subjectivity (Representation and Language)

The methodological principles of my approach in the present thesis confirm both the importance of subjectivity and its intersection with representation and language. For instance the source material for the discussion of subjectivity is not based on the corporeal individuality of an author such as Jean Genet (1910-1986), a feature shared by the definitions of subjectivity from the *Oxford English Dictionary* mentioned in 1.3.

Instead subjectivity is elaborated exclusively in terms of language, in two editions of five texts and in the differences between them. I have deliberately sought to indicate how the publication history of the texts is frequently distinct from the personal history of Jean Genet (1910-1986) and how the former can make a useful contribution to the interpretation of the corpus.

The concept of subjectivity which emerges in Genet's early prose fiction is diverse and is organised around the narrator, individual characters (and the connections between characters - intersubjectivity) and even around a notion of an ideal reader of the texts. Subjectivity in Genet's texts is at one remove from Kant's transcendental subject because it is wholly mediated through language rather than through a self-conscious being who can experience the world. Heidegger too, in his approach to the question of Being which dominated his philosophical writing, continued to make a distinction between the specificities of the individual human being ('das Seiende' [entities in the real world]) on one hand and Being [Sein] on the other. The importance of empirical reality in Kant and Heidegger distinguishes their concepts of subjectivity from the one that I have attempted to elaborate here. However, the location in Genet's texts of the source material for my concept of subjectivity, does not mean that Genet's texts are irrelevant, in methodological terms, to other (more strictly philosophical) approaches to the topic. This is because it is advantageous for *all* writing and thinking about the subject to include at least as much speculation on concomitant factors such as its own form and the medium in which it is conducted, as on the purported object of the thinking or writing itself (Heidegger's later works appear to have been increasingly open to this shift in emphasis).

#### 4.5 Final Comments

The prime subject matter of these General Conclusions is the interdependence between subjectivity, representation and language and how to discuss it. Genet's early prose fiction, the texts by Barthes, Heidegger and Bittner Wiseman all confound attempts to establish a hierarchy among these three concepts. In all three texts language is not modified because it reflects the variations in subjectivity and thus is forced to express them. Nor is language the instance which moulds subjectivity. I argue that Genet's early prose fiction brings to the fore a mode of conceiving relations which suspends origin and possession. Of course this thesis does not aim to refute the fact that Jean Genet (1910-1986) was the author of the five works of early prose fiction under consideration here; nevertheless this origin is not useful in the approach of this thesis. The writing of the

self, of subjectivity, should not be considered as limited to this origin or as the expression of its singularity. Herein lies the general relevance of the interdependent concepts of subjectivity, representation and language, none of which can be altered without altering the others.

## 5.0 APPENDICES A-E: Lists of Excisions and Variants Between the Subscribers' and Public Editions of Genet's Early Works of Prose Fiction<sup>1</sup>

### 5.1 APPENDIX A

#### *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*, Excisions and Variants

'tous droits réservés à la succession de Jean Genet'

References to the Collection Folio edition are followed by those of the subscribers' edition. Particularly important variants are marked with an asterisk and additions with a mathematical plus sign. Speech marks replace the French 'guillemets' («[...]») in the subscribers' edition.

F11 [...] de peur. Toutes les cellules [...] et priaient Dieu. Je vis [...]  
12 [...] de peur (toutes les cellules [...] et priaient Dieu). Je vis [...]

F12 [...] en construction au travers desquelles on voit le ciel par les fenêtres de la façade opposée. Comme ces casernes [...]  
13 [...] en construction. Au travers d'elles, on voit le ciel par les fenêtres de la façade opposée, et comme ces casernes [...]

F12 [...] les déserts, car les déserts sont clos et ne communiquent pas avec l'infini.  
12 [...] les déserts (car les déserts sont clos et ne communiquent pas avec l'infini).

F13 [...] belles fleurs, ces macs, comme jardins en mai.  
13 [...] belles fleurs (ces macs), comme jardins en mai.

F13 [...] s'ils sont des lis ou si lis [...]  
13 [...] s'ils sont des lys ou si lys [...]

F13 [...] leurs jambes, - tant de rigidité [...]  
13 [...] leurs jambes, car en effet tant de rigidité [...]

F13 [...] soudain mauvaise d'un cloche crevant [...]  
\*14 [...] soudain mauvaise d'un clocher crevant [...]

F14 La faille sur leur visage [...]  
14 La paille sur leur visage [...]

F17 [...] ma propre histoire. Signalement de Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs: taille 1,71m, poids 71kg, visage ovale, cheveux blonds, yeux bleus, teint mat, dents parfaites, nez rectiligne.  
Divine est morte hier [...]

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1

I am grateful to Guy Danigo for his careful proofreadings of my transcriptions. Of course, any mistakes which remain are entirely my own responsibility.

\*16 [...] ma propre histoire.

**S**IGNALEMENT de Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs: taille 1 m. 71, poids 71 kg., visage ovale, cheveux blonds, yeux bleus, teint mat, dents parfaites, nez rectiligne, membre en érection: longueur 0 m. 24, circonférence 0 m. 10.

Divine est morte hier [...]

F20 Des tantes-filles portaient des couronnes en perles de verre, de celles précisément que je fabrique dans ma cellule [...] les escargots et les limaces.

Toutes, les tantes-filles [...]

18 Des tantes-filles portaient des couronnes en perles de verre (de celles précisément que je fabrique dans ma cellule [...] les escargots et les limaces).

Et toutes, les tantes-filles [...]

F22 [...] en elle ce qui impressionne, c'est la vigueur, donc la beauté, de cette partie [...]  
20 [...] en elle ce qui impressionne, c'est la vigueur - (donc la beauté) de cette partie [...]

F26 [...] je ne suis pas folle.

Et elle n'était pas folle.

- Lou Culafroy va mourir tout à l'heure.

22 "[...] je ne suis pas folle". (Et elle n'était pas folle). "Lou (Culafroy) va mourir tout à l'heure. [...]"

F27 Avec précision, tout le mécanisme du drame se présenta à l'esprit d'Ernestine, et de la sorte au mien.

23 Avec une précision remarquable, tout le mécanisme du drame se présenta à l'esprit d'Ernestine (et de la sorte au mien).

F27 [...] suffit à lui dicter son attitude. Ce n'est pas la première fois que [...] responsabilité d'un crime.

23 [...] suffit à lui dicter son attitude (ce n'est pas la première fois que [...] responsabilité d'un crime).

F27 [...] avec la brutalité, qui lui brûlait les joues, dont les épaisses mains [...]

23 [...] avec la brutalité, qui lui brûlait les joues, comme les épaisses mains [...]

F28 [...] elle mit ses bijoux. Ainsi je faisais [...]

23 [...] elle mit ses bijoux. (Ainsi je faisais [...] un diamant énorme).

F28 Du plafond, détail important, pendait un lustre énorme.

24 Du plafond (détail important) pendait un lustre énorme.

F29 [...] y mourir d'amour, gardénal et fleurs, pour un Chevalier [...]

24 [...] y mourir d'amour (gardénal et fleurs) pour un Chevalier [...]

F30 [...] cet état surhumain ou extra-lucide de l'assassin [...]

24 [...] cet état (surhumain ou extra-lucide) de l'assassin [...]



F33 [...] son geste libérât en lui, d'un placenta de noblesse, une série d'êtres [...]

26 [...] son geste libérât en lui (d'un placenta de noblesse) une série d'êtres [...]

F33 D'un pan de cette chape de velours noir, velours dont sont faits [...]

26-27 D'un pan de cette chape de velours noir (velours dont sont faits le loup de Fantômas et celui des Dogaresses) [...]

F34 [...] leurs cuisses brutales et colossales comme celles et plus peut-être que celles d'Alberto, de Mignon, de Gorgui, et le flanc [...]

27 [...] leurs cuisses brutales et colossales (comme celles d'Alberto, de Mignon, de Gorgui) et le flanc [...]

F34 Ils ont, l'abbé sait cela [...] en rêve, fait [...]

27-28 Ils ont (l'abbé sait cela [...] en rêve) fait [...]

F35 [...] presque attendri, pensait l'abbé; il remet en place [...]

28 [...] presque attendri (pensait l'abbé) ; il remet en place [...]

F35 L'enfant de choeur, un chétif teigneux, qui [...]

28 L'enfant de choeur (un chétif teigneux), qui [...]

F35 [...] particulier aux danseurs, une main dans leur poche, qui finissent un tango.

28 [...] particulier aux danseurs (une main dans leur poche) qui finissent un tango.

F36 la Saga, le dict de Divine. La Divine-Saga devrait être dansée [...]

\*29 la Saga, le dict de Divine. Je suis le poète tout trouvé. La Divine-Saga devrait être dansée [...]

F38 [...] elle avait un sourire de crâneuse irritant. Ainsi le dit-on dans des hochements de tête. Pour le poète [...]

30 [...] elle avait un sourire de crâneuse irritant. (Ainsi le dit-on dans des hochements de tête). Pour le poète [...]

F39 [...] des magic-city. Au moindre mouvement, s'ils nouent leur cravate, [...] des appareils à sous. Divine nouait [...]

31 [...] des magic-city (au moindre mouvement, s'ils nouent leur cravate, [...] des appareils à sous.) Divine nouait [...]

F39 [...] je les aime. Fatal, c'est-à-dire décidant du sort de ceux qui les regardent, médusés. Je la ferais [...]

31 [...] je les aime. (Fatal, c'est-à-dire décidant du sort de ceux qui les regardent, médusés.) Je la ferais [...]

F39 [...] mystiques. Je la dépouillerais de tout attirail sentimental. Qu'elle consentît à être [...]

\*31 [...] mystiques. Et je le dépouillerais de tout attirail sentimental.  
Qu'elle consente à être [...]

F41 [...] et paillettes d'un falbala [...]

32 [...] et paillettes d'un falbalas [...]

F42 [...] fut conquise, transportée par la tiédeur de la nuit [...]

33 [...] fut conquise (transportée) par la tiédeur de la nuit [...]

F44 Signalement de Mignon: taille 1,75 m, poids 75 kg, visage ovale, cheveux blonds, yeux bleu-vert, teint mat, dents parfaites, nez rectiligne.

Il était jeune aussi [...]

\*34 Signalement de Mignon: taille 1m. 75, poids 75 kg., visage ovale, cheveux blonds, yeux bleu-verts, teint mat, dents parfaites, nez rectiligne; membre: longueur en érection 0 m. 24, circonférence 0 m. 11.

Il était jeune aussi [...]

F45 [...] la Canebière [...]

35 [...] la Canebière [...]

F53 [...] et ainsi de suite: une théorie de macs purs, sévèrement [...]

40 [...] et ainsi de suite, et une théorie de macs purs et sévèrement [...]

F57 Rentrés au grenier, ils se caressent.

Divine aime son homme. Elle lui cuisine [...]

\*43 Rentrés au grenier, ils se baisent. A Mignon, pour l'amour, afin qu'il soit facilité et leur paraisse, parce qu'il devient normal, consacré, régularisé, sacramentel, Divine a enseigné une posture qu'ils recherchent naturellement tous deux. Couchée sur le dos, elle laisse Mignon enfoncer sa verge dans sa bouche. Il fait sur elle, son ventre sur sa figure, ses poils dans ses yeux, les mouvements rythmés. Elle se masturbe d'une main, et de l'autre, caresse les fesses de Mignon. Elle a méthodiquement appris à prévoir la seconde exacte de la jouissance de son homme et surveille sa propre main pour obtenir la sienne au même moment. Le sperme qui monte dans la verge de Mignon, elle le sent venir sous ses lèvres. Elle en a la bouche pleine quand le sien jaillit sur les jambes velues de l'autre, qui halète. Puis ils fument, et boivent l'éternel thé. Se caressent. Autrefois, la partie mâle de Divine effarouchait Mignon. Maintenant, il aime à sentir contre son ventre sa dureté. Il plonge en Divine comme en un miroir et la beauté un peu molle de son ami lui raconte, sans qu'il le comprenne bien clairement, la nostalgie d'un Mignon mort, enterré en grand appareil, et jamais pleuré. Il accepte que Divine boive une gorgée de thé tiède, le conserve une seconde dans la bouche, et, lèvres contre lèvres, le lui repasse. Et ainsi de suite.

Ils dorment se regardant, la verge du maître entre les cuisses rondes de Divine-la-Belle.

Divine l'aime, son homme [...]

F60 La mère de Divine, Ernestine, appelant la lessive [...]

45 La mère de Divine (Ernestine) appelant la lessive [...]

F62 [...] quatre ou cinq jours...

Le reste ne nous intéresse plus.

46 [...] quatre ou cinq jours... Le reste ne nous intéresse plus.

F62 [...] secouent - la rage d'être pris - leurs cheveux [...]

47 [...] secouent (la rage d'être pris au piège) leurs cheveux [...]

F62 [...] se sourient d'un sourire humide et [...]

47 [...] se sourient (sourire humide) et [...]

F63 [...] dessine sur la muraille du grenier de Divine.

D'une promenade au parc Monceau [...]

\*47 [...] dessine sur la muraille du grenier où Divine, après chaque masturbation, flanque son foutre. Car il fallait un commencement à la chose. Or les premiers coups échangés, rien ne peut plus faire qu'ils ne soient suivis de beaucoup d'autres, et des coups, Divine se console seule.

D'une promenade au parc Monceau [...]

F64 [...] appliquées à elle-même. L'argot [...]

48 [...] appliquées à elle-même. Jamais elle n'eut osé dire sans rougir: "Ma bite était braquée". L'argot [...]

F66 [...] comme de démêler - il lui semblait que [...] sa main introduite soulevait la chemise - certains mots [...]

49 [...] comme de démêler (il lui semblait que [...] sa main introduite soulevait la chemise) certains mots [...]

F66 [...] murmurait ces mots en avalant la fumée lourde de sa cigarette. Pour mieux [...]

49-50 [...] murmurait ces mots en avalant la fumée lourde comme sperme de sa cigarette. Pour mieux [...]

F67 [...] une jeune canaille, un de ces vingt visages que j'ai découpés dans les magazines, qui sifflotait [...]

50 [...] une jeune canaille (un de ces vingt visages que j'ai découpés dans les magazines) qui sifflotait [...]

F68 [...] bull-dog, celui du jeune boxeur anglais Crane que j'ai là parmi les vingt, sur le mur.

Mignon pâlisait. Il a assommé un Hollandais rose [...]

\*51 [...] de bull-dog (celui du jeune boxeur anglais Crane que j'ai là parmi les vingt, sur le mur).

**M**IGNON a assommé un gros Hollandais rose qui voulait l'enculer dans une chambre d'hôtel.

Mignon accepte de faire les michetons au pèze. Et j'en arrive à ce que je voulais montrer: Mignon, confondu avec ce robuste soldat que je connus à la prison militaire du Fort-Saint-Nicolas. Déserteur, pour gagner le jury, l'émouvoir, il eut l'idée de simuler, avec une science instinctive parfaite, l'homosexuel passif bafoué dans sa caserne où la vie lui est rendu impossible, qu'il déserte. Il réussit son truc. L'aliéniste déclara qu'il n'était pas en état de démence au moment de sa désertion, mais qu'il était atteint de

nombreuses anomalies dont le jury devait tenir compte. Le soldat fut acquitté, mais, dans la prison, tout le temps de la prévention, le splendide colonial n'osa plus sourire, ni rire, ni parler, car malgré lui, sournoisement, cette personnalité dont il se para combattait sa nature virile Il en était pâle. [sic for punctuation].

Mignon pâlisait. Il a assommé ce Hollandais rose [...]

F71 Le suicide fut sa grande préoccupation: le chant du gardéna! Certaines crises [...]

53 Le suicide fut sa grande préoccupation (le chant du gardéna). Certaines crises [...]

F71 Mais un jour, à portée de ma main, se trouverait bien une fiole de poison qu'il me suffirait de porter à ma bouche; puis attendre. Attendre dans une angoisse intolérable, [...]

53 Mais un jour, à portée de sa main, se trouverait bien une fiole de poison qu'il lui suffirait de porter à sa bouche; puis attendre. Attendre dans une angoisse folle, intolérable,[...]

F71 [...] et si proche, encore dans le moment, qu'on dirait pouvoir l'effacer [...]

53 [...] et si proche (encore dans le moment) qu'on dirait pouvoir l'effacer [...]

F73 [...] humains. L'enfant [...]

54 [...] humains. Et l'enfant [...]

F74 Ce matin, [...]

55 **M**oi, ce matin, [...]

F75 [...] ce qu'il me dit. Mon réveil ne m'enleva ce sentiment de baptême. Mais [...]

56 [...] ce qu'il me dit. Et mon réveil ne m'enleva ce sentiment de bénédiction, de baptême. Mais [...]

F77 [...] dans un confessionnal. Le confessionnal vide me réservait ces mêmes douceurs. De vieux journaux [...]

57 [...] dans un confessionnal (le confessionnal vide me réservait ces mêmes douceurs). De vieux journaux [...]

F78 Divine à Mignon: "Tu es mon Affolante."

- Divine est humble. Elle ne [...]

\*58 Divine à Mignon: "Tu es mon Affolante."

- Divine est humble. Pas à la manière de ce Jésuite de qui l'on me disait: "C'est un homme qui vit dans une telle simplicité! Ainsi, pendant la guerre, officier supérieur, il avait établi son P.C. dans un château et son bureau dans le grand salon. Eh bien, il refusa pour son usage un beau meuble de marqueterie et le fit remplacer par une table de cuisine en bois blanc." Officière, Divine n'eut pas vu la différence entre les deux tables. Elle ne [...]

F79 Dès qu'un peu riche, par le fait d'un Argentin, Divine s'entraîna au luxe.

59 Dès qu'un peu riche (par le fait d'un Argentin), Divine s'entraîna au luxe.

F79 [...] une semaine entière, maintenant elle sait marcher sur les tapis, parler aux laquais, meubles de luxe.

59 [...] une semaine entière et maintenant elle sait marcher sur les tapis, parler aux laquais (meuble de luxe).

F80 [...] de son certificat d'études supérieures.

- Il est bête comme un bouton...

59 [...] de son certificat d'études supérieures.

- Un Dur à Divine: "Qu'est-ce que t'aimes le mieux: que je t'encule ou me faire une pipe?"

Divine, goulue, et sincère jusqu'à joindre les mains et arranger sa bouche en rond: "Mon Dur, les deux à la fois."

- Il est bête comme un bouton...

F80 [...] quand le fils de la maison entra.

60 [...] quand le fils de la maison (17 ans) entra.

F81 Elle regarda encore d'un oeil mouillé le fils de la maison.

60 Elle regarda encore d'un oeil mouillé le fils de la maison (17 ans).

F81 Leurs sexes gigantesques vivent, frappent à petits coups [...]

60 Leurs verges gigantesques vivent et frappent à petits coups [...]

F82 Jean des Bandes Noires; je le laisse [...]

61 Jean des Bandes Noires, et je le laisse [...]

F83 [...] mesdames, une farandole de ah! oui, oui, mes Belles, rêvez et faites les Pochardes pour y fuir, ce qui je refuse de vous dire, ce qui était ailé, bouffi, gros [...]

\*61 [...] Mesdames, une farandole de bites, oui, oui, mes Belles rêvez et faites les Pochardes pour y fuir, des bites ailées, des pafs bouffis, gros [...]

F83 [...] de prison, que j'aime maintenant comme un vice, m'apporta [...]

62 [...] de prison (que j'aime maintenant comme un vice) m'apporta [...]

F84 [...] trace fraternelle d'un ami. Car si je n'ai jamais su [...] un mâle qui sait qu'il ne l'est pas. J'attends sur le mur [...]

62 [...] trace fraternelle d'un ami (car si je n'ai jamais su [...] un mâle qui sait qu'il ne l'est pas). J'attends sur le mur [...]

F86 Sa confiance était totale, invincible, dans les hommes [...]

63 Sa confiance était totale (et invincible) dans les hommes [...]

F86 Elle comprit soudain, ou peu à peu, voulut prendre le contrepied [...]

63 Elle comprit soudain (peu à peu) et voulut prendre le contre-pied [...]

F86 [...] qui dissimule mal sa faiblesse [...]

63 [...] qui dissimule (mal) sa faiblesse [...]

F86 [...] (leur tenir la dragée haute) pendant qu'ils [...]

64 [...] (leur tenir la dragée haute), et ils [...]

F86-87 [...] du tribunal, car elle est tombée souvent surtout pour la came, [...]

64 [...] du tribunal (car elle est tombée souvent surtout pour la came), [...]

F88 [...] le soleil. Mais [...] entortillés.

64-65 [...] le soleil. (Mais [...] entortillés.)

F88 [...] un objet de pur luxe. Si Divine consent [...]

65 [...] un objet de pur luxe; et, si Divine consent [...]

F88 [...] et deviner qu'il [...]

65 [...] et deviner (sentir) qu'il [...]

F89 [...] en entrouvrant la culotte, ce soin mystérieux de son homme. Enrubanné les poils [...]

\*65 [...] en entr'ouvrant la culotte, ce coin mystérieux de son homme. Parfumé les couilles. Enrubanné [sic] les poils [...]

F90 - Non, non, c'est moi.

L'amie du ménage [...]

66 "Non, non, c'est moi."

## L'AMIE du ménage [...]

F90 Mimosa II, qui était alors garçon laitier, elle lui a laissé son nom.

66 Mimosa II (qui était alors garçon laitier) elle lui a laissé son nom.

F92 Mignon, je suis peut-être frappé d'amour pour toi [...]

68 - Mignon, je suis peut-être frappa d'amour pour toi [...]

F94 [...] on dirait que la Belle descend. [...]

Mignon souriait à peine. Il sait. La Belle Grosse des hommes [...]

69 [...] on dirait que la queue descend. [...]

Mignon souriait à peine. Il sait. La queue des hommes [...]

F95 - J'fais le thé.

Comme s'il eût compris [...] Je suis la Toute-Seule.

69 "J'fais le thé". Et comme s'il eût compris [...] Je suis la Toute Toute-Seule."

F95 " [...] la Toute-Persécutée." Ayant à exprimer un sentiment [...]

69 " [...] la Toute-Persécutée." Quand elles avaient à exprimer un sentiment [...]

F95 [...] qui apaise une tempête invisible. Le familial qui avait connu, du temps de la grande Mimosa, les cris éperdus de liberté [...]

69 [...] qui apaisait une tempête invisible. Et le familial qui avait connu (du temps de la grande Mimosa) les [70] cris éperdus de liberté [...]

F96 - Ta gueule, hein, gonzesse. Tu vas pas me faire manquer devant les copains.

La voix était si froide, [...]  
 70 "Ta gueule, hein, gonzesse. Tu vas pas me faire manquer devant les copains." La voix était si froide [...]

F98 Voici Divine seule au monde.  
 71 Et voici Divine seule au monde.

F98 [...] le pantalon d'un matelot.  
 Divine est seule.

\*72 [...] le pantalon d'un matelot. Dans la foule qui va, il accompagne Divine quelques pas, la baise en marchant derrière, avec sa queue la soulève de terre, la porte devant lui sans la toucher des mains, puis, arrivé à la hauteur d'une grande maison mélodieuse, il la dépose, reboutonne son pantalon, cligne de l'oeil et ramasse dans la boue du ruisseau ce violon blessé que Divine a vu. Il disparaît.  
 Divine est seule.

F99 [...] M<sup>me</sup> Roquelaure [...]  
 72 [...] Madame Roquelaure [...]

F100 [...] entrebâillée [...]  
 73 [...] entre-bâillée [...]

F101 [...] mon corps détaché de ma tête, par mes doigts enfoncés dans les yeux, pourrie.  
 74 [...] mon corps détaché de ma tête (par mes doigts enfoncés dans les yeux) pourrie.

F102 [...], les Églises n'existant pas,[...]  
 74 [...], les Églises (toutes) n'existant pas,[...]

F102 [...] de tous les saints.  
 74 [...] de tous les Saints.

F102 [...] faire autrement. Que j'annonce que je suis une vieille pute [...]  
 74 [...] faire autrement. Mais, quand j'ai dit que je suis une vieille pute [...]

F102 [...] il ne peut que me mépriser. J'ai passé des nuits entières à ce jeu: [...]  
 74 [...] il ne peut que me mépriser. Imaginez la quantité de larmes que j'ai dû étouffer. J'ai passé des nuits entières à ce jeu-ci: [...]

F103 [...] en rigolades. Mon sourire alors [...]  
 75 [...] en rigolages. Alors mon sourire [...]

F103 [...] il faut qu'il le demeure, afin de conserver mon récit. Il ne peut me plaire qu'à ce prix.

\*75 [...] il faut qu'il le demeure, afin de conserver cette apparence de roc en marche aveugle à travers mon récit. (J'oublie l'e d'aveugle, j'ai écrit "aveugl") Il ne peut me plaire qu'à ce prix.

F104 Ce mouvement [...] le punissait.  
 75 (Ce mouvement [...] le punissait.)

F104 *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs* fait ici son entrée [...]

77 **N**OTRE-DAME-DES-FLEURS fait ici son entrée [...]

F105 [...] dit-il tout haut

Ces mots ne sont pas [...]

78 [...] dit il tout haut (Et ces mots ne sont pas [...])

F107 Sans fard le chanter. Sans prétendre [...]

79 Sans fard le chanter. Sans excuses. Sans prétendre [...]

+F108 de sa jeunesse morte, et de sa mort. Il éclabousse le mur d'un éclat qui ne peut s'exprimer que par la confrontation de ces deux termes qui s'annulent: lumière et ténèbre. La nuit sort [...]

80 de sa jeunesse morte, et de sa mort. Il éclabousse le mur de beauté. La nuit sort [...]

F108 [...] seul dans les Mondes où les soleils tournent!

80 [...] seule dans les Mondes où les Soleils tournent!

F109 [...] sur un autel, qu'il soit de planches basculantes ou d'air azuré.

80 [...] sur un autel (qu'il soit de planches basculantes ou d'air azuré).

F109 [...] d'aucun ordre, car le soldat [...]. Un homme perdu.

80 [...] d'aucun ordre (car le soldat [...]. Un homme perdu).

F109 Tout aussi bien qu'au Mexicain, [...]

81 Tout aussi bien qu'au jeune et beau Mexicain, [...]

F111 [...] cette voile qu'il apercevait.

81 [...] cette voile qu'il l'a vue.

F111 [...] ne lui arrachera pas.

Un jour, Mignon, oisif, [...]

\*82 [...] ne lui arrachera pas.

Mignon l'avait fait un matin d'avril (ce qui le fit naître en décembre) à une fruitière de la rue Lepic, dont nous ne saurons jamais rien. Seize ans plus tard, le père et le fils devaient se retrouver juste à temps pour dévorer ensemble les vingt mille francs du vieux étranglé. Jusqu'à la fin du livre, - et malgré ma tentation, car l'inceste commis aux cabinets entre père et fils est bien la forme d'amour exquise (à la promenade, ne restè[sic]-je pas longtemps dans l'escalier avec l'espoir de rencontrer ce père qui a violé son fils? L'enfant de quinze ans est au quatrième, avec les mineurs. Le père est à quelques cellules de moi), - jusqu'à la fin du livre, *Notre-Dame* et *Mignon* doivent ignorer ce qui les lie.

Un jour, Mignon, oisif, [...]

F113 [...] son dessert, Divine étant son bifteck, et il revint [...]

83 [...] son dessert (Divine étant son bifteck), et il revint [...]

F113 [...] et pour tout dire fantomal costume [...]

84 [...] et pour tout dire fantômal costume [...]



F114 Mignon l'examina, car [...] gangsters marseillais. Cette simple [...]

84 Mignon l'examina (car [...] gangsters marseillais). Cette simple [...]

F114 Faites ce qu'il vous plaira.

84 Faites ce qu'il vous plaira...

F115 [...] d'un vrai mac. Mignon portait [...]

85 [...] d'un vrai mac. Et Mignon portait [...]

+F117 [...] que Mignon d'un coup de reins, rocher d'inconscience et d'innocence enfonce loin, [...]

86 [...] que Mignon d'un éblouissant coup de reins, splendide d'inconscience et d'innocence, enfonce loin, [...]

+F117 [...] de l'assassin adolescent pulvérisé par la gratitude!

Cela pourrait être aussi, mais ne sera pas.

86 [...] de l'assassin adolescent, fou de reconnaissance, gorgé de sperme, et qui pense: "Oh! Mignon, tout parce que c'est toi."

Ainsi, cela pourrait être aussi, mais ne sera pas.

F117 [...] quant au meurtre. Mignon fut le théâtre [...] le désir de délation. Il [...]

86-87 [...] quant au meurtre. (Mignon fut le théâtre [...] le désir de délation.) Il [...]

F118 [...] l'aveu du surnom. Enfin il y vint [...]

87 [...] Il restait à faire l'aveu du surnom. (Pourquoi ne pas le cacher?) Enfin, il y vint [...]

F118 [...] dégueuler des pafs. Il prit de l'enfant [...]

87 [...] dégueuler des pafs gluants de foutre. Il prit de l'enfant [...]

F118 [...] les yeux de son ami. D'un bout à l'autre [...]

87 [...] les yeux de son ami. Et, d'un bout à l'autre [...]

F118 [...] fixé sur sa bouche, car il sentait [...]

87 [...] fixé sur sa bouche. Car il sentait [...]

F118 Quand le nom fut dans la chambre [...]

87 Et, quand le nom fut dans la chambre [...]

F119 [...] existence en moi, car ils ne se contentent [...] et le composent. J'appelle [...]

87-88 [...] existence en moi (car ils ne se contentent [...] et le composent). J'appelle [...]

F120 [...] la dignité de culte! Que je commence le geste [...] très loin du monde.

88 [...] la dignité de culte! (Que je commence le geste [...] très loin du monde.)

F120 [...] cogné le front à une dalle de granit.

89 [...] cogné le front à une colonne de granit.

F122 [...] demeure de Dieu et de sa Cour.

J'ai refait le chemin [...]

\*89-90 [...] demeure de Dieu et de sa Cour. Quand je dis que le Ciel m'a trompé, c'est ainsi qu'un autre disait: Versailles est implacable, Trianon, l'Elysée, la Wilhelmstrasse sont muets. Le Ciel m'a berné. Et j'ai peur, mon petit.

J'ai refait le chemin [...]

F122 [...] des populations pétrifiées. Mais pas d'issue.

90 [...] des populations pétrifiées. Et pas d'issue.

F123 [...] voisin du bonheur pendant la chute, mais c'était [...]

91 [...] voisin du bonheur (pendant la chute), mais c'était [...]

F124 Durant son séjour à l'hôtel, Mignon [...]

91 Durant son séjour à l'hôtel - un mois - Mignon [...]

F125 Ses mouvements, et plus particulièrement une prise de ceinture, une mise en garde devaient à tout prix, au prix de la victoire même, faire d'elle [...]

92 Ses mouvements (et plus particulièrement une prise de ceinture, une mise en garde) devaient à tout prix (au prix de la victoire même) faire d'elle [...]

F127 L'amour commence.

Divine ne s'était pas virilisée: elle avait vieilli.

\*93-95 L'amour commence. Je laisse aller, jusqu'à ce qu'ils soient presque à poil tous les deux. Bandent comme des cerfs. (Divine alors met sa langue entre sa mâchoire inférieure et la peau de cette mâchoire et pense qu'ils bandent mieux que des cerfs.) Couché sur le ventre de Notre-Dame, Marchetti enfin entre son membre et s'enfonce. Je m'approche. Je trique aussi. Je m'ouvre la braguette. Avec mes mains, je ne sais pas ce que je caresse: c'est peut-être les cuisses de Marchetti. Enfin, ma tête s'approche. Et ma langue trouve la base de la verge de Marchetti, verge trépidante et velue dont tout le reste est entré à l'intérieur de Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs. Ma langue liche verge [94] et pourtour du trou. Je bénis l'union, j'adore ce miracle qui toujours m'inquiète et m'émerveille: l'instant et le point précis où deux ne font qu'un.

Mignon observait Divine, ahuri. Notre-Dame n'apercevait rien de cela qu'il provoquait. Un jour qu'ils n'étaient que tous deux dans le grenier, Divine décida enfin d'enculer Notre-Dame, qui, amusé, se prêtait à tous les jeux de bonne grâce. Car Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs était gentil, notons-le une fois pour toutes. Gentil, c'est-à-dire: prêt au jeu. Ils s'embrassèrent, mais déjà dans le baiser, Notre-Dame, plus fougueux et plus fort, de sa langue vibrante trouait la bouche de Divine. Elle écartait lèvres, dents, et s'introduisait, victorieuse. Et quand Divine voulut passer à l'acte définitif, elle chevaucha Notre-Dame deboutonné, couché sur le sol, le membre brandi hors de la braguette. Elle allait de sa verge un peu souple l'enfiler - il souriait toujours, amusé - quand la bosse de la dure queue de l'adolescent, plaquée et bondissante sur son ventre, donna à Divine ce vertige bien connu d'elle: l'abandon au mâle. Elle se laissa glisser, saisit à pleines mains la verge de Notre-Dame et, la serrant bien fort, la dirigea, l'introduisit elle-même, en elle. Souriant toujours, et écarlate - et il semblait possédé, si j'en crois son visage d'alors, par le dieu du buisson ardent - comme il l'avait bien souvent entendu dire par Mignon à Divine, à son tour Notre-Dame, hissé sur elle, disait: "Allons, la môme, donne-toi; faut te donner." Divine serrait contre elle, les pressait, les reins qui allaient et venait par à-coups terribles. Enfin, il jouit. Divine était vaincue. Elle sentit la tiédeur du sperme sur ses cuisses, mais c'était celui de Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs. Vaincue à peine, car elle l'eut contre elle pantelant, saignant d'une énorme blessure de bonheur. En

somme, elle réintégrait son âme. Avez-vous connu cela? Aimer un jeune garçon longtemps, chèrement, et puis, n'en pouvant plus de cet acte héroïque, j'abandonne. Mes muscles et mon esprit se relâchent. A la lettre, je chancelle. Et j'adore enfin, frénétique- [95]ment, les muscles qui me torturent, qui me courbent sous eux, et cette domination m'est apaisante comme un sanglot après un trop long temps sur les sommets d'un drame haut comme la mort.

Notre-Dame se leva et fut s'essuyer à la serviette, pendant que, honteuse, s'efforçant de ne pas le montrer, Divine se branlait en le regardant devant le bidet, sa chemise relevée, admirant de le voir planté naturellement sur ses deux jambes tel que jamais elle ne saurait être ni montrer cette vigueur qui s'impose simplement parce qu'elle est. Ainsi Divine ne s'était pas virilisée: elle avait vieilli.

F128 [...] Jésus sur une croix du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle [...]

95 [...] Jésus sur une croix du dix-huitième siècle [...]

F131 [...] sa marche pieds nus, sous la lune, autour des planches de choux [...]

97 [...] sa marche pieds nus (sous la lune) autour des planches de choux [...]

\*F131 Comme la fraîcheur de la nuit [...]

97 La fraîcheur de la nuit [...]

F133 [...] en le fabricant - mais non en le concevant - il y avait huit jours à peine [...]

99 [...] en le fabricant (mais non en le concevant), il y avait huit jours à peine [...]

F135 Pour étudier la musique, c'est-à-dire pour faire les mêmes gestes [...] Culafroy fabriqua l'instrument [...]

100 Pour étudier la musique (c'est-à-dire pour faire les mêmes gestes [...]), Culafroy fabriqua l'instrument [...]

F136 Sa tête baissée, afin qu'il se vît dans la glace.

101 Sa tête baissée, pour qu'il se vît dans la glace.

F137 [...] et pourtant présent. Cette enfance [...]

101-102 [...] et pourtant présent. Et [102] cette enfance [...]

F139 [...] en souriant. Cette crainte [...]

102 [...] en souriant. Mais cette crainte [...]

F140 [...] les poulains des prés. Les joueurs eux-mêmes [...]

103 [...] les poulains des prés. Et les joueurs eux-mêmes [...]

F141 [...] d'une façon violente (c'était bien là des viols) presque totale.

104 [...] d'une façon violente (c'était bien là des viols) et presque totale.

F141 [...] et collaient leur ventre nu, à l'abri pourtant de la lune, à même le tronc [...]

104 [...] et collaient leur ventre nu (à l'abri pourtant de la lune) à même le tronc [...]

F142 Cela fit partie de l'enfance de Divine.

105 **C**ELA fit partie de l'enfance de Divine.

F142 [...] ces craintes: colère, mépris, dégoûts divins, Divine fit [...]

105 [...] ces craintes: (colère, mépris, dégoûts divins), Divine fit [...]

F142-143 [...] Gabriel, malgré son tempérament de feu, qui fait souvent rougeoyer sa face, craignit l'Enfer [...]

105 [...] Gabriel (malgré son tempérament de feu, qui fait souvent rougeoyer sa face) craignit l'Enfer [...]

F143 [...] ils soutenaient Mlle Adna [...]

106 [...] ils soutenaient Mademoiselle Adna [...]

F144 [...] verticale, courant, pareil à ce chien ensorcelé qui descendit au village, par la grand-rue et comme [...]

106 [...] verticale (courant, pareil à ce chien ensorcelé qui descendit au village, par la grand'rue) et comme [...]

F144 [...] quelque visage d'adolescent, mal discerné en elle, avait illuminé la foule, puis il a disparu.

106 [...] quelque beau visage d'adolescent, lumineux ou sombre, mal discerné en elle, avait illuminé la foule. Puis il a disparu.

F144 [...] devant elle, déployant son dos [...]

106 [...] devant elle, et il déploya son dos [...]

F146 Et Divine:

- Tu ne me racontes [...]

107 Et Divine: "Tu ne me racontes [...]"

F147 [...] leur couple.

Divine [...]

108 [...] leur couple.

Et Divine [...]

F147 [...] l'attachement du chien. Trouver l'enfant [...]

\*108 [...] l'attachement du chien. Et lui enseigner plus tard à compléter finement ses plaisirs par le choix des cravates, le choix du gin, découvrir cette fine et presque imperceptible saveur qu'a le meilleur. Trouver l'enfant [...]

F150 Il rit, mais je le sens gêné.

Elle est heureuse.

\*110-112 Il rit, mais je le sens gêné. Du plat de sa main, il frotte lentement sa braguette. "Regarde ça. - T'es salaud, Archange." Divine sourit et feint de n'être pas trop attentive. Soupis, de l'espoir d'être conquise. "De quoi ça te choque? - Moi? Il faut autre chose." Gabriel rit, et cette écume légère dont j'ai parlé mousse entre ses dents. Il se penche sur Divine. C'est-à-dire qu'il ose plutôt faire un geste qui incline son torse vers elle; elle cherche à s'écarter, et c'est justement ce recul qui attire les bras de Gabriel pour la saisir. Vite, elle échappe. "Laisse t'embrasser, j'te dégoûte? - Tu ne vois pas qu'on rentre?" Il saute à la porte et tourne la clé, se retourne, et, emporté par ce même saut, plonge sur le lit. "Alors?" Divine s'échappe et rit, mais son membre (que d'habitude elle sait, quand il est dur, replier entre ses cuisses) la trahit. Elle ne résiste plus. Colle sa

bouche sur l'autre, et s'arrange pour faire glisser son visage jusqu'à ce que la bouche de Gabriel baise ses paupières, ce qui est le baiser de tendresse. Sous sa rèche écorce bleue, il avait une chemise de soie blanche, qui se mêle au lin bleu du pyjama, et leur enchevêtrement, lentement agité, c'est l'oriflamme de Jeanne d'Arc qui flotte très suavement au fond d'un hallier, sur un pilier de basilique. Divine avait placé sa langue entre ses lèvres serrées; peu à peu, elle la retire devant celle, décisive, de Gabriel, puis enfin elle desserre son étreinte.

"Salope, défais mon froc, allez!" Divine rit, mais ne bouge pas. D'une main, Gabriel déboutonne son pantalon. [111] Divine ne voit rien, mais sur la peau de son ventre, elle sent forcer le membre qui bientôt glisse, et se colle entre le ventre de Gabriel et le sien. Elle sourit toujours, mais en se débattant elle a fait un tel mouvement de dérobage que Gabriel s'excite et fait un bond qui place juste son membre à hauteur de la bouche de Divine, et ceci fut voulu par Divine qui glissa un peu vers le fond du lit. Les mains de l'Archange en nage caressent les cheveux, les emmêlant, les démêlant, car il n'ose pas encore. Pour voir son visage, il doit baisser la tête, et Divine sourit toujours, et ne dit pas un mot. Enfin, ses mains flottent légères sur les hanches de sel de Gabriel, puis elle entr'ouvre la bouche. Gabriel caresse toujours ses cheveux et veut les mêler à ses poils crépus. Il craint de l'étouffer, car ses cuisses vont se resserrant. Il pense une imploration enfantine: "Divine, prends." Doucement, et comme par timidité, il approche sa queue de la bouche, et la bouche souriante se ferme. Il veut entrer. "Allez! petite femme, allez prends! prends tout." Il le prononce cette fois, mais la bouche de Divine s'écarte encore et sourit. Il est maintenant à genoux sur le traversin. Il sue. Soudain, il saisit la tête à deux mains et l'applique contre son ventre. "Allez, suce." Il crie: "Divine!" Un cri terrible. Puis une plainte d'enfant: "Si tu ne prends pas, je t'étrangle (il halète), je serre: laisse-moi pas serrer, prends." Il presse sur la bouche. Elle s'entr'ouvre puis se referme, se retire, et sourit. Le cou de Divine est entre les mains de l'Archange pantelant: "Vite, vite, ou tu vas crever." Divine n'a jamais été aussi légère, sainte, détachée de la terre. Elle ne bande même plus. Elle peut refuser sa bouche et mourir étranglée, et du même coup entraîner Gabriel à l'échafaud. Elle-même a envie de mourir, mais elle n'ose le dire de peur qu'il n'accepte. Elle le condamne à mort. Mais, dans un éclair terrestre, elle voit le membre énorme qui lui cingle les joues, et son sourire s'arrête net. Son visage devient extrêmement grave, religieux: "Tu es [112] beau." Elle ouvre la bouche, ses joues se creusent dans une aspiration et ses joues un peu creusées l'affinent encore.

.. .. .

Le goût du foutre. La douceur d'être cause de l'apaisement du mâle. Comme chaque fois, Divine n'a pas joui, mais le long de son corps Gabriel a glissé et posé sa bouche écumante sur la sienne encore pleine du foutre qu'elle ne pouvait avaler, car il fallait faire un mouvement de déglutition et son cou était gêné par le poids du ventre chaud. Elle refait avec l'Archange le jeu qu'il accepte, et ils se passent, dents contre dents, le sperme mystérieux. Enfin elle l'avale. Elle est heureuse.

F150 Il tenait Divine contre soi [...]

112 Il tenait (nus tous deux) Divine contre soi [...]

F150 [...] la *Marseillaise* [...]

112 [...] la *Marseillaise* [...]

F151 Elle murmura:

- Oh! Archange.

Gabriel partit [...]

113 Oh! Archange." Elle murmura: "Oh! Archange." Gabriel partit [...]

F152 [...] presque heureuse.

En entrant chez Graff [...]

\*113-115 [...] presque heureuse.

"Tu es mort, Gaby? Pauvre vieux Gaby!"

Et, toujours souriante, elle se tourne vers Jimmy: "Enfin quoi, Gaby est mort. Mais Jimmy, moi je ne sais tout de même pas. Qu'est-ce que c'est, mort? Parce que comprends que tous meurent (son geste montre les tombes), même les gens qui vivent encore. Mais Gaby? Gaby avec ses yeux? et son sourire?" Elle semble disserter, mais de vrai, si elle céda à sa douleur, un souffle la ferait monter au ciel. Et vous connaissez son horreur de l'immonde surnaturel. Enfin, soudain, crevant le glaçage du discours: "Comme je t'aime, Gaby! Tu m'as fait du mal en mourant. Et, pendant un bon moment, je t'ai exécré de me faire si mal."

Puis encore à Jimmy: "Mais, tu ne crois pas qu'il pourrait nous arriver par derrière. En douce? En rigolant. Comme il l'a fait un soir, au Tabernacle, tu te rappelles. On l'attendait plus, et puis, pan, le rev'la.

- Il ne faudrait pas qu'il arrive. Non, parce qu'alors [114] (et je me permets la gravité) il faudrait m'expliquer ce qu'il y a là-dessous, et on ne pourrait pas. Il y aurait deux Gaby.

- Et voilà ce qu'il ne faut pas."

[page 114 ends at this point and page 115 begins two fifths of the way down the page]

**E**N entrant chez Graff [...]

F152 [...] dénoncé, si toutefois il avait fait un mauvais coup, mais elle [...]

115 [...] dénoncé (si toutefois il avait fait un mauvais coup), mais elle [...]

F153 [...] épousailles. L'une et l'autre tantes en furent horrifiées. Toujours [...]

115 [...] épousailles (et l'une et l'autre tantes en furent horrifiées). Et toujours [...]

\*F153 [...] gardé par-devers elle [...]

116 [...] gardé pour elle [...]

F154 [...] cette forme, les saints du Ciel veillaient en sourdine, et les saintes; ils [...]

116 [...] cette forme, car les saints du Ciel veillaient en sourdine, et les saintes; et ils [...]

+F156 [...] Notre-Dame, car il avait ses moments de douceur, ne comblait pas le besoin d'être soumise à une domination brutale qu'éprouvait Divine. Les idées [...]

117-118 [...] Notre-Dame (car il avait ses moments de douceur) ne comblait pas son besoin d'être soumise à une domination brutale. [118] Les idées [...]

F157 [...] en revue la peau trop blanche et sèche, la maigreur, les cavités des yeux, les rides poudrées, les cheveux collés, les dents d'or.

118 [...] en revue: sa peau trop blanche et sèche, sa maigreur, les cavité de ses yeux, ses rides poudrées, ses cheveux collés, ses dents d'or.

F158 Il connut la jouissance [...]

118 Il eut la jouissance [...]

F158 [...] elle devait payer ses amants.

119 [...] elle devait les payer.

F158 [...] partouzes compliquées, à deux, trois ou quatre, et [...]

119 [...] partouzes compliquées (à deux, trois ou quatre) et [...]

F159 [...] pour elle, connaître le plaisir.

\*119 [...] pour elle, décharger ensemble.

F159 [...] qui l'avaient perforée. Sans souci de leurs goûts, elle les accouplait. Elle acceptait [...]

\*119 [...] qui l'avaient de leur verge perforée. Et sans souci de leurs goût, elle les accouplait: c'étaient un chasseur du Claridge, un boxeur italien, un officier canadien. Elle imagina de beaux monstres michel-angelesques à quatre têtes, quatre bras, quatre sexes enfouis et huit jambes. Elle acceptait [...]

F159 [...] très lasse. Bientôt s'émoussa le plaisir [...]

119-120 [...] très lasse. Elle n'avait de son sperme que sur le ventre, mais elle essuyait [120] pourtant sa bouche et ses cheveux. Bientôt dut s'émousser le plaisir [...]

F159 [...] d'Alberto et se satisfait de lui.

120 [...] d'Alberto (et elle le trouva) et se satisfait de lui.

F160 [...] immoral: c'était un garçon [...]

120 [...] immoral: il était un garçon [...]

F161 [...] son sourire. Quand [...]

121 [...] son sourire, et quand [...]

F161 [...] soi-même en inventant avec sa propre bouche [...]

121 [...] soi-même et invente avec la bouche [...]

F161 [...] glace, elle [...]

121 [...] glace et qu'elle [...]

F161 [...] Culafroy. Ce fut [...]

121 [...] Culafroy. Et ce fut [...]

F163 (Alberto parlait des serpents au féminin.)

122 (Alberto parlait des serpents, au féminin, toujours.)

+F163 [...] le corps glacé, lugubre. Cela fut [...]

122 [...] le corps glacé. Et cela fut [...]

F164 [...] tendresse, cependant que la main [...]

122 [...] tendresse. Mais pendant ce temps, la main [...]

F165 [...] le jour suivant ces jours avec le reste et ce souvenir [...]  
 \*123 [...] le jour d'après avec son membre, le suçà, et ce souvenir [...]

F165 [...] leur charme. Culafroy fut bel [...]  
 124 [...] leur charme. Et Culafroy fut bel [...]

F167 [...] leur ombre. S'il ne touchait plus [...]  
 125 [...] leur ombre. Et s'il ne touchait plus [...]

F169 [...] alors il prononça [...]  
 126 [...] et alors il prononce [...]

F169 [...] pour Culafroy, plus tard pour Divine, autre [...]  
 126 [...] pour Culafroy (plus tard pour Divine) autre [...]

F171 Une nuit [...]

127 **U**NE nuit [...]

F171 [...] cherchait l'aventure.  
 Il était vêtu [...]

\*127-128 [...] cherchait l'aventure.

Signalement de Seck Gorgui: taille 1 m. 77: poids 88 kilos, visage ovale, cheveux crépus noir, yeux noirs, teint [128] noir, dents parfaites sauf une molaire qui est en or, nez camus, membre en érection longueur 0 m. 28, circonférence 0 m. 14.

Il était vêtu [...]

F171 [...] elle songea, vaguement toutefois, [...]  
 128 [...] elle songea (vaguement toutefois) [...]

F172 - Oui ça va, dit-il, et toi?  
 Divine se collait à lui.  
 128 "Oui ça va, dit-il, et toi?" Divine se collait à lui.

F172 [...] jarrets nerveux pour pisser contre [...]  
 128 [...] jarrets nerveux et qui pisse contre [...]

F172 [...] Alberto, Colosse de Rhodes, qui est [...]  
 128 [...] Alberto (Colosse de Rhodes) et qui est [...]

F173 M<sup>lle</sup> Adeline [...]  
 128 Mademoiselle Adeline [...]

+F173 [...] l'assassin noir, le faisait [...]  
 129 [...] l'assassin noir, faisait [...]

F173 [...] de mes pets, qui n'est pas celle de ma merde, odeur détestée, tellement [...]  
 129 [...] de mes pets (qui n'est pas celle de ma merde, odeur détestée), tellement [...]

F174 [...] enregistrements passés, usure avant-courrière de purification, mais [...]



129 [...] enregistrements passés (usure avant-courrière de purification), mais [...]

F174 Entre ses doigts il roulait un soldat [...]

129 Je le revois, entre ses doigts roulant un soldat [...]

F175 Je crois, bien que je sache que c'est faux, que [...]

130 Je crois (bien que je sache que c'est faux) que [...]

F175 [...] Polo du *Gyp's Bar* est [...]

130 [...] Polo du *Gyp's Bar* est [...]

F176 Il avait tué sa femme, puis, l'ayant assise [...]

131 Il avait tué sa femme, et, l'ayant assise [...]

F177 [...] jusqu'à... Enfin j'ai mes histoires. Celles qui sourdent de mes yeux. Les prisons [...]

131 [...] jusqu'à... Et puis, j'ai mes histoires. Celles qui sourdent de mes yeux. Et les prisons [...]

F178 [...] ce *Veni Creator*, qu'on chante [...]

132 [...] ce "Veni Creator", qu'on chante [...]

F179 [...] neufs. Peu à peu [...]

133 [...] neufs. Et peu à peu [...]

F180 [...] de ses jambes. Dans le col [...]

133 [...] de ses jambes, et voilà le comble de l'élégance masculine. Dans le col [...]

F180 [...] doués de puissance. Je me demande [...]

133 [...] doués de puissance. Et je me demande [...]

F181 [...] la même façon et que nous vîmes dans la rue ou à l'écran. Me hausser [...]

134 [...] la même façon (nous le vîmes dans la rue ou à l'écran). Me hausser [...]

F181 [...] montré. Les prêtres [...]

134 [...] montré. Et les prêtres [...]

F181 [...] du premier exécutant; le prêtre [...]

134 [...] du premier exécutant et le prêtre [...]

F181 [...] se greffèrent sur Culafroy, comme plus tard se greffèrent des muscles, et il dut les porter [...]

134 [...] se greffèrent sur lui (comme plus tard se greffèrent des muscles), et il dut les porter [...]

F182 [...] silencieux, ses sabots se posant avant lui le portaient avec d'infinies précautions sur la haute laine du tapis, et l'odeur [...]

134 [...] silencieux (ses sabots se posaient avant lui et le portaient avec d'infinies précautions sur la haute laine du tapis), et l'odeur [...]

5.1 *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*, Excisions and Variants

F183 Les doubles rideaux du tabernacle [...]

135 Les doubles-rideaux du tabernacle [...]

F183 [...] sortait d'elles. Haussé sur [...]

135 [...] sortait d'elles. Un silence fou. Haussé sur [...]

F185 [...] au *Caprice viennois*.

136 [...] au "Caprice viennois".

F185 [...] personne n'entendit. Elle eut alors l'idée de chercher sa valise cachée sous le lit, et commença [...]

137 [...] personne n'entendit. Alors, elle eut l'idée de chercher sa valise cachée sous le lit, et elle commença [...]

F187 [...] un témoin (les témoins sont presque toujours à charge), jaloux [...]

\*138 [...] un témoin, et les témoins sont presque toujours à charge, jaloux [...]

F189 [...] son bras. Quand [...]

139 [...] son bras. Et quand [...]

F190 Vous savez par *Paris-Soir* qu'il fut tué [...]

140 Vous savez par "Paris-Soir" qu'il fut tué [...]

F190 [...] j'aie jamais vu. Comment je caresserai [...]

140 [...] j'aie jamais vu, et comme je la caresserai [...]

F190 [...] et vulgaire! Peut-être son destin [...]

140 [...] et vulgaire! Il était beau, mais peut-être son destin [...]

F191 [...] je ne sais comment.

Les petits soldats [...]

140 [...] je ne sais comment.

Nous deux, nous...

Les petits soldats [...]

F191 [...] pourquoi, et aussi sans que nos rapports [...]

140 [...] pourquoi, et aussi, sans que nos rapports [...]

F191 [...] cent mille! Bien que je tinsse là [...]

141 [...] cent mille! Et bien que je tienne là [...]

F192 - Gadez moin.

Clément [...]

141 [...] "Gadez moin." Clément [...]

F192 [...] sans qu'il y mît la main je me souviens de [...]

141 [...] sans qu'il y mit la main: sa queue en moi loin, brutalement, et je me souviens de [...]

F192 Avec Gorgui, Divine fut vite en l'air. Il joua avec elle comme le chat avec la

souris. Il fut féroce.

Sa joue posée sur la poitrine noire - sa perruque est collée - Divine [...]

\*141-2 **A**VEC Gorgui, Divine fut vite en l'air. Il joua avec elle comme le chat avec la souris. Il fut féroce. L'obligeant à rester allongée sur le divan, immobile, les bras le long du corps, il s'arquait au-dessus-d'elle, son membre battant de coups durs son ventre noir et dur: un bouclier. Il fit [142] pleurer Divine. Il ne voulait pas qu'elle touchât. D'un seul coup, il se laissa tomber sur elle. La verge de Divine se courba. Gorgui baisa sa bouche. Sa langue était dure, sévère. Elle forçait les lèvres, les dents, et une fois entrée, accomplissait son labeur de vrille, de pieuvre, de sangsue, de membre. Ils furent mouillés l'un et l'autre.

Et quoi donc? Sa joue posée sur la poitrine noire (sa perruque et bien collée), Divine [...]

F193 [...] des émois, ainsi [...] Sang, Peur, Amour.

142 [...] des émois (ainsi [...] Sang, Peur, Amour).

F194 [...] Divine.

Elle [...]

143 [...] Divine." Elle [...]

F194 [...] une place?

Gorgui s'éveillait. Il [...]

143 [...] une place?" Gorgui s'était éveillé. Il [...]

F194 [...] ne parût ridicule, [...]

143 [...] ne parut ridicule, [...]

F197 - Oui ça bout.

Sur le petit réchaud électrique, l'eau [...]

144 - Oui, ça bout." Sur le petit réchaud électrique, dans le ballon de verre blanc, l'eau [...]

F197 - Attends, tu vas boire le thé.

Divine [...]

144 - Attends, tu vas boire le thé." Et Divine [...]

F200 [...] les rites, ainsi qu'elle l'explique à Notre-Dame, peut-être [...]

146 [...] les rites (elle l'explique à Notre-Dame), peut-être [...]

F200 [...] qu'on leur refuse. Il a trente ans. Marchetti [...]

147 [...] qu'on leur refuse. Trente ans, qu'il a. Marchetti [...]

F201 [...] réalisées, sans espoir de l'être jamais, ce sera la mort de l'Espoir. Des vies cossues, captives d'une cellule en forme de dé à jouer. J'en suis [...]

147 [...] réalisées (et sans espoir de l'être jamais), la mort de l'Espoir. Des vies cossues, captives d'une cellule en forme de dé à jouer. Et j'en suis [...]

F201 Nous sommes blasés.

147 Nous sommes blasés, nous.

F202 Car je vous hais d'amour.

DIVINARIANE (suite)

\*148 Car je les hais d'amour, ces mâles, et mon imagination (que l'on dise d'elle ce que l'on voudra; pourrions-nous jouir de la possession réelle sans avoir recours à ses trésors d'analogies?), mon imagination invente pour eux cette humiliation: je laisse l'un d'eux très réellement introduire sa queue dans ma bouche. Il entre en moi jusqu'à devenir moi-même, prendre par cette présence de son seul sexe toute la place que j'occupe, et alors, au moment extrême de quitter ma personnalité, j'attire à moi le souvenir d'un autre mâle, à qui j'offre de m'enculer.

DIVINARIANE (suite)

\*F202 - Pitiah, pitiah, pour la Divhaïne!

148 "Pitiah, pitiah, pour la Divine."

F204 [...] collines, nous les attendions dans la vallée [...]

149 [...] collines et les attendre dans la vallée [...]

F204 [...] boue.

Les cyclistes de Divine font sourdre en moi une antique épouvante.

Il faut qu'à [...]

149 [...] boue."

Et les cyclistes de Divine font sourdre en moi une antique épouvante.

Ecoutez:

il faut...

Il faut qu'à [...]

F204 [...] qu'il ne dise rien de mes hantises.

149 [...] qu'il ne dise rien, rien de mes hantises.

F206 [...] au tribunal [...]

151 [...] au Tribunal [...]

F207 [...] par un fil. Pourtant [...]

151 [...] par un fil. Et pourtant [...]

F207 [...] en homme. Je sentais [...]

152 [...] en homme. Et je sentais [...]

F208 [...] il fut soudain si près de moi que je crus qu'il [...]

152 [...] il est soudain si près de moi que je crois qu'il [...]

+F208 [...] "Je l'ai dépouillé", c'est-à-dire dépecé ou encore comme il est dit: "Dépouillez le vieil homme." Et il dit encore: "Comme ça [...]"

152 [...] Je l'ai dépouillée, c'est-à-dire dépecée. Il encore: "Comme ça [...]"

F208 [...] de dés) il me [...]

152 [...] de dés), il me [...]

F208 [...] sans dégoût. Partout [...]

152 [...] sans dégoût. Car partout [...]

F209 [...] crispé. Quand [...]

153 [...] crispé. Et quand [...]

F209 [...] ses bras. Elles y ont maçonné un nid de terre sèche. Des [...]

153 [...] ses bras. (Elles y ont maçonné un nid de terre sèche.) Des [...]

F211 [...] siennes. Sur son carnet célèbre par [...]

154 [...] siennes. Sur son carnet (ce carnet célèbre par [...])

F211 [...] noirs. Que [...]

154 [...] noirs. Et que [...]

F212 - Die Puppe hat gesprochen [...]

155 [...] - Die Puppe hat ersprochen " [...]

F213 [...] le plancher où elles sont [...]

155 [...] le plancher, et elles sont [...]

F213 [...] changée, et les lèvres rentrées dans la bouche:

- Eh bien [...]

155 [...] changée (et les lèvres rentrées dans la bouche): "Eh bien [...]"

+F213-214 [...] la grandeur qu'il fallut pour accomplir celui-ci: retirer de dessus ses cheveux le bridge et le rentrer dans la bouche et l'y accrocher.

Ce [...]

155 [...] la grandeur d'âme qu'il lui fallut pour accomplir cet autre: retirer de dessus ses cheveux le bridge et le rentrer dans la bouche.

Et ce [...]

F214 [...] la noblesse. Culafroy [...]

156 [...] la noblesse. Et Culafroy [...]

F214 [...] voluptueusement, comme il l'eût fait à l'Art, s'il l'eût connu. La [...]

156 [...] voluptueusement (comme il l'eût fait à l'Art, s'il l'eût connu). La [...]

F214 [...] vénérés, totems des vieilles familles, cris de guerre, titres, fourrures, émaux, - écussons [...]

156 [...] vénérés (totems des vieilles familles, cris de guerre, titres, fourrures, émaux), - écussons [...]

F214-215 [...] était, se croyait-il, l'aboutissement [...]

156 [...] était (se croyait-il) l'aboutissement [...]

F215 [...] chaumières, - l'émouvait [...]

156 [...] chaumières, l'émouvait [...]

F216 [...] la Grâce. Culafroy ne sut se retenir de [...]

157 [...] la Grâce. Il ne put se tenir de [...]

F217 Cette *Histoire* devait [...]

158 Cette *Histoire* devait [...]

F219 [...] ne l'eût pas avoué: il fallait que je fusse novice. C'est dans [...]

159 [...] n'eût pas avoué cela: il fallait donc que je fusse novice. Or c'est dans [...]

F220 [...] du *Moïse* de [...]

160 [...] du "Moïse" de [...]

F220 chefs-d'oeuvre. Culafroy [...]

160 chefs-d'oeuvre. Déjà Culafroy [...]

F221 [...] le regardèrent passer [...]

160 [...] le virent passer [...]

F221 Il pencha davantage [...]

160-161 Il baissa [161] davantage [...]

F222 [...] mais le muscle et le regard durs. Et tous [...]

161 [...] mais avec la dureté de muscle et de regard. Et tous [...]

F223 [...] où sifflant au vent [...]

162 [...] où, porté comme Nijinski atterrissant sur la scène, sifflant au vent [...]

F224 Et je reste avec tézig.

- Sûr, godasse.

Mignon [...]

162 Et je reste avec Tézig. - Sûr, godasse." [sic] Mignon [...]

F225 [...] d'une phrase, à la vue [...]

163 [...] d'une phrase bouleversante, à la vue [...]

F225 [...] le noeud de putain.

Comment expliquerons-nous [...]

\*163-164 le noeud de putain. Ils se dénouent d'eux-mêmes, pour peu qu'on y touche. Divine exauçait. Un vieux micheton, à son contact, faillit pleurer. C'était un vieillard sévère et droit. L'apparence de rectitude d'une vie plate et sans aspérités s'effaçait assez vite. Le relief naissait dès qu'on lui parlait, et même dès qu'on observait d'un peu près son visage. Son langage poli laissait parfois passer un mot, une intonation, un accent étranger, ancien, perdu, appartenant à un autre monde, à un autre état, à d'autres individus peut-être qu'il avait connus, signalant les préoccupations nombreuses, diverses; un clin d'oeil, un bâillement se souvenaient de vieilles vies endormies. Cela faisait de lui un personnage plein de ressources. Mais tout ce mystère, jeu de charade ou de mots, comme fait pressentir une solution en forme de poème, se trouva soufflé, quand il voulut faire croire à son méphistophélisme. Un soir, il s'approcha de Divine et, sur un ton doux,

voulant contraster avec le convulsif des mots: "Ne croyez pas en ma simplicité, elle est une science de l'apparence. Vous pensez, Divine, que je me livre à vous. Mais j'avoue beaucoup et beaucoup plus, afin d'être à mon aise pour cacher davantage. Et l'on croit me dominer, mais mon royaume est secret. Et sournoise est ma domination: afin de me venger des outrages d'un adversaire inconséquent, je m'applique à le démontrer. Et je le possède secrètement, alors qu'il se croit en sécurité derrière son râtelier et ses lunettes." C'en fut fait de lui. Il était mort à Divine.

Comment expliquerons-nous [...]

F226 [...] luxe chaud, doré. Tout cela [...]

164-165 [...] luxe fou, chaud, doré. [165] Et tout cela [...]

F227 [...] ce luxe m'entourât, fût réel, et réellement à moi, qu'il aurait suffi d'un [...]

165 [...] ce luxe m'entoure, soit réel, et à moi. Qu'il suffit d'un [...]

F228 [...] de couleur.

165 [...] de couleur. Le fait est exact."

F228 [...] du *Tavernacle* et [...]

166 [...] du *Tavernacle* et [...]

F229 [...] de Mignon augmentaient.

166 [...] de Mignon s'augmentaient.

F229 [...] retrouverons bientôt.

Qu'importerait [...]

166 [...] retrouverons bientôt.

[new page, starts 1/3 down the page]

**QU'**IMPORTERAIT [...]

F231 [...] princesses. Voyez s'il sont beaux! Tous [...]

168 [...] princesses. Voyez donc si c'est beau! Tous [...]

F231 [...] elle-même et si spontanément que [...]

168 [...] elle-même. Et nous y rentrons si spontanément que [...]

F232 [...] chantent. Et les [...]

169 [...] chantent. Et - c'est curieux - les [...]

F232 [...] musicales, qu'il faudrait noter ici pour les bien rendre, qui [...]

169 [...] musicales (qu'il faudrait noter ici pour les bien rendre) qui [...]

F236 [...] sourde comme les lanternes des anciens rôdeurs dirigée [...]

172 [...] sourde, - comme les lanternes des anciens rôdeurs, - dirigée [...]

F238 [...] étrangeté, mais elle est de taille, qu'arriver [...]

173 [...] étrangeté (mais elle est de taille) qu'arriver [...]

F238 [...] par un souci d'être [...]

173 [...] par un souci que vous direz exagéré, un souci d'être [...]

F239 [...] Seigneur." Un tel piédestal orgueilleux confond. Elle demanda [...]

173 [...] Seigneur " (un tel piédestal orgueilleux confond). Elle demanda [...]

F239 [...] miséricorde. Culafroy [...]

174 [...] miséricorde. Et Culafroy [...]

F240 [...] mon mariage!"

Voici ce qu'étaient les nuits au patronage - ou colonie. Les têtes [...]

174 [...] mon mariage!" Voici ce qu'étaient les nuits au patronage - ou colonie. Nous y sommes. Les têtes [...]

+F240 [...] qui est au bout du dortoir. Le silence [...]

174 [...] qui est à côté, au bout. Le silence [...]

\*F240 [...] une demi-heure. le silence [...]

174 [...] une demi-heure. Le silence [...]

F242 [...] mal posé. Ces [...]

175 [...] mal posé. Et ces [...]

F243 [...] mâle - c'est [...]

176 [...] mâle - et c'est [...]

F243 [...] homme "tu défends ton froc". J'admire [...]

176 [...] homme tu défends ton froc. J'admire [...]

F243 Ce furent les vêtements des soeurs qui [...]

176 Ce furent les vêtements des Soeurs qui [...]

F243 Les religieuses laissent des nuits entières leur linge pendre dans un séchoir, elles [...]

176 Les Religieuses laissent des nuits entières leur linge pendre dans un séchoir, et elles [...]

F243 [...] l'ouvrir. Avec une prudence [...]

176 [...] l'ouvrir. A l'aide d'une prudence [...]

F243 [...] son plan.

"Si un type voulait...

176 [...] son plan. " Si un type voulait...

F244 [...] quêter."

Ne criez [...]

176 [...] quêter." Ne criez [...]

F244 [...] fait. Mais "il faut [...]

176 [...] fait. "Mais il faut [...]



F244 [...] favorable à leur nerfs, pour voler chacun [...]  
 177 [...] favorable (à leurs nerfs) et volèrent chacun [...]

F244 [...] ils s'entraidèrent et [...]  
 177 [...] ils s'entr'aidèrent et [...]

F245 [...] la route, qu'il [...]  
 177 [...] la route et il [...]

F246 [...] le soir même.

Je parlerai encore de Divine, mais d'elle en [...]

\*178 [...] le soir même.

Ce passage de la vie de Divine n'importait peut-être guère, mais il m'amènerait du fond de mon enfance jusqu'au coeur de cette grosse prison, où mon coeur bat pareil à chacun des pavés qui battent comme des coeurs, une si douce caresse!

**J**E parlerai encore de Divine, mais de Divine en [...]

F246 [...] une Anglaise.  
 178 [...] une anglaise.

F246 - T'as ton tire-jus, Seck?  
 Aussitôt [...]  
 178 "T'as ton tire-jus, Seck?" Aussitôt [...]

F247 [...] des étincelles.

Ils vont [...]  
 179 [...] des étincelles.

\*

\* \*

Ils vont [...]

F247 [...] à Gorgui:  
 - Non, dit-il [...]  
 179 [...] à Gorgui: "Non, dit-il [...]"

F248 [...] superstition, puis [...]  
 179 [...] superstition et puis [...]

F248 [...] autrefois), où de beaux [...]  
 179 [...] autrefois), et de beaux [...]

F248 [...] réunissent: Toutes, mais surtout Première Communion, Banjo [...]  
 179 [...] réunissent: toutes, mais surtout Première-Communion, Janjo [...]

F248 Le cabaret est livré aux [...]  
 179 Le cabaret est livré (livré) aux [...]

F249 [...] des macs-enfants. En somme [...]  
 180 [...] des macs-enfants, genre *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*. En somme [...]

F250 [...] *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*. Il n'avait pas [...]  
 181 [...] *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*. Lui, il n'avait pas [...]

F251 [...] de chagrin; il prend alors l'assassin par [...]  
 181 [...] de chagrin; alors, il prend l'assassin par [...]

F251 [...] jusqu'au jour. Divine voudrait [...]  
 181 [...] jusqu'au jour. Elle voudrait [...]

F251 [...] antérieur à Divine rappelle [...]  
 181 [...] antérieur lui rappelle [...]

\*F251 Elles se sauva sur [...]  
 181 Elle se sauva sur [...]

F251 [...] se gonflait; elle désirait [...]  
 181 [...] se gonflait et elle désirait [...]

F252 [...] masques. On danse [...]  
 182 [...] masques (la bergère et les loups). On danse [...]

F252 [...] de Düsseldorf sur [...]  
 182 [...] de Dusseldorf sur [...]

F253 [...] des travestis. Les amants [...]  
 182 [...] des travestis. Et les amants [...]

F253 [...] royaux; ma plus grande jouissance [...]  
 182 [...] royaux et ma plus grande jouissance [...]

+F254                                    *Taraboum, dié!*  
     *Taraboum, dié! Taraboum, dié*  
 183                                        "Taraboum!  
     "Taraboum, lass! Taraboum, lass!"

F254 [...] où l'on aurait oublié de [...]  
 183 [...] où l'on a oublié de [...]

F255                                    *Taraboum, Taraboum, dié!*  
     *Taraboum, dié!*  
 184                                        "Taraboum, Taraboum lass!  
     "Taraboum, Taralass!"

F256 - Un chouïa.  
           Sans que [...]  
 184 "Un chouïa." Sans que [...]

F256 [...] allumée, encore qu'il fût jour. Un gardien de la paix rentrant chez lui, ou il trouverait [...] car il était jeune, passa [...]

184 [...] allumée, bien qu'il fût jour. Un gardien de la paix rentrant chez lui (où il trouverait [...] car il était jeune) passa [...]

F257 [...] une tante, ce que [...] Notre-Dame; il fallait [...]

185 [...] une tante (ce que [...] Notre-Dame) il fallait [...]

F257 [...] ce phénomène de la langue maternelle [...]

185 [...] ce phénomène connu de la langue maternelle [...]

F258 [...] pensait plus. En présence [...]

185 [...] pensait plus. Par ailleurs, en présence [...]

F258 [...] un socle solide. Alors [...]

186 [...] un socle solide. C'est alors [...]

F258 [...] mâle impérieux, et pour elle, femme non plus, Ernestine [...]

186 [...] mâle impérieux et beau, et pour elle, femme, non plus Ernestine [...]

F258 [...] avait connue au village.

186 [...] avait connue, gosse, au village.

F259 Culafroy fut amoureux, puisqu'il fit, quand Solange fut mise au couvent, des pèlerinages.

186 Culafroy fut amoureux, puisque, quand Solange fut mise au couvent, il fit des pèlerinages.

F260 [...] des tziganes [...]

187 [...] des Tziganes [...]

F262 Le rocher devint, par la suite, un lieu visité, hanté. Ils y venaient comme l'on vient à un tombeau. Cette [...]

188 Le rocher devient, par exemple, un lieu visité, hanté. Ils y venaient comme l'on vient à un tombeau. Et cette [...]

F263 [...] au désespoir qui [...]

189 [...] au désespoir (dés-illusion) qui [...]

F263 [...] un mystère se trouvait [...]

189 [...] un mystère (assez inquiétant) se trouvait [...]

F264 [...] de l'extérieur. Culafroy raconta [...]

189 [...] de l'extérieur. Il raconta [...]

F264 [...] des familles. Solange [...] la chronique. Je [...]

190 [...] des familles. (Solange [...] la chronique.) Je [...]

F265 [...] même, ceux-là surtout, sont [...]

190 [...] même (ceux-là surtout) sont [...]

F265 [...] répondre. La Fée courait le danger d'oubli. Au [...]

190 [...] répondre (la Fée courait le danger d'oubli). Au [...]

F265 Près du taxi, n'ayant plus à penser, elle redevint Divine. Au lieu d'entrer (déjà [...])

191 **P**RES du taxi, n'ayant plus à penser, elle redevint Divine. Au lieu d'entrer (et déjà [...])

F266 [...] Divine ne se déplissa pas. Aussi bien [...] disait-elle. Le chauffeur [...]

191 [...] Divine ne se déroula pas. (Aussi bien [...] disait-elle). Le chauffeur [...]

F266-267 [...] l'obscurité qu'établissaient les rideaux [...]

191 [...] l'obscurité que faisaient les rideaux [...]

F267 [...] une cigarette, à ses pieds, la masse moussue des dentelles de sa robe lui faisant une sorte de socle frémissant, et [...]

191 [...] une cigarette (à ses pieds, la masse moussue des dentelles de sa robe lui faisait une sorte de socle frémissant), et [...]

F267 [...] le frac [...]

191 [...] le froc [...]

F267 [...] amant le roi.

192 [...] amant le Roi.

F268 - Oui tiens, vas-y.

Notre-Dame [...]

192 "Oui, tiens, vais-y." Notre-Dame [...]

F269 [...] au *Tavernacle* [...]

193 [...] au Tavernacle [...]

F270 [...] la bouche entrebâillée de Divine.

193 [...] la bouche entre-bâillée de Divine.

F270 ([...] joue de Divine), voulut [...]

193 ([...] joue de Divine) et voulut [...]

F270 Moi ça m'excite.

Il bougea.

193 "[...] Moi ça m'excite." Il bougea.

F270 [...] le pénétrer. Un désespoir [...]

\*194 [...] le pénétrer. Déjà son membre intelligent était planté, son membre dur et gros, plus dur et plus gros que celui de Notre Dame, et un désespoir [...]

F270 [...] bouche de Divine et trouvait [...]

\*194 [...] bouche de Divine pour y planter sa bite et trouvait [...]

F271 - Oui, dit le nègre.

Son haleine dut soulever les cheveux blonds de Notre-Dame. Un furieux mouvement s'ébranla au-dessus de Divine.

"C'est la vie" [...]

\*194 "[...] - Oui, oui, dit le nègre." Son haleine dut soulever les cheveux blonds de Notre-Dame. Un furieux mouvement s'ébranla au-dessus de Divine. Notre-Dame avait retrouvé sa bouche, et cette bouche s'ouvrit enfin, immense, terrible, pendant que s'y écoulait le chaud liquide de Notre-Dame, plus vigoureux encore parce que Gorgui le baisait (quand Moaouia me baisa pour la première fois, sa verge loin rentrée, tant fut impérieuse sa virilité qu'en moi j'en sentis assez pour jouir d'une femme - et ce fut la première et seule fois que j'en désirai une).

"C'est la vie" [...]

F271 [...] l'oreiller. Elle [...]

194 [...] l'oreiller. Sa rage et sa honte. Elle [...]

F271 [...] amour indiqué. Divine se fût [...]

\*194-195 [...] amour indiqué. Elle avait l'état d'esprit de cette fille... (C'est Gabriel qui lui fit ce récit, un soir, en fumant une cigarette, et elle se rappelle que son haleine était sensible au palais, comme une bille fraîche qu'on y eût poussée). Son frère et lui firent un jour l'amour avec une jeune putain, l'un devant et l'autre derrière. Leurs mouvements s'accordaient. Mais, quand la jeune femme voulut baiser la bouche de celui qui était allongé par-devant elle, elle eut la honte de trouver cette bouche prise par celle du frère. Ils s'étaient rejoints par-dessus la tête de la femme... Divine se fût [...]

F271 Notre-Dame lui devenait [...]

195 Notre-Dame, lui, devenait [...]

+F271 Le soir, quand ils furent [...]

195 Quand ils furent [...]

F272 [...] sans qu'on la vît, mais [...]

195 [...] sans qu'on la voie, mais [...]

F272 [...] l'étoffe palpitante.

- Ça, c'est [...]

195 [...] l'étoffe palpitante, faisait la verge. "Ça, c'est [...]"

+F273 [...] physique dont on sait comme elle est amère lui fut [...]

196 [...] physique (on sait comme elle est amère) lui fut [...]

F273 Cependant qu'elle [...]

196 Pendant qu'elle [...]

F273 "J'te lance un autobus."

196 "J'te jette un autobus".

F274 [...] dignité. Vers la trentaine [...]

197 [...] dignité. Car vers la trentaine [...]

5.1 *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*, Excisions and Variants

F274-275 [...] loue. Au besoin [...] neuf trous. Que [...]  
 197 [...] loue. (Au besoin [...] neuf trous.) Que [...]

F275 [...] sans elle, quand Notre-Dame [...]  
 197 [...] sans elle, et Notre-Dame [...]

F275 Quelques secondes après, Divine ajouta  
 197 Quelques secondes après, Divine ajoute:

F276 [...] s'allongeait, à la [...] vers le bas. Il était [...]  
 198 [...] s'allongeait (à la [...] vers le bas). Il était [...]

F276 [...] comme un rayon de soleil un bouchon d'épines [...]  
 198 [...] comme un rayon de soleil, un bouchon d'épines [...]

F277 [...] ses poursuites. En définitive, ses flèches faisaient peu de mal à Notre-Dame,  
 nous avons dit pourquoi, et si [...]  
 198 [...] ses poursuites. Mais en définitive, ses flèches faisaient peu de mal à Notre-  
 Dame (nous avons dit pourquoi), et si [...]

F277 [...] cicatrisant. Elle redoutait [...] heureux. A chacune [...]  
 198 [...] cicatrisant. (Elle redoutait [...] heureux.) A chacune [...]

F277 [...] adoucissant. Comme Notre-Dame [...]  
 198 [...] adoucissant et comme Notre-Dame [...]

F277 [...] Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs. Quoique [...]  
 199 [...] Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs, et, quoique [...]

F278 [...] ne se dissolvât dans [...]  
 199 [...] ne se dissolve pas dans [...]

F278 [...] cet aveu: je ne sentis [...]  
 199 [...] cet aveu: que je ne sentis [...]

F279 [...] ma pauvre vieille?  
 - Notre-Dame [...]  
 200 [...] ma pauvre vieille. - Notre-Dame [...]

F281 [...] de prix. Écoute, va [...]  
 201 [...] de pris. Ecoute, va [...]

F281-282 [...] au courant.  
 - Faut y aller. Danie.  
 Le nègre [...]  
 201 [...] au courant. "Mais faut y aller, Danie." Le nègre [...]

F282 [...] ses michetons, le scrupule [...]  
 201 [...] ses michetons, mais le scrupule [...]

F282 [...] il gardait la main [...]

201 [...] il garde la main [...]

F282 [...] gauche, il retenait une longue [...]

202 [...] gauche, il retient une longue [...]

F282 [...] d'étoffe brune.

202 [...] d'étoffe noire.

F282 [...] c'est propre.

Il tenait par un fil [...]

202 "[...] c'est propre." Il tenait par un fil [...]

F283 [...] je ne puis m'empêcher de [...]

202 [...] je ne puis - c'est plus fort que moi - m'empêcher de [...]

F284 "L'envergué!"

203 "l'Envergué"

F285 [...] un filet mouvant les comptoirs [...]

\*203 [...] un filet mourant les comptoirs [...]

F285 [...] à Mignon. L'instant [...]

203 [...] à Mignon. A l'instant [...]

F285 [...] de petits Mercures [...]

203 [...] des petits Mercures [...]

F285 [...] fallait qu'il en passât par là, c'est-à-dire qu'il volât.

204 [...] fallait qu'il en passe par là, c'est-à-dire qu'il vole.

F285 [...] il déposait, comme par inadvertance, un petit [...]

204 [...] il déposait (comme par inadvertance) un petit [...]

F286 [...] puisque Mignon possédait [...]

204 [...] puisqu'il possédait [...]

F286 [...] la poche, percée, de son pardessus [...]

204 [...] la poche (percée) de son pardessus [...]

F286 [...] connaissent. Mignon préférait saisir, faire [...]

\*204 [...] connaissent bien. Je connais moi, leurs calculs secrets. Mignon préférait saisir, d'un geste gracieux en somme, faire [...]

F287 [...] clients, toujours traîtres, ne regardent pas.

205 [...] clients, toujours traîtres, ne regardent pas.

F288 [...] naturel, puis encore [...]

205 [...] naturel (un client naturel), - et puis encore [...]

5.1 *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*, Excisions and Variants

F288 [...] au passage les étalages [...]

205 [...] au passage toute l'étrangeté des étalages [...]

F288 [...] les plus pernicious, c'est d'eux [...]

206 [...] les plus pernicious, les plus retors, et c'est d'eux [...]

F288 [...] sur la plage. Par les mots [...]

206 [...] sur la plage. Et, par les mots [...]

F289 [...] filous, macs [...]

206 [...] filous filant la nuit au fil de leur sifflet, macs [...]

F290 (Il inventa: - Romuald!)

206 (Il inventa, devinez? - Romuald!)

F291 ([...] gardien l'ignorait.)

Mignon [...]

207 ([...] gardien l'ignorait.) Mignon [...]

F292 [...] au pénitencier furent [...]

208 [...] au pénitencier des anges furent [...]

F292 [...] devant lui, écartelé, au pilori déjà, ses quinze ans en croix, le surveillant [...]

208 [...] devant lui, écarté, au pilori déjà, ses quinze ans en croix (Ave Maria), le surveillant [...]

F292 [...] durs (les sentiments [...])

208 [...] durs (et les sentiments [...])

F293 [...] une cellule. Enfin, sous [...]

208 [...] une cellule enfin, et sous [...]

F293 Devant toutes [...]

209 **D**EVANT toutes [...]

F294 [...] vers l'ouest, la [...]

209 [...] vers l'Ouest, la [...]

F294 [...] dans la tragédie, - (en prison [...])

209 [...] dans la Tragédie, - (en prison [...])

F294 [...] referme. Le détenu n'est [...]

210 [...] referme. Il n'est [...]

F295 ([...] galériens du roy) - le matelas [...]

210 ([...] Galériens du Roy) - le matelas [...]

\*F295 [...] de sein (elles battent comme une bouche) les latrines des faïence blanche accordent leur [...]



210 [...] de sein, elles battent comme une bouche, les latrines de faïence blanche, donnant leur [...]

F295 Le Bloc-Mignon [...]

210 **L**E Bloc-Mignon [...]

F296 [...] du drame qu'il [...]

211 [...] du drame surprenant qu'il [...]

F297 [...] elle les annule.

Aux pieds [...]

\*211 [...] elle les annule. Quand un camp-volant emporte en le traînant par la main le fils du baron, les valets et les larmes sortent par les portes et les yeux. Tout reste ouvert. Enfin, le château s'aère. Il s'écroule.

Aux pieds [...]

F297 [...] s'agenouille. La prison entraîne avec elle toutes les cellules où les prisonniers dorment; s'allège et file: Courez [...]

211 [...] s'agenouille. Et la prison entraîne avec elle toutes les cellules où les prisonniers dorment; s'allège et file à travers les étoiles. Courez [...]

F297-298 [...] le prie-Dieu; aux [...]

212 [...] le prie-Dieu, aux [...]

F300 [...] à un gâfe. Son sourire [...]

214 [...] à un gaffe, et son sourire [...]

F300 [...] je n'avais remarqué de gardien [...]

214 [...] je n'avais remarqué de jeune et beau gardien [...]

F301 [...] un autre gardien ou à un assassin et qu'étant [...]

214 [...] un autre gardien (ou à un assassin) et qu'étant [...]

F301 [...] et reconnaissant.

En face [...]

\*214 [...] et reconnaissant - et ma bite dans sa bouche pensait: "Donne" que je déchargeai entre ses dents d'énormes caillots de sperme.

En face [...]

F302 [...] moment de bonheur, fait de l'adorable facilité [...]

215 [...] moment de bonheur. De quoi est-il fait? De l'adorable facilité [...]

F302 [...] c'est-à-dire comme... Dans les [...]

215 [...] c'est-à-dire comme... Et dans les [...]

F303 [...] supportable. (Il est [...])

215 [...] supportable. (Et il est [...])

F303 [...] eux-mêmes; mais il est [...]

215 [...] eux-mêmes; et il est [...]

F303 [...] les éléments tragiques [...]

\*216 [...] les élément tragiques [...]

F303 [...] d'être multiple, parce qu'elle reste muette, fermée comme un tombeau, comme [...]

216 [...] d'être multiple, car elle reste muette, fermée comme un tombeau, et comme [...]

F304 Jean ici. Quand je dis [...]

216 Jean ici. Et quand je dis [...]

F304 [...] qu'il m'accorda de [...]

216 [...] qu'il m'accorde de [...]

F305 [...] chasteté. C'est un autre Jean [...]

217 [...] chasteté. Et c'est un autre Jean [...]

F305 [...] qu'un geste irréfléchi [...]

217 [...] qu'un geste fou, irréfléchi [...]

F306 J'suis pas bon.

Je continue [...]

217 "[...] J'suis pas bon."

Ainsi le rêve, à cheval, est entré par la porte cochère.

Je continue [...]

F306 Comme des lis tout droits [...]

218 Comme des lys tout droits [...]

F307 [...] la folie, comme j'aime la prison, cette [...]

218 [...] la folie (comme j'aime la prison) cette [...]

F308 [...] des héros, que Mignon devenait tout à coup, et il [...]

219 [...] des héros (que Mignon devenait tout a coup), et il [...]

F308 [...] lente et lourde. Leurs pieds [...]

\*219 [...] lente et lourde. (Un petit soldat français, blanc, blanc, blanc et rose, Gabriel l'Archange, un petit soldat tombait, blanc, blanc, blanc et rose et blanc.) Leurs pieds [...]

F308 [...] flexibles. Je m'émerveille que le souteneur Horst Wessel, dit-on, ait donné naissance à une légende et à une plainte.

Ignorants, fécondants [...]

219 [...] flexibles. Et je m'émerveille que le souteneur Horts Wessel, dit-on, ait donné naissance à une légende et une plainte.

Ignorants, ils tombent sur Paris, qui toute une nuit comprima les battements fous de son coeur, fécondants [...]

F309 [...] je rencontrais les mineurs [...]

220 [...] je rencontrai ce père qui baisa son fils consentant, et les mineurs [...]

F309 [...] des visites. Dans sa vie [...]  
220 [...] des visites; et, dans sa vie [...]

F309 [...] jamais rien. Comme [...]  
220 [...] jamais rien; et, comme [...]

F309 [...] il ne saura pas, dans cette histoire que le gosse lui récite, que Pierrot-le-Corse [...]  
220 [...] il ne saura pas que, dans cette histoire que le gosse lui récite, Pierrot-le-Corse [...]

F309 [...] le gosse qui va parler, quand l'ascenseur de l'immeuble s'arrêta au palier. Le bruit [...]  
220 [...] le gosse qui parle, quand l'ascenseur de l'immeuble s'arrêta au palier. Et le bruit [...]

F310 [...] Notre-Dame seraient morts de peur. C'est le gosse [...]  
220 [...] Notre-Dame mouraient d'épouvante. C'est le gosse [...]

F310 - Police.  
Il s'avança dans l'antichambre. Tout le sol était couvert d'un tapis. Pour consentir [...]  
221 "Police!"  
Et il avança dans l'antichambre. Tout le sol étant couvert de tapis, les policiers marchaient dans du rêve. Pour consentir [...]

F310 [...] un peu fée. Les policiers marchaient [...]  
221 [...] un peu fée. Fées sont les policiers. Ils marchaient [...]

F311 [...] de crainte, étrangla le vieux.  
\*221 [...] de crainte, égorgea le vieux.

F311-312 [...] proposition, l'ennui de son absurde et de son possible: un meurtre postiche [...]  
221 [...] proposition (et l'ennui de son absurde et de son possible): un meurtre postiche [...]

F312 [...] mannequin de cire utilisé par les tailleurs. Néanmoins [...]  
222 [...] mannequin de cire que les tailleurs... Néanmoins [...]

F313 [...] basses-fosses, quitte [...] volte-face, et à cause [...]  
223 [...] basses-fosses (quitte [...] volte-face) et à cause [...]

F313 [...] gestes absurdes.  
223 [...] gestes incroyables.

F314 [...] avec le commissaire, ils revinrent [...]  
223 [...] avec le Commissaire, ils revinrent [...]

F315 [...] sur une chaise. Après tout [...]

223-224 [...] sur une chaise. Je vois la scène, [224] comme si j'y étais. Après tout [...]

F317 - Oui, oui, c'est lui. Laissez-moi.

Ses cheveux [...]

225 "Oui, oui, c'est lui. Laissez-moi." Ses cheveux [...]

F317 [...] sa bouche. Tout devient [...]

225 [...] sa bouche. Et tout devient [...]

F317 [...] pareilles à Ernestine, née vieille, comme les enfants juifs [...]

225 [...] pareilles à Mademoiselle Adeline, née vieille, comme les enfants juifs [...]

F318 [...] pourquoi elle avait ainsi parlé.

226 [...] pourquoi cette vieille momie avait ainsi parlé.

F319 Ainsi, Ernestine partait [...]

227 Ainsi, Adeline partait [...]

F319 [...] des journaux. Elle en rêvait.

227 [...] des journaux. (Voyez la vieille, d'un pas de marionnette, se prenant à l'amour!)

Elle en rêvait.

F320 [...] divers, colonnes sanglantes et mutilées comme des poteaux de torture. Et, bien [...]

227 [...] divers (colonnes sanglantes et mutilées comme des poteaux de torture). Et, bien [...]

F320 [...] poussières acres, arrosèrent [...]

\*\*227 [...] poussières sacrées, arrosèrent [...]

321 [...] foule d'assises que tant de majestés vont affaïsser.

228 [...] foule d'Assises que tant de Majestés vont affaïsser.

F322 [...] un peuple. Vous souvenez-vous de l'Italienne maigre [...] pour Divine? Ici [...]

228 [...] un peuple. (Vous souvenez-vous de l'italienne maigre [...] pour Divine?) Ici [...]

F322 [...] patronages de l'adolescence parlaient [...]

229 [...] patronages de l'Adolescence parlaient [...]

F322 Les avocats, qui n'ont pas [...] des ecclésiastiques, faisaient [...]

229 Les avocats (qui n'ont pas [...] des ecclésiastiques) faisaient [...]

F323 C'était la religion [...]

229 C'était sa religion [...]

F324 [...] à son tour, donna, en clignant des yeux, un léger coup de tête, qui fit rebondir [...]

230 [...] à son tour, donna un léger coup de tête, en clignant des yeux, qui fit rebondir [...]

F234 [...] (soldat de la coloniale) [...]  
230 [...] (soldat de la Coloniale) [...]

F325 [...] la salle des assises fût [...]  
230 [...] la salle des Assises fût [...]

F325 [...] un polichinelle, ou [...]  
230 [...] un Polichinelle, ou [...]

F325 [...] par la gloire, on discerne [...]  
231 [...] par la Gloire, on discerne [...]

F327 [...] être contrebalancés par [...]  
232 [...] être contre-balancés par [...]

F327 ([...] la bravoure.) On peut dire [...]  
\*232 ([...] la bravoure. Car on peut dire [...]

F327 [...] autres; l'infâmie n'eût pas [...] [misprint]  
\*232 [...] autres; l'infamie n'eût pas [...]

F327 [...] poétisait. Peut-être à [...]  
232 [...] poétisait. Et peut-être à [...]

+F328 [...] serrés, pétris, comme [...]  
232 [...] serrés, comme [...]

F328 [...] sa cellule. Les paysans [...]  
233 [...] sa cellule. Et les paysans [...]

F329 [...] légèrement entrouverte. Parfois [...]  
233 [...] légèrement entr'ouverte. Parfois [...]

F329 - La cour!  
233 "La Cour!" [et passim]

F330 [...] avec bruit. M. Vase de Sainte-Marie [...]  
233 [...] avec bruit. Monsieur Vase de Sainte-Marie [...]

F330 [...] la main fine de M. Vase de Sainte-Marie [...]  
234 [...] la main fine de Monsieur Vase de Sainte-Marie [...]

F331 [...] du 7 au 8 juillet 1937, pénétré [...]  
235 [...] du 7 au 8 juillet mil neuf cent trente-sept, pénétré [...]

F331 - Oui, monsieur.  
235 - Oui, Monsieur.

F332 [...] l'avez étranglé.

Le Président prit la cravate.

235 "[...] l'avez étranglé." Le Président prit la cravate.

F332 [...] de ridicule. Il se hâta [...]

235 [...] de ridicule. Et il se hâta [...]

F333 [...] avec le destin qui [...]

235 [...] avec le Destin qui [...]

F333 Alors il l'a enlevée.

Et l'assassin [...]

236 "[...] Alors il l'a enlevée." Et l'assassin [...]

F334 [...] la misère. Cette dèche [...]

236 [...] la misère. Et cette dèche [...]

F335 [...] autre chose. Pourtant, dans [...]

237 [...] autre chose, et pourtant, dans [...]

F336 [...] est pour nous.

Tandis qu'il parlait [...]

238 "[...] est pour nous." Et tandis qu'il parlait [...]

F337 [...] du mur. M. Vase de Sainte-Marie [...]

238 [...] du mur. Monsieur Vase de Sainte-Marie [...]

F341 [...] être mon fils.

Elle dit encore [...]

241 "[...] être mon fils." Elle dit encore [...]

F341 [...] Culafroy qu'il n'avait cessé d'être.

\*241 [...] Culafroy qu'il n'avait pas cessé d'être.

F343 [...] avec - qui pouvait faire que le monde ne fût pas, que sa mère, que lui-même ne fussent pas, un Dieu [...]

242 [...] avec - et qui pouvait faire que le monde ne soit pas, que sa mère, que lui-même ne soient pas, un Dieu [...]

F344 [...] la porte entrebâillée. Chacun [...]

243 [...] la porte entre-bâillée. Chacun [...]

F344 C'est que se reconstruisait [...]

\*243 C'est là que se reconstruisait [...]

F346 [...] dans l'espace, toute seule. Elle n'obéissait déjà plus aux lois de la terre. A travers [...]

244 [...] dans l'espace infini, toute seule. Elle n'obéissait déjà plus aux lois de la Terre. A travers [...]

5.1 *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*, Excisions and Variants

F346 [...] se fût organisée en couple pour chanter: "La vie [...]"  
 244 [...] se fut organisée en couple et eut chanté: "La vie [...]"

F346 [...] le Président Vase de Sainte-Marie. C'est si [...]  
 244 [...] le Président Vase de Sainte-Marie. Et c'est si [...]

F346 [...] pensa-t-il. Aussitôt [...]  
 245 [...] pensa-t-il, et aussitôt [...]

F347 [...] Écritures. Qu'est-ce au juste [...]  
 245 [...] Écritures. Et qu'est-ce au juste [...]

F347 C'était sensé [...]  
 245 C'était très sensé [...]

F347 frappez fort.  
     En parlant [...]  
 245 "[...] frappez fort." En parlant [...]

F348 [...] grec que la Minerve porte sur [...]  
 246 [...] grec que les Minerves portent sur [...]

F349 [...] pu bander.  
     Le dernier [...]  
 246 "[...] pu bander." Le dernier [...]

F349 [...] un organe, qui ne trouvant [...]  
 246 [...] un organe, qui, ne trouvant [...]

F350 [...] choix, déjà fait, du juste [...]  
 247 [...] choix (déjà fait) du juste [...]

F351 la soif (allait-il, mon Dieu, faire de l'enfant un Père de Foucauld [...])  
 247 la soif (Allait-il, mon Dieu, faire de l'enfant un père de Foucauld [...])

F351 Qu'il dît un mot [...]  
 248 Qu'il dise un mot [...]

F351 [...] d'assassin, tranquilles, assis [...] Damnation. Leur aise [...]  
 248 [...] d'assassin (tranquilles, assis [...] Damnation). Leur aise [...]

352 [...] claquer tout de suite.  
     L'avocat [...]  
 248 "[...] claquer tout de suite." L'avocat [...]

352 N'anticipons pas.  
     La cruauté du mot [...]  
 248 "[...] N'anticipons pas." La cruauté du mot [...]

353 [...] racla sa gorge. Le Président [...]

248 [...] racla sa gorge. C'était terrible. Le Président [...]

F353 [...] expiatoires, qu'elles fussent bouc, boeuf, enfant, et qu'ont encore aujourd'hui les rois et les Juifs. Les gardiens [...]

249 [...] expiatoires (qu'elles fussent bouc, boeuf, enfant) et qu'ont encore aujourd'hui les rois et les Juifs, et les gardiens [...]

F354 [...] sa vétusté. Quoique [...]

249 [...] sa vétusté. Et quoique [...]

F354 J'ai relu [...]

249 **J'**AI relu [...]

F355 [...] il sourit. Ce ne fut plus [...]

250 [...] il sourit. Et ce ne fut plus [...]

+F356

DIVINARIANES (*suite et fin*)

251

DIVINARIANES

+F357 [...] Val des Anges.

Elle (Divine) [...]

251 [...] Val des Anges.

Elle (Divine) [...]

F357 [...] la vanité. Ainsi [...]

252 [...] la vanité. Et ainsi [...]

F357 [...] répugnante. Croyant ainsi brûler ses vaisseaux [...]

252 [...] répugnante. Elle croit brûler ses vaisseaux [...]

F358 Geler son visage.

\*252 Gelé, son visage.

F358 [...] de la *Marche de la Zauberflöte*. Elle [...]

252 [...] de la Marche de la Zauberflöte. Elle [...]

F358 [...] dans la rue, fantomale. Un jeune [...]

252 [...] dans la rue, fantôme. Un jeune [...]

F359 [...] un crime afin de se [...]

253 [...] un crime pour se [...]

F359 [...] beau crime. Elle chante [...]

253 [...] beau crime. Et elle chante [...]

F361 [...] connaissance. Cela [...]

254 [...] connaissance. Et cela [...]



F362 [...] la matière. Dans l'espace [...]

254 [...] la matière. Et dans l'espace [...]

F362 [...] Dieu la prit pour une sainte. Rappelons [...]

\*255 [...] Dieu la prit et la fit une sainte. On me demandera ce que cela veut dire. J'ai toute prête la formule métaphysique, mais je ne la livrerai que plus tard, quand je serai sûr de ne plus vous épouvanter. Rappelons [...]

F364 [...] Mélusine était mère. Mère et fils étaient [...]

256 [...] Mélusine était mère et du fils étaient [...]

F364 [...] au début. Divine [...]

256 [...] au début. Et Divine [...]

F364 [...] la sienne. Ce respect [...]

256 [...] la sienne. Et ce respect [...]

F364 [...] reconnaissent des signes qui avertissent plus sûrement qu'un crêpe elle avait [...]

256 [...] reconnaissent - des signes qui avertissent plus sûrement qu'un crêpe - elle avait [...]

F365 M. le Curé [...]

256 Monsieur le Curé [...]

F365 ([...] cachant), ce merveilleux [...]

257 ([...] cachant) et ce merveilleux [...]

F365 [...] conservant - son buste [...]

257 [...] conservant - et son buste [...]

F365 [...] disait-elle. Elle [...]

257 [...] disait-elle. Et elle [...]

F366 [...] dire grand-chose, car [...]

257 [...] dire grand'chose, car [...]

F366 Trois tziganes y avaient organisé une école de pick-pockets.

257 Trois Tziganes y avaient organisé une école de pickpockets.

F366 [...] sur le bat-flanc [...]

257 [...] sur le bât-flanc [...]

F366 [...] déjà. Aventure délicate, car [...]

257 [...] déjà. C'était délicat, car [...]

F366 [...] se tournât dans [...]

257 [...] se tourne dans [...]

F366 [...] de ses cuisses.

5.1 *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*, Excisions and Variants

- Quand fut venu mon tour d'opérer, le tzigane [...]  
 257 [...] de ses cuisses de marbre.  
 Quand fut venu mon tour d'opérer, le Tzigane [...]
- F366 [...] l'étoffe du veston, je sentis le coeur [...]  
 \*257 [...] l'étoffe du veston, messieurs, je sentis le coeur [...]
- F367 [...] regardant. Comme je [...]  
 258 [...] regardant. Et comme je [...]
- F367 [...] il se gratte les cheveux [...]  
 258 [...] il se gratta les cheveux [...]
- F368 [...] du monde. Ce rôle était l'origine du monde et à l'origine du monde. Il m'apparut [...]  
 258-259 [...] du monde. Il était l'origine du monde et à l'origine du [259] monde. Et il m'apparut [...]
- F268 Le monde se réduisit et son mystère dès [...]  
 258 Le monde se réduisit (et son mystère) dès [...]
- F369 [...] de son index sec [...]  
 259 [...] de son doigt sec [...]
- F370 [...] il se leva. Sur la pointe [...]  
 \*260 [...] il se leva et le geste qui posa son pied sur la carquette fut un geste de reine de théâtre. Sur la pointe [...]
- F370 [...] mort que vif. Les âmes [...]  
 260 [...] mort que vif. Et les âmes [...]
- F370 [...] qu'il pût.  
 260 [...] qu'il put.
- F371 [...] le *Veni Creator*...  
 - " Et, si la veilleuse [...]  
 \*260 [...] le " *Veni Creator* " ...  
 Et, si la veilleuse [...]
- F371 [...] visage, telle, une glaise [...]  
 261 [...] visage, tels, une glaise [...]
- F371 [...] Bernadette Soubirous, à l'heure [...]  
 261 [...] Bernadette Soubiroux, à l'heure [...]
- F372 Mais c'est de cet instant que [...]  
 261 Mais c'est de cet instant (la mort de la vieille) que [...]
- F372 [...] cette dignité, qu'ils [...]  
 261 [...] cette dignité - qu'ils [...]

F373 [...] retrouver d'apaisantes, de consolantes [...]

262 [...] retrouver, l'apaisant, de consolantes [...]

F374 Morte Divine [...]

263 Et morte Divine [...]

F375 [...] la fatalité. Maintenant que [...]

263 [...] la fatalité. Et maintenant que [...]

F375 [...] désirs. Moi aussi [...]

263 [...] désirs. Et moi aussi [...]

F376 [...] d'adorables vies nouvelles.

J'ai lu [...]

264 [...] d'adorables vies nouvelles.

\*

\* \*

J'ai lu [...]

F377 Je n'ai pas de pot; reconnais-le.

265 Je n'ai pas de pote, reconnais-le.

+F377 [...] dessiner Mignon.

Prison de Fresnes, 1942.

265 [...] dessiner Mignon.

**FIN**

## 5.2 APPENDIX B

*Miracle de la rose*, Excisions and Variants

'tous droits réservés à la succession de Jean Genet'

Page references are first given for the 'Collection Folio' edition - preceded by an 'F' - and then to the subscribers' edition. I only refer to the L'Arbalète edition of 1966 (preceding page numbers with an 'A') if it is different from both the subscribers' and the 'Collection Folio' edition.

F12 C'est là, en entrant dans la voiture cellulaire [...]

13 C'est là, d'abord, en entrant dans la voiture cellulaire [...]

F14 [...] fermée à clé.

15 [...] fermée à clef. [et passim for this spelling]

F17 [...] éclairés violemment, sentant le ripolin [...]

18 [...] éclairés violemment. Ça sentait le ripolin [...]

F19 [...] mais tous les boutons manquaient, et cela donnait au costume la tristesse d'une maison dévastée. Je me fis [...]

21 [...] mais tous les boutons manquaient. (C'est ce manque de boutons qui donnait au costume la tristesse d'une maison dévastée). Je me fis [...]

F28 [...] son rôle de démon de me montrer cette nouvelle direction. Il apporte [...]

32 [...] son rôle de démon - ou daimon - de me montrer cette nouvelle direction. La fatalité qui conduit mes poèmes (donc ma vie) à leur fin, se sert de celui-là. Il apporte [...]

F30 [...] absolument, et d'une pâleur, d'une blancheur pleine de santé.

34 [...] absolument, et d'une pâleur de mort.

A18 [...] absolument, et d'une blancheur (ma paresse quelquefois et mon goût du tragique me feront souvent user de cette épithète, mais ici il s'impose réellement), d'une pâleur terrible.

F38 [...] une vie dangereuse. Car le corps seul [...]

43-44 [...] une vie dangereuse. Le danger physique est l'élément dans [44] lequel se développent les sentiments nobles. C'est justement l'esprit chevaleresque, c'est l'esprit du soldat de métier, de l'explorateur. Car le corps seul [...]

F43 [...] d'une pâleur débile. Ils ne m'indiquent plus [...]

49 [...] d'une pâleur débile. Ils sont morts. Toutes leurs destinations étant destinations pratiques, je sais ce qu'ils furent et je ne puis tirer d'eux ces étincelles de vie que notre contact fait jaillir des objets nouveaux, comme elles sortent, jaillissent, avec des crépitements que moi seul entends, des doigts secs et précis de Bulkaen. Ces objets ne m'indiquent plus [...]

F47 [...] de la Prison. Et qu'à ce danger [...]

55 [...] de la Prison. Et toute ma volonté qui me cherchait une issue dans l'air libre, mes efforts, mes expériences, mon refus de me laisser couler dans des rêveries, ma vie active, tout n'aura servi à rien, à cause de cet amour qui m'oblige à voir par Bulkaen, à considérer la prison selon l'incidence qu'il donne à mon regard, à m'y complaire. Et qu'à ces dangers [...]

F47 [...] dont j'ai voulu m'affranchir. Au surplus [...]

55 [...] dont j'ai voulu m'affranchir. Ils retiendront les charmes. Au surplus [...]

F52 [...] avant de s'éteindre. Il était aux fers [...]

61 [...] avant de s'éteindre. Cette admirable clarté, c'est le chant du signe. Il était aux fers [...]

F67 [...] de l'expression: 'C'était trop beau pour être vrai'.

79 [...] de l'expression: 'c'était trop beau pour être vrai'.

F70 [...] et ainsi durant l'éternité.

Condamné à la relègue, [...]

83 [...] et ainsi durant l'éternité. Je ne sortirai pas du malheur ni ne quitterai le sentiment d'être maudit car les mêmes signes qui me l'annoncèrent autrefois, sur moi gardent la même puissance puisqu'ils font naître le même désespoir. Je suis enfermé dans un cercle de malheur.

Condamné à la relègue, [...]

F72 [...] qu'il faut), il fallait montrer de l'audace, [...]

84 [...] qu'il faut), Harcamone devait montrer en outre de l'audace, [...]

F72 [...] en est incapable.

Harcamone en vint donc [...]

85 [...] en est incapable. Il faut nier sa personnalité quand, au contraire, on sent le besoin de l'affirmer, et choisir entre l'intelligence quand on éprouve un tel besoin d'être soi. C'est ce besoin qui tend à me faire connaître comme casseur. Il faut que ma vérité éclate.

Harcamone en vint donc [...]

F74 (Weidmann et sa balle dans la nuque, etc.)

88 (Weidman et sa balle dans la nuque, etc.)

F77 [...] les choses, ceux que [...]

91 [...] les choses, aucun de ces mots de poète, des mots gratuits, ceux que [...]

F79 [...] qui l'a versé. Par ses meurtres [...]

93 [...] qui l'a versé. Le sang effraye. Par ses meurtres [...]

F80 [...] composant un poème? Bulkaen remonta son froc [...]

94 [...] composant un poème. Il remonta son froc [...]

F83 Mais j'insistai. Nous éprouvions [...]

99 Mais j'insistai. (Qu'ils me paraissent délicats nos premiers rapports à les évoquer pour les écrire! Nous éprouvions [...] gestes).

F84 [...] en danger. Bulkaen se moquait de moi.

99 [...] en danger. Un moment, je vis en morceaux toute la construction que je m'étais donné tant de mal à élever. Bulkaen se moquait de moi.

F85 Cette phrase me remplit d'espoir.

101 Cette phrase me remplit d'un espoir fou.

F85 Je capitulais.

101 Je capitulai.

F85 [...] de coups mirobolants et, surtout, [...]

102 [...] de coups merveilleux et, surtout, [...]

F87 [...] de la rue des Lis [...]

104 [...] de la rue des Lys [...]

F89-90 [...] *est sincère*.

Quelques mots qu'il voulait souligner [...]

106 [...] 'est sincère.'

Cette lettre - et celles qui suivirent - étaient gentilles. Quelques mots qu'il voulait souligner [...]

F90 Je sentais le cheval qui se cabre devant l'ombre.

107 Je sentais le cheval qui se cabre devant le diable.

F93 [...] et de l'autre. La prison [...]

111 [...] et de l'autre, je composai avec des poèmes brefs et bouleversants, poèmes de prisonniers où les mots sont saouls, agités, comme tout ce qui touche à la prison, d'une nausée. La prison [...]

F94 [...] chute lui-même, etc.). Un seul mot [...]

112 [...] chute lui-même, etc.). On s'est laissé engloutir. Les choses pèsent encore parce que leur matière est pesante; les murs sont pleins, en granit, les portes massives, les clefs des serrures, le pas des gardiens sont lourds. Enfin la prison est lourde parce que l'air est chargé de gaz carbonique, d'odeurs, parce que le sexe énorme des détenus est lourd comme une haltère, et surtout parce qu'il émane de leur bouche, leurs yeux, leurs pôles, les plus suffocantes imaginations, les peurs, les colères, les angoisses, plus lourdes que les exhalaisons des corps, et sur quoi l'on flotte, au dessus de quoi tout, même les murailles, peut voguer. Les choses y sont donc encore d'une légèreté effrayante, de la légèreté qui appartient aux gens ivres. Par une grande douleur, par un grand coup, on est détaché du sol. Tout est vu de haut. Si, par mégarde, on se cogne à un accident du sol des humains, on rebondit, car on est gonflé comme une baudruche. On a la difformité des personnages de rêves. On est lourd et léger. Tous ici, nous cherchons notre équilibre avec des mouvements grotesques. Un seul mot [...]

F96 [...] la féerie. Nous étions légers [...]

115 [...] la féerie. C'est quand l'âme est exaspérée, par l'attente par exemple, que l'on s'ouvre à l'irréel, au surréal. Tout est devenu possible. Nous étions légers [...]

F96 [...] qu'il se passait quelque chose d'insolite [...]

116 [...] qu'il se passait, au coeur même du monde, quelque chose d'insolite [...]

F97 Je me tenais sur mes gardes en face du tatouage et, d'autre part [...]

117 Je me tenais sur mes gardes en face de la femme tatouée et, d'autre part [...]

F98 [...] par la suite, après elle, son enthousiasme [...]

118 [...] par la suite, après sa beauté, son enthousiasme [...]

F99 Elle était étincelante.

Je fis mine [...]

119 Elle était étincelante. Pierrot était donc la gentillesse même.

Je fis mine [...]

F101 [...] c'étaient ses angles. Ils faisaient son éclat. Ils fascinaient. Ils accrochaient mon amour.

121 Ils fascinaient. Et c'est grâce à eux que je l'aimais. Ces angles [...]

F101 [...] ce baiser refusé, preuve de [...]

121-122 [...] ce baiser refusé (et tout baiser qu'on me refuse pourtant m'attriste et me couvre de honte car il me rappelle ce geste de Villeroy détournant la tête quand, à Mettray, après l'amour, je lui tendis ma bouche. Je crus d'abord que c'était à cause du foutre [122] bu, mais c'était bien plutôt le fait d'un dégoût qui vient toujours de l'homme après le plaisir. Et moi, sachant, pour l'avoir éprouvée, leur tristesse, j'accorde aux garçons, sur la bouche, un baiser de reconnaissance), baiser refusé, preuve de [...]

F103 [...] en pensée je vais le pénétrer, ma verge s'amollit, mon corps débande [...]

124 [...] en pensée je vais le pénétrer, que je sens le sperme monter dans ma verge, ma verge s'amollit, mon corps débande [...]

A62 [...] en pensée je vais le pénétrer, que je sens le sperme monter en elle, ma verge s'amollit, mon corps débande [...]

F106 Divers savait son autorité (à Mettray, le chef [...])

128 Divers savait la puissance de sa beauté (à Mettray, le chef [...])

F107 [...] une belle captive?).

128 [...] une belle captive? Je le dirai plus loin).

F109 [...] sans les aimer. Quand il cambriolait, [...]

131 [...] sans les aimer. Toute sa nature était physique, la joie qu'il recherchait, c'était la joie de son corps. Quand il cambriolait, [...]

F111 [...] faisant gicler entre leurs dents blanches des injures [...]

134 [...] faisant gigler entre leurs dents blanches des injures [...] [Misprint]

F111 [...] pour être vus de nous.

C'est au milieu [...]

134 [...] pour être vus de nous. Ainsi la guerre nous semble-t-elle les signes visibles et indéchiffrables d'une action mystérieuse et très vivante, humaine, qui se joue dans le secret d'un chalet blindé, au sommet des Alpes.

C'est au milieu [...]

F117 [...] depuis Beaugency.

Si dans vingt ans [...]

141 [...] depuis Beaugency.

Je compris soudain. Si dans vingt ans [...]

F119 Divers ne se mêla pas quelque tendresse, mais une légère tendresse semblait sourdre [...]

144 Divers ne se mêla pas quelque tendresse - mêler n'étant pas juste - mais une légère tendresse semblait sourdre [...]

F119 [...] loin au fond de moi.

Mettray s'épanouissait [...]

144 [...] loin au fond de moi. Je ne savais encore si elle était éloignée, parce qu'en fuite et si mon sentiment était une nostalgie de cette tendresse, ou parce que naissante, elle apparaissait à peine, et si mon sentiment était un espoir craintif qu'elle ne m'en valût tout. Quoi qu'il en soit, c'est un malaise insupportable que me causait ce sentiment car il me semblait être une trahison envers Bulkaen passionnément adoré, puis j'en éprouvais une sorte de honte (ma position envers Divers étant celle de la femme) et en même temps qu'un malaise, il me mettait au cerveau une espèce de vertige auquel, si Bulkaen était mort, je me serais laissé aller.

Mettray s'épanouissait [...]

F119-120 Elle exerçait sur nous un prestige dangereux. Le prestige des armoires à poison, des poudrières, des antichambres d'ambassade. Bulkaen négligeait l'évocation [...]

145 Elle exerçait sur nous un prestige dangereux. Le prestige des armoires à poison, des poudrières, des antichambres d'ambassade. De mon temps, nous y connaissions l'existence de Jo la Voix d'Or, dont on ne savait rien d'autre que sa voix était une terrible charmeuse, et qu'il la laissait pendre la nuit, se dérouler, s'enrouler autour de nous. Bulkaen à qui, par un biffeton, je demandai un jour s'il avait entendu parler de Jo me répondit que non. La légende n'a pas survécu à ceux qui la créèrent, mais il est vrai que Pierrot négligeait alors l'évocation [...]

A72 Elle exerçait sur nous le prestige des armoires à poison, des poudrières, des antichambres d'ambassade.

Nous vivions sous le regard [...]

F120 [...] de la Centrale, comme un village [...]

145-146 [...] de la Centrale, [146] un peu comme un village [...]

F120 [...] être dignes d'eux.

146 [...] être dignes de nos chevaliers.

F120 [...] secrètement du château. Par qui?

146 [...] secrètement du château. Ils émanaient sans doute de Jo la Voix d'Or, mais transmis comment? Par qui?

F120 Nous sommes pour eux des pourris.

146 Nous sommes des pourris.

F121 [...] où ils se fondent. Un air de famille [...]



146 [...] où ils se fondent. Ils se rejoignent là où l'envers rejoint l'endroit. Un air de famille.

F121 [...] inoculés.

Nous obéissions [...]

147-148 [...] inoculés. Enfin, l'on comprendra ce qu'il pouvait advenir d'eux quand on saura que je vis un jour Brulard, pourtant très beau, le plus beau des gâfes, passer dans les couloirs au milieu de cinq admirables adolescents, plus ou moins voleurs, putains et bandits. Ils s'arrêtèrent. Raides, impassibles, ils entouraient le gardien qui s'agitait et puis peu à peu s'immobilisa. Je regardais la scène de la cellule de l'infirmerie, par l'espace de clarté que laisse la porte entre le bois et le mur, du côté des gonds. Je *lus* le désarroi du gâfe. Il porta sa main à son visage et je crus que c'était à son corsage et qu'il crierait se voyant sa beauté dépouillée

- Ils .....

et tout à coup, un cri déchirant, ses yeux butent contre les cinq branches aiguës de l'étoile:

[148]- Mes clips!

Nous obéissions [...]

F122 [...] les lâchetés fascinantes.

148 [...] de lâchetés très belles.

F124 Villeroy était à Mettray parce qu'il avait tué son père, un charcutier. Villeroy, c'était mon homme.

150-151 Villeroy était à Mettray parce qu'il avait tué son père, un charcutier. Lui ayant arraché le coeur, il l'avait porté au maire qui s'était suicidé de dégoût après l'avoir [151] mangé. Villeroy, c'était mon homme.

F124 [...] à l'atelier des tailleurs.

Mettray, [...]

151-152 [...] à l'atelier des tailleurs.

- Il faut que tu te démerdes pour qu'il ait trois vestes de faites pour le 17 au soir. T'as encore huit jours. Laco les prendra.

Je savais Laco n'avoir jamais vu ni entendu le messenger qui unissait la Centrale à la Colonie, et j'étais sûr que les vestes commandées et faites avec des coupons d'étoffe volée, serviraient à l'évasion de trois détenus de Fontevrault. Etaient-ils aidés par la Voix d'Or? Mais, me disais-je, puisqu'il peut donner de tels ordres, pourquoi Jo la Voix d'Or ne s'est-il pas évadé? Comme j'en étais venu à aimer la Colonie comme d'un tel amour - que j'analyserai plus loin - , j'imaginai que je pourrais y [152] rester durant toute ma jeunesse, même si l'on laissait libre d'en partir, en me réservant néanmoins des faveurs de ce genre: je garderais mes cheveux aussi longs que je voudrais, je fumerais, etc. Je croyais que Jo la Voix d'Or avait pu se trouver à Fontevrault dans les mêmes dispositions que j'inventais pour moi à Mettray. Cet essai d'explications n'était pas si sot car, depuis, j'ai appris qu'on pouvait craindre assez la vie et ses luttes pour aimer la prison jusqu'à désirer n'en plus sortir, en s'y établissant toutefois une existence aussi fastueuse que possible, moins pour y ajouter du confort qu'afin d'y être le premier, le plus haut, dans un monde humilié.

Je sentais que nous vivions dans une anxiété immense à cause de nos anciens.

Mettray, [...]

F125 [...] lui tendre la palme - la palme du diacre Étienne - car cette palme, [...]

153 [...] lui tendre la palme - la palme du diacre - car cette palme, [...]

F125 [...] de plus jeune.

154 [...] de plus jeune et de plus beau.

F126 [...] lourde sur vous. Je tremblais [...]

155 [...] lourde sur vous. Et j'ai cru que toute cette poésie en fuite serait remplacée en moi par de plus grandes ardeurs amoureuses, et que cet amour, dans sa forme, profiterait des expériences poétiques au point de me permettre d'accepter même le sordide. Pourtant je tremblais [...]

F128 [...] se distinguent de ceux des casseurs.

Pour les macs, les casseurs sont des caves [...]

157-158 [...] se distinguent des gourbis des casseurs. Les seconds ont souvent dans le ton et dans les manières une sorte de gaminerie sourde qui s'exprime par des coups d'oeil amusés, par des grimaces, enfin par des mots vifs, quelquefois très drôles, sur le métier, sur la prison, sur les caves et sur les gâfes. Ce mot de Velours: on lui disait qu'au lieu de barboter du bronze, il aurait pu faucher de l'étain, puis de l'argent, puis de l'or: 'Oui, t'as raison, mon pote, tous les métaux et je finis par la tôle'. Les harengs, au contraire, sont la sévérité dans toute sa rigueur. Ils sourient quelquefois, mais rarement, et d'un sourire grave. Leurs gestes sont en bois mais en bois de fer. Ils ne plaisantent jamais. Leur correction est si grande que l'on comprend l'étonnement, la stupeur même où les plongent certaines exclamations de Lou-du-Point-du-Jour.

Quand je parle de gourbis, il ne s'agit pas d'organisation très nette, d'une popote, un plat, un feu, autour desquels ne sont admis que les macs appartenant à l'une ou à l'autre catégorie; c'est plutôt que les harengs se reconnaissent au passage dans les couloirs, [158] dans l'escalier où nous nous croisons, et s'adressent un signe, un salut discret. Les casseurs entre eux font de même. Le gourbi est donc un lieu idéal où ils ne se rencontrent jamais puisqu'ils sont toujours séparés par le travail à l'atelier, par la discipline, par les gâfes, le murs, mais ils se savent solidaires et si à l'un des leurs on cherche des crosses, ils se soutiennent.

L'hostilité entre les deux groupes n'est pas déclarée. Macs et casseurs se saluent puisqu'ils sont des durs les uns et les autres mais, dans le salut échangé, n'entre pas l'imperceptible signe de ralliement - l'espèce de sourire grave chez les macs, le sourire très léger, de gavroche, chez les casseurs.

Un autre point: les casseurs ont souvent entre eux quelqu'un de ces mots dits grossiers: enulé, merde, petit con ... jamais prononcé par les macs entre eux.

- Ça, c'est un langage de caves, disent-ils.

Et pour les macs, en effet, au fond d'eux-mêmes, les casseurs sont des caves [...]

F129 [...] toujours prévôt.

Je déteste [...]

159 [...] toujours prévôt. Je déteste [...]

F130 [...] leur jeunesse, leur grâce, leurs gestes façonnant dans l'air des bijoux, et leur puissance [...]

161 [...] leur jeunesse, leur beauté, leurs gestes façonnant dans l'air des bijoux d'une magnificence princière, et leur puissance [...]

F132 [...] par un chant de clairon. Il sonnait [...]

164 [...] par un chant de clairon (O clairon de Mettray, je te veux encore saluer!) Il sonnait [...]

F134 [...] qui est en nous et c'est la mine [...]

166 [...] qui est en nous - c'est notre tristesse et autour de nous - et c'est la mine [...]

F134 [...] des objets, plus ingrate [...]

166 [...] des objets - plus ingrate [...]

F135 [...] réservée aux colons les plus audacieux. De l'amour que [...]

167 [...] réservée aux plus beaux colons et aux plus audacieux. Réserve à Rigaux, dont je vais parler d'abord avec cette tendresse peut-être dont m'en parla Deloffre.

A l'atelier des forgerons (car la Colonie possédait de nombreux ateliers où les garçons travaillaient sous la surveillance d'un chef d'atelier) un peu à l'écart du Grand Carré et derrière une haie de lauriers taillés, des jeunes colons s'aimaient et chantaient leur amour en battant le fer des socles, des fourches, des bûches et des pioches que d'autres jeunes garçons ébréchaient aux cailloux des vignes et des champs de betteraves. Il fabriquaient des clous et des fers à cheval. Derrière le dos du chef, ils échangeaient un baiser rapide et muet, du dos ou du plat de leurs mains hachurées de menues coupures, une caresse sur leur queue, émue très vite, avant le geste même, le prévenant en somme, gonflant déjà le froc à la braguette, puis ils retournaient à l'enclume. Peut-être comme beaucoup de colons, continuaient-ils une idylle qui s'était nouée à la Petite-Roquette, grande pourvoyeuse de Mettray. De l'amour que [...]

F140 Ce désir me libérait d'un tourment, [...]

174 Ce désir - ou rêve - me libérait d'un tourment [...]

F140 [...] ma douleur d'amoureux.

En plus de ses [...]

174-176 [...] ma douleur d'amoureux. Je n'aime plus Divers du même amour qu'autrefois. Je joue le rôle d'un amant passionné, mais je joue avec toute ma chair - exaspérée par le désir de Bulkaen - engagée dans un drame commencé à la Colonie de Mettray et s'y continuant.

Je parlais de la forge où travaillaient les deux [175] amants. Il serait difficile d'imaginer forge plus brutale que celle de Rigaux et de Deloffre (nous savions que Deloffre, qui s'était trouvé dans un accident de chemin de fer, dépouillait les victimes et, lorsqu'il fut arrêté, on trouva dans sa poche la main coupée couverte de bagues magnifiques d'une belle dame morte). Cette forge était comme toutes les autres avec une enclume aussi grave, avec le soufflet habituel aussi gros... ce n'était pas une forge d'enfants, où les forgerons étaient des gosses. La braise éclairait leur torse nu, luisant, déjà plus musclé qu'un torse d'homme. Ils s'en approchaient sans précaution, présentant au feu ou le retirant, au bout d'une longue pince, les fers et les clous. Le gâfe, assis dans un coin, regardait sans voir, ou bien il lisait toujours, indifférent à cette souffrance infantine que la beauté exigeait. Parfois. Rigaux, ou Deloffre, plongeait une barre rougie dans l'eau, sans se douter qu'ils recommençaient un geste symbolique, un signe sacré, la pénétration de l'eau trois fois, par le cierge béni, et d'accomplir sans le savoir un tel geste, ces deux petits hommes acquérait une dignité qui me fait, encore aujourd'hui, frissonner de crainte au souvenir d'avoir été le témoin de pareils mystères. Ils forgeaient consciencieusement, s'activaient sur le travail et j'ai, pour les évoquer avec

plus de précision, le souvenir plus récent d'un gamin de seize ans, joueur de xylophone sur la place publique. Il frappait à tour de bras les planchettes de bois et, de chacun de ses coups, qui sont autres que musicaux, d'un coup brutal, et d'un autre enfant méchant qui cogne de toute la redoutable force de ses poignets souples, vole une note, et c'est une mélodie connue, que tout le monde a chanté, que les violons ont jouée. Des coups sans pitié font naître les mélodies. Si toute l'intelligence de la technique de ce jeu est contenue dans l'ampleur du mouvement qui brandit, très haut, le maillet, toute la force joyeuse s'y trouve aussi. Un bras d'enfant se soulève, dépasse la tête, s'immobilise, attendant que l'autre ait fini son arpège étincelant. Chaque bras sait s'effacer devant l'autre. L'enfant fait battre une enclume musicale par deux adorables petits forgerons: ses bras jeunes, musclés et précis. A la forge, les deux gosses s'attendaient l'un l'autre, le marteau levé et, tout à coup, ils défaillent ensemble et leur amour les faisait se toucher en passant. Le chef n'avait rien soupçonné. Cette vie harmonieuse dans la fatigue et les larmes qui coulaient des yeux criblés d'escarbilles dura jusqu'au jour où Deloffre, le plus jeune et joli, s'éprit de Toscano, un môme de l'atelier de broserie, et de la famille Jeanne d'Arc. Car, en plus de ses dix familles [...]

F141 [...] de l'autre. Comme dans les illustrés [...]

178 [...] de l'autre. Ce coup de poing qu'ils me donnent me fit voir trente-six mille chandelles. Comme dans les illustrés [...]

F142 [...] de la main. Il me demandait [...]

179 [...] de la main, et qu'il commença par cette admirable expression, voulu par sa maladresse à discourir, mais, si belle qu'elle pourrait s'adresser à un souverain: 'Veuillez bien vouloir...' ou l'acte de vouloir paraissait dépendre de la volonté de celui à qui la lettre s'adressait. Son mot me demandait d'écrire quelques vers sur un sujet qu'il me donnait [...] faire des vers sur un sujet.

F143 [...] était la discipline, m'étonnant [...]

180 [...] était la discipline dont je dirai plus loin quelques mots, m'étonnant [...]

F144 Sa vulgarité bande.

Est-il possible que [...]

181 Sa vulgarité bande.

Ces gosses dont je parle ne sont forts ou fragiles que par rapport à de moins forts ou moins fragiles, et les plus costauds étaient de délicats objets en regard des mecs plus terribles - encore que moins sombres - qui présidaient magnifiquement à notre existence, du fond de Fontevault. Rigaux était un des costauds de Mettray. Sa beauté était faite de ceci: son sourire à peine né, la bouche se refermait, la lèvre supérieure reprenant sa place, avec le frémissement d'une babine de chien, qui a montré un instant les crocs et les rentre. On prenait plaisir à faire naître ses sourires. Si on ne lui eût rasé les cheveux chaque mois, il eût foncé à travers nous, sourcils toujours tordus, avec cette boule bouclée des jeunes taureaux, avec leur cou qui la supporte, capable de donner du front contre tel autre jeune taureau bouclé que j'ai vu à Fresnes, encore bouclé, las de ses amours avec une mitraille 'réchauffée sur sa poitrine', un gosse blond enfin, à la prunelle claire. Il avait les dents de la jeunesse qui dévore les vieillards et les femmes rien qu'à leur rire au nez. Il aimait Deloffre plus frêle et plus féroce encore. Leur jalousie fut bizarre, épineuse. Elle était une plante - une fleur parce qu'odoriférante - jamais vue. Rigaux, par simple jeu, et pour se vider les burnes, attirait parfois l'enfant derrière les lauriers où, rapidement, il se l'envoyait sans tendresse.

- Que je me le mette sur le bout, disait-il.  
Est-il possible [...]

F144 [...] en aimé. Il me suffit [...]

182 [...] en aimé. Les visages glacés, polis, des cartes postales, à l'ombre dans l'épaisseur du carton, se livrent-ils à de noires pratiques? Nous épanouissions au jour notre beauté lisse et polie, je ne savait pas encore sa profondeur, ses racines, ses souterrains de taupe, pas plus que bien souvent au théâtre le spectateur n'est ému par l'inverse: la beauté et la jeunesse prêtes à bondir, si elles le veulent, du plus beau des acteurs qui la dissimule et la conserve sous les gestes et les traits d'un personnage horrible, mais il [183] suffit [...]

F144 [...] dans une région solitaire [...]

182-183 [...] dans une région terrible, brûlante ou glacée mais solitaire [...]

F144 [...] jamais voulue quitter. De la cellule [...]

183-184 [...] jamais voulu quitter. Les enfants dont la nature est farouche, en face d'une si terrible vie, eussent dû penser au suicide Mais peut-être cette vie étant une mort (une mort se déroulant lentement, avec ses usages, ses cérémonies qui ne sont plus des vivants, car déjà elles nous mettent en intime rapport avec les divinités secrètes de la terre et de l'eau), les gosses ne croyaient pas que l'on pût s'en débarrasser. Ils étaient au coeur de l'enfer, d'où la corde ou la noyade ne nous arracheront, car les enterrements des colons n'étaient qu'un des rites familiers de cette mort longue et lente, compliquée de mes départs sur la galère. Pour un rien j'embarquais en douce. A l'avant du navire, que ce fut quand le soleil se couchait, ou en pleine nuit, je donnais à ma pensée une allure vive et fière. Le vent jetait en arrière mes cheveux. J'étais figure de proue et, comme [184] le cavalier se sent faire corps avec sa monture, j'étais un centaure à corps de galère. J'étais la galère. J'ai porté dans mon flanc d'extraordinaires désordres de pirates ivres d'alcool, de sang, de coups de fouet. Mais je me sentais participer d'une façon immédiate à la vie générale. L'enfance est proche des éléments. Cette enfance serait à jamais perdue si la présence de Divers ne m'obligerait à la revivre. De la cellule de [...]

F146 [...] braver la mort et la vaincre.

A Mettray, on faisait exactement huit fois par jour la prière. Voici la manoeuvre du dortoir [...]

187-188 [...] braver et vaincre la mort. Et ce n'est pas de l'amitié que pouvait réveiller en moi le rappel des amours cruelles de Rigaux et de Deloffre. Ce qui émane de ces deux gosses enchevêtrés dans leur lutte, c'est une odeur funèbre qui monte à la tête après avoir tourné le coeur. Souvent, quand Rigaux prenait Toscano derrière la haie taillée au sécateur, Deloffre assistait à la séance. Quelquefois même, son marle lui permettait d'user du mino, et, sous l'oeil de son petit homme, le même Deloffre faisait acte de mâle. Mais c'était toujours contre le gré de Toscano.

Ces jeux offrent des dangers multiples dont les plus terribles pour des enfants sont ceux qu'ils ne peuvent soupçonner, même lorsqu'ils les côtoient à tous les instants, et l'amour entre autres.

Je l'ai dit. Deloffre s'éprit de Toscano. Sans doute aimait-il Rigaux, mais au fur et à mesure que s'installait en lui l'amour nouveau, il se détachait - comme une branche de son arbre - de son mac. Il allait jusqu'à haïr l'empire de Rigaux sur lui et, peut-être plus que ses jeux avec Toscano. Je ne sais comment Rigaux découvrit la trahison, je

n'assistai qu'à la lutte, et de loin. Ce fut une lutte de géants. Elle est racontée d'un bout à l'autre dans la 'Légende des Siècles' sous le titre de 'Mariage de Roland' et fut calqué sous certains combats de détenus, au fond de Fontevrault, dans la salle de discipline. Qu'était la discipline des moines auprès de celle des Hommes et des Enfants! Le soir du combat, quand le soleil se fut couché, chacun d'eux regagna la famille. Ils boitaient l'un et l'autre. Peut-être Toscano ignora-t-il tout de cette jalousie et de son éclosion en un combat qui fit frémir les plantes et interrompit peut-être la pitié. Quand le clairon sonna le rassemblement des ateliers, pour rejoindre les familles ils se mêlèrent aux autres colons qui ne demandèrent pas d'explications. La tête dans l'assiette de fer, silencieusement, sans un bruit de cuiller ni de lèvres, comme le veut l'usage et la règle, ils avalèrent la soupe, ils firent avec les autres la prière du soir (car à Mettray on [188] faisait exactement huit fois par jour la prière) et montèrent au dortoir, dans les hamacs se coucher, après avoir fait la manoeuvre. Le drame ne pouvait s'arrêter là. La mort sait dénouer de tels noeuds, mais quand elle ne le fait, les acteurs, si leur vie continue, durant toute leur vie, verront surgir à la surface, éclore, si vous voulez, des gestes fous, des paroles monstrueuses qui sont le bégaiement d'une tirade tragique qui devrait se dire en quelques heures. Nous verrons ce que se chargea de faire la mort. Voici la manoeuvre [...]

F148 [...] ma jeunesse est vieille.

Il n'est pas impossible [...]

190-191 [...] ma jeunesse est vieille. La beauté de ces gosses m'apparaît aujourd'hui car ils ne rêvaient pas tellement de vivre en truands, pour avoir de l'argent - leurs rêves n'étaient pas cupides - ils désiraient une vie qui les tiendrait en marge du monde, cette marge où ils étaient déjà, dès leur naissance, de par une fatalité intérieure. Mais leur pureté devait s'altérer avec l'âge et pour interpréter la réaction de Bulkaen - son vomissement sur le fric je me refuse à toute analyse trop profonde. Cette manifestation extraordinaire de son mépris pour l'argent le paraît encore. Cette maladie était bien étrange, lui seul se la pouvait permettre et, [191] ce qui sortait de sa bouche, les glaires, la preuve de son ivresse devenait d'une beauté inouïe! Et ses hoquets, ses haut-le-coeur, son geste de se casser, tout cela n'était supportable chez lui, il fallait qu'il fût puissant pour oser se permettre un tel mal. Et c'est à lui que je dois d'avoir compris la beauté du vol et, particulièrement, du cambriolage. A mesure qu'il m'en parlait, je le compris un peu. Toute la folie et la bêtise de pareils actes disparaissaient pour ne plus me montrer que le principe qui les commandait: l'audace, mais une audace doublée d'un élément trouble qui est la joie de fait la chose d'interdite.

Il n'est pas impossible [...]

F149 [...] de la prison. Il s'opérait [...]

193 [...] de la prison. Ce désenchantement s'opérait [...]

F150 [...] mes frères. Ce mot m'écoeure [...]

194 [...] mes frères. Le mot de frère a la lourdeur charnelle d'un poème de Renoir, il m'écoeure [...]

F150 [...] j'oublie le présent.

Mon enfance me remonte aux dents.

194-196 [...] j'oublie le présent. Pendant des années, après l'avoir quittée, je ne pensais qu'en fonction d'elle. Il fallut des années pour qu'elle se détachât de moi et même je ne pus jamais croire que, de son ombre, j'étais sorti tout à fait. On parle ainsi de la religion.

En effet, le prestige de l'une comme de l'autre participe des mêmes moyens. Comme la religion, la Colonie était encore riche en épisodes qu'un légère tendance à la littérature qualifie de merveilleux. Il ne faut qu'un choc en vous pour que d'un être vous apparaisse le mécanisme qui commande à des fonctions inhabituelles ou généralement inaperçues. Ainsi j'ai vu la Colonie s'élever sur les nuages. Durant longtemps, elle présida, et davantage encore l'image, fausse aux yeux qui ne voient que ce qu'on voit, mais essentielle et vraie, vraie de la vérité poétique, l'image que j'en garde présida à tous les actes de mon existence; je ne pouvais pas ne pas me voir habillé en colon. Pourtant la vie que nous menions là-bas était vache: le réveil l'hiver, les stations, le buste nu dans le lavabo glacé, les glaçons que nous nous passions sur le cou et la figure pour faire croire au chef de famille que nous étions lavés, parce qu'on ne pouvait sortir du lavabo que le visage humide, les coups du frère aîné et ceux des autres moniteurs, la mauvaise soupe, nos tendres pieds blessés par les sabots de bois noir, mais tout cela ne comptait pas au regard de tant de merveilles: celle d'abord d'être entre nous, gamins féroces, délicats, et presque toujours jolis. Ou plutôt si, les rigueurs que j'ai dites plus haut comptaient. Elles ajoutaient encore à l'immonde, c'est-à-dire qu'elles rejetaient un peu plus 'hors du monde' la Colonie pénitentiaire. Enfin elles me demeurèrent et me donnèrent une allure plus ferme, sans toutefois me transformer profondément, [196] car on pourrait, par exemple, se tromper sur mon caractère en voyant la brusquerie de certains de mes mouvements, et me croire énergique. Je suis l'indécision même, et la paresse physique, la pauvreté physique aussi, m'enferme dans une sorte de vague somnolence dont je ne me libère que par un geste brusque, celui qui commence l'acte à accomplir. Et c'est cette brusquerie initiale qui donne à l'acte le rythme vif qu'il gardera jusqu'à son achèvement, et me fait paraître décidé. Et cette brusquerie est différente de ce qu'était la brusquerie violente de Bulkaen, en ce sens que le corps de Pierrot était constamment en éveil, même aux instants d'apparente nonchalance, alors que je vogue dans une constante somnolence qui est l'élément parfait où les rêves et les rêveries se déroulent, et que je romps brutalement.

Mon enfance me remonte aux dents.

F152 [...] galoches boueuses.

198 [...] galoches lourdes de boue.

F152 [...] à votre vie. Je crois savoir [...]

199 [...] à votre vie. Tels quels, mes prisons et mes bagnes m'émeuvent beaucoup. Ce monde est aussi sacré que le monde des Juifs, que leurs textes funèbres, que leurs cimetières où se déroulent la nuit, des scènes de vampirisme et de sortilèges. Je crois savoir [...]

F153 [...] beauté morale. A peine [...]

199 [...] beauté morale. J'excepte les moments brefs de bonheur causés tantôt par l'ombre par un jour de pluie, par la rencontre d'un beau visage, par je ne sais quoi et que j'ai horreur d'éprouver au milieu de gens absolument antipathiques; parce que, s'ils possèdent ce même bonheur, au même instant que moi, il me semble communiquer avec eux, et plus intimement que par tout autre mode, car c'est dans un élément capable de se mêler, de se fondre, d'interpénétrer avec peut-être encore plus de facilité qu'une vapeur dont nous serions composés. A peine [...]

153 [...] je reste éveillé. Je suis la sentinelle [...]

200 [...] je reste éveillé. Je ne regarde pas dans le noir. Il suffit de savoir que je suis la

sentinelle [...]

F153 [...] du rêve. Le temps [...]

200 [...] du rêve... Le temps [...]

F153 [...] n'importe quel insecte. Nous ne sommes [...]

200 [...] n'importe quel insecte. Les murs suintent des cris étranglés. Les gardiens sont masqués de noir et vêtus de rouge. Les assassins charment les araignées. Les enfants pactisent avec le diable qui, quelquefois et pour des besognes de séduction qui le servent, les métamorphose en nymphes, ou en faunes qui partent, couverts de haillons ou de bijoux, dans les rues ou dans les bals où vous les côtoyez. Le silence de la prison est le silence même de la mort. Nous ne sommes [...]

F153 [...] tempête, la galère affolée [...]

201 [...] tempête, l'Offensive affolée [...]

F153 [...] des crimes passés. Par plus légers, [...]

201 [...] des crimes passés. Car la mort est le voisinage de Dieu et, si Dieu vous met en péril de mort souvent, c'est qu'il veut vous honorer. Dieu sait ce qu'il fait. Et par plus légers [...]

F154 [...] en même temps, amollis par cette [...]

201 [...] en même temps, amollis (foudroyés) par cette [...]

F154 [...] un noeud d'amours brutales. La mer hurlait [...]

201-202 [...] un noeud d'amours si violents qu'à le voir [202] le diable se fût signé. La mer hurlait [...]

F154 'La colère gonfle nos voiles.'

202 'La colère gongle nos voiles.' [Misprint]

F154 [...] le premier soir, je fus [...]

202 [...] le premier soir, mît sa queue déjà d'homme entre mes cuisses serrées, je fus [...]

F155 [...] ne souriait plus. Et, dans mes bras, [...]

203 [...] ne souriait plus. Puis il jouit. Je fus sa femme. Et, dans mes bras, [...]

F155 [...] d'un des malabars de la famille B.

203 [...] d'un des matelots de la famille B.

F156 [...] de honte. Villeroy fut [...]

205 [...] de honte. Elle se transforma en fureur qui fut sur ses bras, sur ses cuisses fléchies, quelque chose comme des boas de fourrure aux bras et aux épaules des courtisanes. Villeroy fut [...]

F157 Ainsi j'esquintai [...]

205 Ainsi que j'esquintai [...]

F157 [...] le même La Guêpe.



205 [...] la morue La Guêpe.

F158 [...] et j'enrageais de haine rentrée; [...]

206 [...] et j'enrage de haine rentrée; [...]

F160 '[...] boucler ma gueule.'

Les quatre ou cinq marles [...]

209-210 '[...] boucler ma gueule.'

Aussi jeunes que nous fussions, cette déclaration impressionna. Sans doute, Villeroy était assez cabotin pour avoir senti la portée qu'aurait une telle franchise, [210] une si loyale probité, mais ce mot réalisait le tour de force d'être l'expression d'un cabotinage savant et d'une exacte vérité. Néanmoins un geste de trop haute grandeur n'eût pas été compris des gosses, car il existe une grandeur - et c'est la plus grande - qui s'enseigne et s'apprend, car dans la grandeur morale, il entre un facteur individuel, littéraire même, auquel un enfant n'est pas accessible. Les quatre ou cinq marles [...]

F160 '[...] de ton mec.'

Dans mon livre, c'est Harcamone.

Sur les quais [...]

210 '[...] de ton mec.'

Il se trouve de ces enfants et ils me stupéfient. Ils semblent être bâtis de la même matière exceptionnelle qui compose les hommes durs, qui vont, aveuglés par eux-mêmes, et qui, se cognant à la divinité, la feraient se déranger du chemin. Dans mon livre, Harcamone sera ce gosse.

Sur les quais [...]

F161 [...] d'un béret plat.

Mon mac [...]

210 [...] d'un béret plat.

Notre couple - Villeroy et moi - et les autres couples d'enfants, attendrissaient. Mon mac [...]

F161 [...] quelques minutes, de songes [...]

211 [...] quelques minutes, la tête sur sa queue raide, de songes [...]

F161 [...] plus de science. Avant de partir [...]

211 [...] plus de science. Nous nous aimions vertigineusement. Avant de partir [...]

F161 [...] en même temps. Enfin [...]

212 [...] en même temps (on connaît cette sensation). Enfin [...]

F162 [...] système nerveux. Je compris [...]

212 [...] système nerveux. Si j'étais resté dix secondes des plus dans cet état, peut-être me fussé-je évanoui et c'eût été la honte éternelle. Je compris [...]

F162 [...] main droite, tandis que [...]

213 [...] main droite qui ouvrait la braguette et saisissait la queue, tandis que [...]

F163 [...] de ses armes. Je devenais le centre, la clé de voûte d'un système familial sévère. Sur mes épaules [...]

214 [...] de ses armes. Arrivant en douce, je me glissais dans la maison et je me faisais passer pour quelque fils adultérin, enfant de l'amour. Je m'installais. Je devenais le centre, la clé de voûte d'un système familial sévère, tragiquement organisé, noué, bouclé par cette clé de voûte qui est une fausse clé. Sournoisement, j'entrais une place forte, non en combattant, mais par le chemin des taupes. Sur mes épaules [...]

F163 [...] la fin provisoire. Je serais marle [...]

214 [...] la fin provisoire. Par moi se continuerait une famille qui ne serait plus cette famille. J'allais être, sans qu'on s'en doutât, un autre chef de dynastie qui conservait les noms de la vieille lignée. Je serais marle [...]

F163 [...] tous les dons. Encore qu'on puisse vivre confortablement quand on s'est débarrassé de l'orgueil, et même qu'il existe [...]

214-215 [...] tous les dons. D'avoir accepté quelque chose une fois, je me souviens que, dès que j'eus surmonté la première douleur qu'occasionne la déchirure de l'amour-propre, j'éprouvai une espèce de soulagement, la douceur de me sentir débarrassé d'un bloc d'orgueil qui, s'il me faisait tenir très droit, me donnait une rigidité de roc, m'obligeait pourtant à des attitudes parfois gênantes. Je me laissai donc couler dans cette douceur, et je sentis qu'on peut vivre confortablement quand on s'est débarrassé de l'orgueil,

F164 [...] devais me barricader.

Le soir... Nous [...]

215 [...] devais me barricader.

Je me fis les poings et les pieds sur les cloches, mais je sus ne pas m'imposer trop tôt. Lorsque j'allais m'occuper de quelque troc avec un autre vautour, Villeroy, de loin, se détournait du groupe d'hommes et posait son oeil sur moi. Le soir... Nous [...]

F164 [...] d'une heure tandis qu'au-dessus [...]

215-216 [...] d'une heure. Et ces deux gosses, pendant une heure, bouche contre bouche, éveillés et l'esprit bandé, sérieusement et [216] ensemble, s'efforçaient de croire qu'ils se donnaient une nuit entière, tandis qu'au-dessus [...]

F165 [...] mon chant. Qui Bulkaen [...]

217 [...] mon chant. Et tu n'as pas ces oreilles qui l'entendent. Qui Bulkaen [...]

F166 [...] écarté. Je crois bien [...]

218 [...] écarté. Avec un garçon comme lui ouvert, me semblait-il aux *influences les plus occultes*, en cheville avec la poésie, je devais m'attendre à une trahison qui se manifesterait, d'une façon peu commune. Je crois bien [...]

F166 [...] frapper. J'avais l'avantage [...]

219 [...] frapper. J'étais sûr que malgré sa souplesse, je saurais le dominer si l'avais le courage de blesser une telle beauté. J'avais l'avantage [...]

F168 [...] propre abjection.

L'enfance qui [...]

221 [...] propre abjection. L'image des petits colons qui m'aimaient me visite, et ceux qui me haïssaient. Ils s'agitent avec gravité, car ils furent toujours graves. Que l'on ne crie pas surtout qu'ils étaient des rêveurs. Aucun esprit plus positif que le nôtre. Toute

leur activité poursuivait un but pratique. S'ils créaient de la poésie c'était par accident, ou bien ils rêvent la nuit, pour échapper à l'horreur d'être des bagnards, ou pour se reposer un instant dans un monde plus confortable. Le seul fait romanesque qui fut peut-être la création de la Voix d'Or, mais cette création ne s'était pas accomplie un beau jour, de façon délibérée. Elle relevait de ce phénomène qui forme les grands courants religieux. C'est seulement quand cette bande fut en état de fait que, petit à petit, s'organisa, à l'intérieur d'elle, une discipline qui établit son ordre avec ses distinctions, ses interdits, quelques rites très élémentaires. Ces gosses affolés de beauté avaient compris qu'elle ne réside jamais dans la position confortable - ou postures - mais dans une suite de danses extrêmement dangereuses, ou impostures. Sans le savoir, ils aimaient la beauté et lui sacrifiaient leur confort. L'enfance qui [...]

F168 [...] par mille gestes. Mais pour voir [...]

222-223 [...] par un geste dont je fus le témoin stupéfait. Quand me fut connue par le journal la mort de Maurice Pilorge, je rencontrais sur le boulevard de Clichy six potes à moi et à lui. Six mecs dont l'âge allait de vingt à trente ans. Nous nous assîmes à une table. Nos visages étaient graves comme des visages d'enfants qui s'appliquent à la gravité. Le plus vieux, Ricou, commanda huit apéritifs, puis nous demeurâmes silencieux. Le garçon apporta huit verres, les servit à chacun et Ricou prit le verre qui restait, en partagea le contenu entre les sept. D'un air doux, et qui ne devait pas lui être habituel, il regarda le garçon et lui demanda; 'Tu permets?' en même temps il laissa tomber le huitième verre qui se brisa. [223] Puis il expliqua: 'C'est pour çui qu'est mort.' Ce n'est qu'ainsi que je peux présenter l'amitié. Pour ceux de Mettray, il faut peut-être y ajouter qu'ils avaient le pressentiment d'être les héros de la plus satanique aventure. Mais pour voir [...]

F169 [...] attitudes roides [...]

224 [...] attitudes rigides [...]

F170 [...] les autres détenus.

L'affaire des bandes molletières [...]

224-226 [...] autres détenus.

Je me rappelle la confusion où nous mit la mort du clairon Beauvais. C'était lui le chef de la bande de la Voix d'Or. Il m'est impossible d'expliquer comment il arriva à ce poste de pontife. Nous le soupçonnions d'être en relation avec Jo. Aujourd'hui, je crois que s'ils [225] n'étaient pas reliés en fait, il l'étaient par une sorte de lien mystique qui permettait à Beauvais de recevoir et de déchiffrer tous les messages que lui adressait la Voix d'Or. Ces messages étaient singuliers. Quelquefois, il concernaient un colon qu'il fallait punir, un gâfe brimer, des cordes voler, des effets porter dans une cachette déterminée. Qui maintenant serait le messenger? Villeroy, qui était le frère aîné de la famille B..., fit part de son inquiétude, à Abondance, à Divers. J'entendis toute la conversation parce que j'étais encore le page, le mino du frère aîné, et je surpris Rigaux dire qu'il avait beaucoup connu Jo, qu'ils avaient travaillé ensemble dans des affaires de casses. Il fit son portrait. Il parla de sa carrure, de son torse, des ses dents, de ses cheveux. Et Rigaux devint le chef de la bande. Quand il apprit l'extraordinaire aventure de son marle, Deloffre dut se sentir perdu. La violence de son amour pour Toscano qu'il rencontrait toujours en cachette de Rigaux aurait pu peut-être le délivrer de la servitude de vautour. Je voyais un combat intérieur le déformer aux yeux de tout le monde. Par exemple, il passait très près des marles et jusqu'à les frôler. Aux autres girones, et à moi-même, il disait: 'Alors, poupée.' Rigaux devait assez l'aimer, et d'assez près, pour ne

rien voir de la transformation ou bien n'osait-il rien dire, parce que [226] son ami devenu de plus en plus audacieux, depuis la scène des lauriers, connaissait sa force. Deloffre était sur le point de triompher quand le nouvel honneur accordé à son homme dérangerait tout. En effet, Rigaux possédait une puissance extraordinaire sur la Colonie parce qu'elle n'était plus accordée par la force physique. Il détenait bel et bien un pouvoir magique. Il était du Seigneur. Il ne pouvait esquisser un geste qu'aussitôt il n'émît ses foudres, ne rompît la glace, nous éclaboussât et nous figeât de honte. Il était aimé d'amour et, pourtant, il avait très souvent des histoires avec les autres marles car il n'était pas toute loyauté.

L'affaire des bandes molletières [...]

F171 [...] pantalon retroussé sous la bande.

.....

- Riton marche au pas [...]

228-229 [...] pantalon retroussé sous la bande.

Rigaux étant forgeron, avait promis un battant d'acier à Rey qui lui avait donné de magnifiques bandes molletières. Mais Rey s'étant un jour disputé avec Deloffre, Rigaux décida de garder les molletières et de ne pas apporter le battant. Quand il vit que Deloffre montrait sa force, ignorant toutefois que le giron était excédé par l'autorité de Rigaux, Rey n'osa rien dire. Il rentra sa haine. Il n'osa encore rien dire quand Rigaux réussit son coup d'état. Je m'étonnais que Divers eût laissé passer à portée de sa poigne terrible la chance de devenir chef de la bande de la Voix d'Or, sans bouger un doigt pour la saisir. Plus que n'importe qui, il pouvait le faire, par sa force et sa beauté. De sa force, à l'époque je ne puis réellement rien dire car je ne le vis jamais se battre. Auprès des chefs de la famille, il avait la réputation d'être une sale gueule. Mais cette réputation lui vint peut-être de l'autorité calme, souveraine, massive de sa musculature et de ses silences. Chacune de ses réponses était une riposte. Il se taisait souvent. J'ai su qu'il était très fort en le voyant, il y a quelques jours, faire crier grâce, à la salle, à force de coups de pieds partout, dans les côtes et dans la figure, d'un costaud râleur qui ne marchait pas en cadence. La scène fut rapide. Il dit au mec, calmement:

[229] - Riton, marche au pas.

[no suspension points across the page in subscribers' edition]

F172 [...] et les yeux seuls vivants.

Étonnons-nous [...]

230 [...] et les yeux seuls vivants.

Je puis parler de sa beauté, et par elle de la Beauté. La beauté me ferait croire en Dieu. J'en arriverais à dire qu'elle est Dieu, qu'elle est l'*expression* de Dieu. Je ne puis admettre surgie au hasard celle qui fait qu'un jeune homme est beau. Car étonnons-nous [...]

F173 [...] chansons laides [...]

231 [...] chansons sans beauté [...]

F174 [...] et de son jeu un chant. Parfois, pendant le défilé [...]

232 [...] et de son jeu un chant. Et son geste avait de la grâce. Parfois pendant le défilé [...]

F174 [...] bandes molletières kaki [...]

233 [...] bandes molletières kakies [...]

F175 [...] mur de la même façon. Ah! malgré [...]

233 [...] mur de la même façon. Dans un autre angle noir, il postait la machine infernale d'une aussi grande beauté. Ah! malgré [...]

F175 [...] reconnue [...]

233 [...] reconnu [...]

F175 (je

234 [Misprint. Brackets opened in the same place but not closed]

F175 - Je voudrais t'en jeter un coup dans les baguettes!)

Toutes ces blessures [...]

234 - Je voudrais t'en jeter un coup dans les baguettes!

Si je le voyais déjà ainsi, ne m'accordez pas votre mépris parce que je trahissais Villeroy. Mon amour pour Villeroy était sincère et je lui fus fidèle. J'agaçais Divers. Je passais, je repassais devant lui; avec beaucoup de précautions car, enfin, c'était un marle. Je me moquais de lui.

Toutes ces blessures [...]

F176 [...] matelots mutinés.

236 [...] matelots charmants et féroces.

F177 [...] à une autre, stylisée [...]

236 [...] à une autre plus belle [...]

F177 Villeroy de Mettray. Il ne raillait pas.

236 Villeroy de Mettray. Je ne sais à quoi attribuer cette vision magnifique. Il ne raillait pas.

F178 [...] en désir - à Mettray. Mon amour [...]

238 [...] en désir - à Mettray. Tant j'ai aimé Pierrot, je n'ai couché ni désiré coucher avec un môme. Mon amour [...]

F179 [...] avec tranquillité. Mon amour [...]

239 [...] avec tranquillité. Parce qu'il était frère aîné, parce qu'il était fort, qu'il m'aimait, et que, m'ayant choisi, je devais l'aimer. Cet amour était fait de ma faiblesse, il était un mouvement qui me sauvait de l'abandon. Et cet amour [...]

F180 [...] je me calmai. La voix [...]

240 [...] je me calmai. J'accédai à l'espérance. La [241] voix [...]

F180 [...] un peu pour me soulager.

Durant les manoeuvres [...]

241-242 [...] un peu pour me soulager. Il ne faut pas croire que les solutions les plus audacieuses, les moyens de défense efficaces, mais compliquées, se découvrent plutôt par de lentes méditations, par de pénibles réflexions, par des idées mises bout à bout. C'est le danger qui fait naître soudain et tout monté l'appareil de leurs machineries retorses, ces combinaisons travaillées. Elles éclatent et fulgurent dans l'esprit. Elles vont droit au but. Ainsi l'on voit d'un seul coup ce qu'il faudra dire dans huit jours, puis ce qu'il faudra dire ce soir, puis le geste qu'il faudra faire demain, afin d'obtenir tel résultat dans

un an. Voilà ce que savent les habitués des cabinets des juges. Et c'est un phénomène pareil qui m'apporta la clé d'une situation délicate. Je n'imaginai d'habitude aucun monde plus beau où je serais prince ou courtisane. Mais que m'arrive une tuile, que les flics m'arrêtent, par exemple, dès que j'ai un moment de répit, la moindre pause entre les questions, mon esprit s'active à me masquer la réalité [242] trop atroce. Il me tisse vite un monde où je suis courtisane, ou prince, ou roi, ou mousse... mousse sur la sainte galère, toujours là, bonne ou méchante, mais prompte à me sauver des naufrages de la vie. Tout n'y était pas rose pourtant. Durant les manoeuvres [...]

F182 [...] j'échappe à la mort. Un déclic ouvre une trappe par où je tombe dans un monde imaginaire vengeur.

Comme nous-mêmes, ici, dans Fontevault retrouvé, la nuit nous laissons sangloter nos coeurs et nos queues, où nos macs autrefois se désolaient. Mais nous ne nous doutions

243-244 [...] j'échappe à la mort. On dirait qu'un déclic ouvre une trappe par où je tombe dans un monde imaginaire vengeur. Je ne sais pas au juste ce que je vais y chercher. J'emploie peut-être un procédé d'auto-défense, une sorte d'écran pare-choc qui amortit la violence de mon malheur. Ce peut être encore parce que ma véritable fonction est de rêver, et que ma vie, trop agitée, me la refusant, dès [244] que cette vie se trouve coupée d'un coup sec, sans apparente solution de continuité et ne requérant plus mon attention, le rêve reprend sa proie.

Comme nous-mêmes, ici, dans Fontevault retrouvé, la nuit nous laissons sangloter nos coeurs et nos queues, où nos macs autrefois se désolaient. Enfin est venu ce moment très grave où je pénètre au coeur du mystère. Je suis reporté au début d'une vie tragique dont les dessous secrets vont m'être révélés. Mais nous ne nous doutions [...]

F182 [...] un moine d'autrefois. Les hommes se racontaient [...]

244-245 [...] un moine d'autrefois. Mais malgré ses mignons, comme nous maintenant, ces durs à qui nous rêvions et leurs mignons eux-mêmes devaient succomber sur leur lit, se convulser dans des draps tachés, laisser leur corps avoir des soubresauts que leur donnait l'image récalci-[245]trante des nôtres. Ils se racontaient [...]

F184 [...] portées par les durs.

246 [...] portées par les Durs.

F185 [...] chaussure.

248 [...] chaussure?

F186 Car des voix en aiment d'autres. Nos dieux verrouillés, [...]

249 Car des voix en aiment d'autres. L'aventure arrive à tes téléphonistes. L'un était au Carlton, l'autre au Ritz. Ils ne se virent jamais et pourtant leur voix s'adoraient. Et nos dieux verrouillés, [...]

F186 [...] à l'enfant d'être pénétré. Les voix [...]

250 [...] à l'enfant d'être pénétré de verges au pénis épanoui en corolle. Et l'enfant de vingt ans répond: 'Ma bite dans ta viande.' Les voix [...]

+F187 je 'tomberais' [...]

250 je tomberais [...]

187 - Qu'est ce que tu sais comme goulante?

Leur argot était [...]

250 Qu'est-ce que tu sais comme goulante?

Il faut remarquer que leur argot était [...]

187 [...] là-bas? Peut-être [...]

250 [...] là-bas? Ce mystère m'émeut. Peut-être [...]

F189 [No separation of individual verses of song in the subscribers' edition.]

F189 Les complaints dont parlait Botchako [...]

253 A Mettray, nous chantions j'ai dit quelles chansons. Les complaints dont parlait Botchako [...]

\*F190 Sans hésiter éliminaient le faible. [The 'Collection Folio' text is not grammatically sound]

254 Ils éliminaient le faible, sans hésiter.

F190 Je me défendis et Villeroy me prit sous sa garde. Rare était la tendresse [...]

254-5 Je me défendis bien et Villeroy me prit sous sa garde. Villeroy était une [255] brute têtue que j'adorais (adoration: respect et crainte sans tendresse. Rare était la tendresse [...])

F190 [...] quand il était las d'embrasser mes yeux, ma bouche [...]

255 [...] quand il était las d'embrasser mes yeux, j'allais à sa queue, ma bouche [...]

F191 [...] puis il la retirait. En passant sur sa gorge [...]

255 [...] puis il la retirait et je suçais son membre. Avalé le sperme et baisé les boucles emmêlées de ses poils, ma bouche remontait jusqu'au sienne. En passant sur sa gorge [...]

F191 [...] heureux, la Charité [...]

256 [...] heureux, la sainteté [...]

F192 [...] *les Enfants des anges* [...]

257 [...] *les enfants des anges* [...]

F193-194 [...] ou de quelque autre. [194]

Dans les débuts de mon arrivée, [...]

259 [...] ou de quelque autre.

Mon imagination s'affole. Mais quiconque, (et surtout ceux que l'on appelle jouisseurs), voudra s'élever contre l'imagination, veuille voir qu'elle est la condition de toute jouissance. Habiter toute sa vie une demeure dont l'architecture étrange et belle vous a plu, vous n'y serez heureux qu'aux rares instants où vous pourrez vous dire que cette demeure est étrange, belle, et vous qui vivez au milieu d'elle, mais ne pouvez-vous le dire et le savoir qu'un moment très bref. L'imagination seule satisfait pleinement, car elle nous donne conscience d'être. Je ne puis prolonger la beauté de cette maison dans le temps qu'en recherchant des points de vue nouveaux de beauté, ou en m'évoquant, chaque jour, que j'y suis et plus en plus intensément à mesure que je m'y habitue, au milieu de ses points de vue nouveaux. Dans les débuts de mon arrivée, [...]

F194 [...] et l'avaient reconnue, tous, à son approche, s'affolaient [...]

260 [...] et l'avaient reconnue en tant que beauté, mais j'ai vu que tous, à son approche, s'affolaient [...]

F195 [...] fort grande délicatesse. Mais pouvait-il m'aimer?

261 [...] fort grande délicatesse. Pourtant, il paraissait toujours très à son aise au milieu des conversations les plus libres, ne redoutant même pas certains gestes obscènes; je pouvais croire aussi que son amitié pour moi avait fait naître une certaine pudeur qu'il n'avait pas avec les autres, mais alors son amitié était bien loin de l'amour; sinon il m'eût embrassé avec plus de transport. Mais pouvait-il m'aimer?

195 [...] de mon visage; je veux parler [...]

261 [...] de mon visage, et l'on sait que les pédés ont besoin plus que les autres d'être beaux ou forts, car il n'est pas d'amour inverti qui ne se complique, même chez les plus grossiers, d'une joie esthétique. Je parle, bien entendu, de l'amour et non d'un bref désir physique exaspéré par le manque de femme, qui fait un casseur enfiler et oublier le mino le plus jeune. Du reste, quand il m'avoua son amitié pour Rocky, Pierrot me dit: '... et puis, il n'était pas vilain garçon.' J'ai dit que la vie m'avait marqué; j'ai voulu parler [...]

F196 [...] l'autre aimaient les mâles.

J'ai vu des gars tatoués de l'Aigle [...]

263 [...] l'autre aimaient les mâles.

Par leur forme, par leur agilité et leur transparence, très jeune les aiguilles m'avaient charmé. Elles ont pris mon coeur pour pelote. J'ai su depuis les emplois malicieux que les sorciers en firent: les statuettes transpercées, etc., mais aucun de leurs jeux, ni ceux des médecins chinois, ne devaient m'émouvoir autant que les travaux à l'aiguille auxquels, sur la peau des marles d'autres marles habiles se livraient: les tatouages. J'ai vu des gars tatoués de l'Aigle [...]

F196 [...] cou et plus haut. Ces figures [...]

263 [...] cou et plus haut. Les tatouages, c'est Villeroy et son conseil, la bande de la Voix d'Or, qui accordait le droit de les porter. Ces figures [...]

F196 [...] chevalerie nouvelle.

Une chevalerie, mais encore [...]

263-264 [...] chevalerie nouvelle. J'ai comparé Bulkaen à un chevalier, c'est moins pour son esprit [264] et ses moeurs qu'à cause de son allure. Les chevaliers réalisaient donc une sorte d'élégance et de force plus que les autres guerriers. Cela tient-il à leur armure habillée, à leur casque, à la lance qui les allonge, les allège? D'où vient leur grâce? La légende leur prête la pureté, les intentions belles. Il faut qu'obscurément mon esprit ait retrouvé chez Bulkaen tous ces signes - mais sous une forme cachée peut-être - ces signes qui composent l'image d'un chevalier.

Une chevalerie, mais encore [...]

F196 [...] noblesse d'empire avait été créée et ne tenait pas [...]

264 [...] noblesse d'empire avait été créée par la Voix d'Or, et ne tenait pas [...]

F197 [...] sa peau, ses dents. Maintenant, à l'épaule [...]



265 [...] sa peau, ses dents. C'était une alpe, une alpe homicide. Maintenant, à l'épaule [...]

F197 [...] des baisers dévorants.

Comme les autres, [...]

265-6 [...] des baisers dévorants. Il me mangeait. A la fin, il désira m'enfiler et, pour que j'accepte, il me chuchota:

- C'est bon de se faire enculer.

Je remarquai la forme affirmative de la phrase et je dis, au flanc:

- Ça te plaît?

- Par toi, oui, ça me plairait, dit-il

Je l'étreignis plus fort

Comme les autres, [...]

F198 [...] dans leurs hurlements. Je restais [...]

267 [...] dans leurs hurlements noués. Je restais [...]

199 [...] humeur exacerbée. Peut-être le capitaine [...]

267 [...] humeur exacerbée. Un jour, plus tard, ayant moi-même protesté trop haut contre un colon qui faisait remuer la tringle des hamacs, en se branlant, je m'aperçus que j'avais déclenché tout un système de haines de la part de ce colon contre moi. Peut-être le capitaine [...]

F199 [...] captifs chez les pirates.

Je compris que Divers avait été

268-269 [...] captifs chez les pirates.

Il me fut impossible de baiser Divers comme il me le demandait. Je lui faisais mal, ma verge était trop grosse, mais, à l'instant qu'il jouissait dans ma bouche, ma main caressait ses fesses et constatait qu'il s'enfonçait lui-même un de ses doigts dans le cul. (J'ai quelquefois si puissant le sentiment de m'éloigner volontaire du monde social, et avec une si grande facilité accéder à un état d'immoralisme parfait que j'attends, anxieux, l'instant qui me redonnera ma véri-[269]table forme: le diable). Je ne vais pas dire que Divers fut complètement féminin, la chose est plus compliquée, car pendant les mouvements qu'il faisait sur ma croupe, il me dit à l'oreille, dans un souffle:

- C'est des litres qui devait te foutre, ton marle.

Je compris qu'il avait été [...]

F200 [...] d'écritures sacrées. Sur le lit, [...]

270 [...] d'écritures sacrées La bande de la Voix d'Or le rejeta d'entre les marles, pourtant il en était un, par ses tatouages, et il n'en était plus un par les verges qui l'enfilaient. Sur le lit, [...]

F201 [...] une trahison de Bulkaen et, toute [...]

270 [...] une trahison de Pierrot et, toute [...]

F201 [...] une épaule ou sur l'autre.

Lorsqu'ils voulaient faire chier une cloche ou un vautour [...]

271-273 [...] une épaule ou sur l'autre.

Sans doute, tous les anciens de Mettray ont gardé quelque chose des colons que j'ai connus, mais la vie en avait filtré les plus visibles signes. Il ne leur restait qu'un air

vague, très subtil, d'avoir été colon. Divers, demeuré le plus pur, a vieilli. Seul Bulkaen est arrivé ici, tout droit projeté hors de Mettray, vrai colon avec le même regard que nous avons, avec les gestes sournois et francs, enfin tel que je crois le voir, en fermant les yeux, vêtu tous les jours du pantalon blanc et de la blouse bleue. Voici des faits et des mots de lui qui le prouveront.

[272] Arnaqueur. Pierrot était un spécialiste du coup d'arnac. Grâce à sa vivacité, il pouvait bondir d'un guichet à l'autre, l'ouvrir, y passer sa tête d'ange et promettre sa boule de pain contre deux ou trois mégots. Sa vivacité encore, je l'ai dit, me faisait croire à sa spontanéité, ou plutôt sa spontanéité en face des marles me faisait croire qu'il avait la même avec moi, et c'était faux car, alors que les marles lui faisaient perdre son contrôle, en face de moi il le gardait trop. Sa jolie figure plaidait avec la chaleur pour sa bonne foi - l'on pouvait être sûr que le réfractaire était une brute insensible à la tendresse et à la beauté de tous ordres - il partait avec les mégots et ne rapportait jamais le pain. J'ai entendu les explications qu'il donnait. Elles étaient dites d'une telle voix, par une bouche si belle, qu'elles convainquaient toujours sur le coup, comme paraît vraie, soudain, d'une vérité éternelle, la phrase: 'On s'aimera quelques jours, tu verras mon amour que la vie sera belle...' parce qu'elle est, ce soir, chantée sur un air de feu par une voix d'enfant... je l'écoute. Je demande à Dédé, mon pote de cellule, de faire silence pour l'écouter, pour me permettre au moins de l'entendre, mais il répond en rentrant sa tête sous les couvertures: 'On s'en fout, c'est pas Pierrot.' Bulkaen ne sut jamais rien de tous ces hommages, car Dédé subissait son prestige. Il me parle de lui, il m'envie [273] de l'avoir connu, il me dit avoir été marron d'une boule et d'un mégot. Pierrot donc traversait la Centrale avec ce chapeau (le chapeau d'un mec: sa réputation) et, pourtant, on l'accueillait avec autant de sourires, sur les lèvres ou dans le coeur, que s'il n'eût jamais trompé personne. Il était l'image de la pureté. Du reste, qui était arnaqué? Toujours les caves. Bulkaen n'eût pas osé faire le marron devant les hommes. Non parce qu'il craignait les coups, mais par politesse.

L'arnac diffère de l'escroquerie en ceci, qu'il porte sur une victime choisie, voulue et méprisable, avec qui l'on est en rapport direct, humain. Il est bref. Il n'a pas été amené par un cheminement tortueux, par des calculs: il est porté d'estoc, en plein front, en pleine lumière. Malgré lui, avec lui qu'il a rapporté de Mettray où joli vautour soutenu par son mac, il arnaquait les cloches, Pierrot reste le signe de la plus certaine élégance. Les durs l'acceptèrent et, par lui, je fus sur le point d'être admis dans le clan. Botchako me parlait comme à un pote. Lou m'offrait la touche.

Mais à Mettray, j'ai vu plus d'une fois cette scène: lorsqu'ils voulaient faire chier une cloche ou un vautour [...]

F202 [...] écarté de leur groupe.

Bulkaen se faisait des pognes.

274-275 [...] écarté de leur groupe.

(D'avoir entendu les chansons de Pierrot chantées par une autre voix que la sienne m'a filé le bourdon.)

Autre habitude rapportée par lui de Mettray: l'échange des biffetons. J'y vois le goût de la chose clandestine, du geste furtif, et puénil.

Voici également une des manières qu'il avait de rire. Il riait largement, mais en silence. Sa bouche s'ouvrait très grande, jusqu'aux plus extrêmes d'un éclat de rire, mais aucun son n'en sortait. Pourtant les muscles étaient tendus et on sentait qu'il faisait un [275] effort prodigieux pour ne pas éclater. Il riait ainsi même lorsqu'il n'y avait aucun danger d'être entendu. Evidemment, c'est qu'il avait conservé en Centrale l'habitude prise à Mettray, dans le dortoir, le réfectoire ou l'atelier, de rire sans bruit mais

longuement, car on avait quelquefois le coeur gonflé de joie et de plaisir. Ce rire est aussi le rire habituel des marles. Bulkaen riait selon eux.

Il me dit une fois se branler de la main gauche afin de croire qu'un autre le lui faisait. Il se faisait des pognes.

F202 [...] des pommettes, sous les yeux. Au matin le cerne [...]

275-276 [...] des pommettes, sous les yeux. Qu'il eût ce cerne depuis un moment, chaque matin, compliquait encore d'une question nouvelle l'énigme de Pierre Bulkaen. Car si je n'avais encore pu savoir de qui véritablement il était le même, je pouvais penser que c'était de l'un des durs de l'une ou de l'autre des divisions et j'admettais qu'il eût consenti cela, se rendant compte à quoi l'obligeait sa jeunesse et sa beauté, j'admettais même qu'il éprouvât quelque plaisir malin à jouer à la courtisane, quelque perversité à se voir désirer, enfant de luxe, aimant ce qui brille, il était le point de mire, je m'expliquais encore qu'il connût un plaisir phy-[276]sique à faire l'amour avec un mâle, car le contact devait suffire à l'émouvoir et, sur le coup, provoquer sa jouissance, même quand le mac qui jouissait de lui n'était pas beau. Mais au matin le cerne [...]

F203 [...] vilain garçon...', moi je connais [...]

276 [...] vilain garçon...', mais je connais [...]

F203 [...] du bandit Botchako?

Je ne me souviens pas [...]

277 [...] du bandit Botchako? Je ne sais à qui m'arrêter. Pierrot était si beau qu'il ne pouvait que s'évoquer lui-même, car toute autre beauté venant s'ajouter à la sienne pour former un couple d'amour eût fait perdre l'équilibre à la création - toute la beauté s'entassant d'un seul côté du monde - et l'eût renversée en Enfer. Sa beauté lui aurait permis de faire le mac, sa jeunesse aussi et sa force souple, mais le métier lui répugnait. Les macs le dégoûtaient. Les macs et les casseurs se haïssent et je comptais sur cette haine pour qu'il n'appartînt pas à Lou.

Je ne me souviens pas [...]

F203 [...] les escrocs.

Ce livre m'a coûté beaucoup. J'écris sans plaisir. Avec moins de goût, [...]

278 [...] les escrocs.

J'ai du mal, un mal fou à retrouver Mettray. A travers la ouate formée par nos exhalaisons, nos rêves, notre vie, ce qui arrivait jusqu'à nous du monde extérieur était déformé, brisé par réfraction, de la même manière que se brise, dit-on, le rayon lumineux qui va traverser la masse atmosphérique et cette brisure donnait à notre vision des éclats et des ombres inconnus de nous. Hitler dans notre imagination, était une Catherine de Médicis, étendant ses jupes noires sur l'Europe entière. La Russie était un lac glacé où dansaient de blanches ballerines, tandis qu'à travers les océans passaient des navires chargés de princes et de princesses, et quand les matelots en guerre les voyaient, il se disaient: 'Il ne faut pas tirer sur eux, car ils vont au bal', et que sur la France affolée déferlait, nuit et jour, le chant des sirènes.

Ce livre m'a coûté beaucoup. J'écris sans plaisir. Je me force. J'atténue en moi la faculté poétique. Avec moins de goût, [...]

F204 [...] de la vie en cellule. Mais cette lenteur [...]

279 [...] de la vie en cellule. Je répète que l'on est fort. Mais cette lenteur [...]

+F204 [...] la gravité ne réside pas en elle. Rien ne pourra [...]

279 [...] la gravité ne réside pas dans cette lenteur. Que ma faculté poétique s'atténue, je remarque que cela correspond avec mon dégoût de la masturbation. Je ne peux plus me contenter de caresser en pensée des adolescents, il faut que je les prenne dans mes bras. Rien ne pourra [...]

F204 [...] plutôt que les montrer. Mettray m'accorda des spectacles [...]

280-282 [...] plutôt que les montrer. A propos de Mettray, je suis encore touché par le sentiment poétique, mais d'une façon de plus en plus vague - ce qui ne veut pas dire subtile - et c'est Bulkaen, touché par une autre grâce que la grâce poétique, que me parlera de la Colonie avec précision. Sa rencontre pour la première fois dans l'escalier m'avait donné l'impression qu'il dirigerait ma vie, soit par la seule image rapide que ma prunelle avait enregistrée d'un ange changeant d'effets dans l'ombre - image que j'eusse précieusement conservée en moi, modifiant ma vie, car c'est par des faits d'une telle ténuité, mais insidieux, que la vie et son allure est bouleversée - ou soit par l'influence sur moi de son être physique. Il devait me faire donner un sens nouveau à Mettray, à Fontevault, dès sa seconde rencontre, quand Rasseneur nous présenta l'un à l'autre. Je lui portais quelques mégots et j'allais les lui remettre, ma main pleine était déjà tendue vers lui, quand Pierrot parut. Rasseneur m'abandonna pour bondir lui serrer la main. Ils étaient beaux l'un et l'autre, mais différemment (Rasseneur est petit, trapu, puissant, il a trente ans), leurs deux beautés s'opposaient, pourtant elles me semblèrent se confondre par les regards qui étaient pareils, de la même lumière, de la même eau. Ils étaient durs et joyeux. Rasseneur et Bulkaen se [281] dirent très vite pourquoi ils tombaient l'un et l'autre, puis aussitôt, ils évoquèrent Clairvaux où ils s'étaient connus, et c'est alors que j'entendis Bulkaen prononcer ces mots, entre d'autres aussi inquiétants pour moi: 'C'était pour René que je me suis battu.' Rasseneur ne broncha pas, ni ne sourit. Il n'eut même pas un regard vers moi. Qu'un jeune homme se soit battu pour son même - j'avais cru qu'il s'agissait de cela en voyant de quelle façon simple Pierrot faisait l'aveu et l'accueillait Rasseneur - lui paraissant naturel. J'éprouvai donc un choc en constatant que Rasseneur - qui haïssait ces mœurs - tolérait chez Pierrot ce qu'il appelait un vice chez les autres, et cela parce que Pierrot était beau et dur. Leurs deux beautés s'étaient reconnues. Ils sautaient les barrières des nationalités, des races, pour se rencontrer dans une patrie dont ils étaient les fils: la beauté du visage et du corps. Et c'étaient des beautés joyeuses. Je sentais que chez Bulkaen, la joie et la légèreté que je remarquai d'abord étaient causées par cette musique intérieure, joyeuse, échevelée parfois, qui transporte les héros au sommet de leur vie. Les héros sont humains et surhumains. Ce sont les mêmes. Les mêmes qualités les composent. Il suffit que ces qualités s'attristent en se donnant un but pour que d'humain, le héros devienne surhumain. Il a des qualités sociales et des qualités humaines. Etre [282] travailleur, intelligent, honnête, utile, c'est posséder des qualités sociales, qui servent. Les autres sont la bravoure, l'allégresse, la beauté. Elles ne servent à rien d'autre qu'à composer la statue qu'elles composent. Ce sont des qualités de luxe. Bulkaen était un être de luxe. Grâce à son désintéressement, toute mon aventure m'apparaît tragique. Je ne puis dire si je l'ai élevé au-dessus de lui-même. Si je l'ai fait, c'est qu'il avait ce qu'il faut pour une telle apothéose. Son visage, aux traits un peu trop doux, n'était très beau qu'aux grands instants de colère, par exemple la fois qu'il se moqua de sa beauté, alors que sa beauté atteignait son faite. La beauté est un mouvement vers la plus haute altitude. Attitude, altitude, divines sauvegardes! Avec une âme pareille, il devrait aimer les bagarres, il devait damner son désespoir et sa victoire, ou sa honte. Mettray seulement m'accorda des spectacles [...]

F204 [...] quitté son visage, ce rire l'embellissait [...]  
 283 [...] quitté son visage. Mais j'ai dit à quel point ce rire l'embellissait [...]

F205 [...] de la prison. Un [sic] sorte de paix [...]  
 283 [...] de la prison. J'éprouvai ce bien-être qu'on éprouve devant la beauté. Une sorte de paix [...]

F205 [...] chaque détail particulier [...]  
 284 [...] chaque beauté particulière [...]

F206 [...] y gagne. J'ai voulu [...]  
 284 [...] y gagne en beauté. J'ai voulu [...]

F206 [...] les feuilles humides. Nous remontons [...]  
 284-5 [...] les feuilles humides. C'était le soir, d'un commun accord nous sommes tombés, dans nos manteaux de voyage, sur un tas de feuilles mortes. Tout en marchant dans ma cellule, je n'ai pensé qu'à [285] lui et, aujourd'hui par exception, aux plaisirs que je tirerais de son corps. En marchant, je le vois devant moi. Ma verge me gêne. Je m'allonge sur mon lit pour cacher à Dédé mon émoi, mais la pensée de Bulkaen que j'étreins là-bas, dans le brouillard, ne me quitte pas et je dois me retourner sur le côté car, couché sur le dos, il m'est difficile de m'imaginer le baisant. Je donne à mon corps la meilleure position pour l'acte que j'imagine. Dirai-je nos baisers de reconnaissance mutuelle sur nos visages mouillés par la brume? Nous remontons [...]

F206 [...] colons tordus, toute la Colonie [...]  
 285 [...] colons tondus, toute la Colonie [...]

F207 [...] chopaient leur membre [...]  
 286 [...] chopaient leur bite [...]

+F212 [...] férocité inaccoutumée. On part soldat [...]  
 292 [...] férocité extraordinaire: avec l'habituelle folie de ces luttes partisans. On part soldat [...]

F212 [...] la salle des fêtes.  
     Si les durs choisissaient leurs [...]  
 292 [...] la salle des fêtes.  
     Toscano appartient enfin à Deloffre qui prit, grâce à sa force, rang parmi les marles qui montaient. En effet, si les durs choisissaient leurs [...]

F212 [...] c'est que leur beauté les introduisait [...]  
 292 [...] c'est que leur beauté, sans doute, était si belle que tous les marles les aimaient - peut-être - mais en tout cas, cette beauté les introduisait [...]

F212 [...] forts de leur grâce [...]  
 292 [...] forts de leur beauté [...]

F212 L'auteur d'un beau poème est toujours mort. Les colons de Mettray [...]  
 293 L'auteur d'un beau poème est toujours mort. Je vous prie de considérer cela et d'approcher les poètes miraculeux avec le respect que l'on doit à la mort. En silence,

d'abord, et découvert. Les colons de Mettray [...]

F214 [...] par ses pieds nus.

A la Colonie, Harcamone [...]

295 [...] par ses pieds nus. Il paraissait compter rapidement des nombres très grands, comme s'il eût préparé une expérience grave et qu'il se la répétât. Ses lèvres avaient le mouvement silencieux des lèvres du prestidigitateur qui compte tout bas l'ordre des cartes à jouer qu'il présente.

Je pensais que de tels gestes n'étaient possibles que s'ils étaient commandés par un conseil solennel siégeant très loin à l'intérieur d'Harcamone, par une famille royale vivant dans une intimité sévère, transmettant aux plus extrêmes points du royaume des décrets élaborés dans un château d'un luxe inouï, au fond d'une inabordable forêt de sapins. Si les chambres sont étranges, et d'une destination inconnue les objets que déplacent les princes, comment comprendrons-nous les messages qu'ils nous envoient?

A la Colonie, Harcamone [...]

F214 [...] douceur délicate [...]

295 [...] douceur effrayante [...]

F214 [...] du rab [...]

296 [...] du rabe [...]

F215 [...] de son idole. Il faut voir les gosses [...]

297 [...] de son idole - et son geste valait celui du jeune soldat dont j'ai peut-être parlé déjà qui déserta pour aller voir le film intitulé *Capitaine courageux* où jouait le jeune Freddy Bartolomiew. Il faut voir les gosses [...]

F215 [...] devenus celui qu'ils aiment. Ils perdent alors [...]

298 [...] devenus celui qu'ils aiment (ce mac). Ils perdent alors [...]

F216 [...] l'aventure qu'il leur fallut [...]

298 [...] l'aventure étonnante qu'il leur fallut [...]

F217 [...] vie d'esclaves.

Larochedieu, cette cloche [...]

299 [...] vie d'esclaves.

Larochedieu (une fois pour toutes, j'affirme que ces noms sont exacts et qu'ils furent mes camarades tous ces gosses dont je parle ici, je prononce le serment solennel, et que l'on me croie car les poètes croient au ciel et le redoutent, que j'ai, de quinze à dix-huit ans vécu cette vie prodigieuse). Larochedieu, cette cloche [...]

F217 [...] péril de la vie?

Avec quel serrement de gorge [...]

300 [...] péril de la vie?

Bulkaen n'hésita jamais. Des particularités de ses tatouages, je signale encore une chaînette à la cheville, et le désir qu'il eut un jour, en voyant à un bagnard, du loup tatoué sur le visage et sur son dos d'un crucifix.

Avec quel serrement de gorge [...]

F218 [...] immobile et droit, au milieu [...]

301 [...] immobile et droit, lui, au milieu [...]

F218 [...] pitié. Bulkaen souffrit [...]

301 [...] pitié. Je crois aujourd'hui que je n'aurai jamais été assez doux avec Pierrot. Il souffrit [...]

F219 [...] tachés. Je l'écoutais, [...]

303 [...] tachés de foutre. Je l'écoutais, [...]

F220 [...] secrètement.

Mes cambriolages, [...]

304-305 [...] secrètement. Il m'écrivit le lendemain même, il s'emballa dans une lettre d'amour. Je transcris: '...ne crois pas, mon petit Jean, que c'est le manque de femmes qui me fait t'écrire... non, car elles me dégoûtent profondément... Tu me demandes si nous sommes amis et je te réponds par un grand OUI... tu es l'homme avec qui je pourrai échanger toutes sortes de conversations sur mon travail (j'entends travail avec une plume et deux bonnes cales). Quand nous sortirons, tu verras que je ne suis pas maladroit, et je puis te dire aussi sans aucune prétention que beaucoup de truands se font un plaisir de sortir au flanc avec moi... nous serons amis à la vie à la mort... C'est ce qui j'ai cherché depuis l'âge de douze ans, quand j'étais en correction jusqu'à ce jour... malheureusement, ce n'est pas dans l'escalier où toute une bande de caves... Maintenant, mon petit Jean, je t'en prie ne me parle pas de ma beauté, je finirais par te croire... je t'aiderai à faire un beau livre [305] et tu verras que je suis capable dans mon métier car je l'aime comme moi-même, comme un amour. Je ne vis que pour voler. C'est ma vie, et ma doctrine est la tienne.. voler pour le plaisir du danger, voler pour vivre, voler pour m'amuser, voler pour tout, même pour l'amour. Si tu pouvais voir cette flamme qui brille dans mes yeux quand j'ai ouvert une porte avec difficulté et danger. Il me semble que je viens de conquérir le monde entier...

Mes cambriolages, [...]

F222 [...] entre ses mains.

A Mettray nous allions aux cabinets [...]

307 [...] entre ses mains.

Il est à croire que la Providence, celle qui veille à l'ordonnance diabolique, sème, et sachant où, des fragments de journaux, des enveloppes vides, des pages déchirées, de malicieuses pages déchirées qui nous saisissent par le poignet pour nous mener sur la voie de quelque bouleversante aventure, soit qu'ils l'amorcent, soit qu'ils la terminent ou l'entretiennent. Rival était un de ces colons qui sont partout à la fois. Nous allions aux cabinets [...]

F222 [...] chaulé mon doigt.

Pour de pareils [...]

308 [...] chaulé mon doigt. Des cabinets, de l'une des latrines Rival rapporta un morceau de journal jauni dont nous ne pûmes connaître la date. Il s'agissait d'un bref article où un détenu de Fontevault s'était évadé dans la nuit et avait tué un garde en s'enfuyant. Le bout de journal passa de main en main, en mains de marles évidemment (à propos de leurs mains, évoquez, quand elles sont fermées, des pognes terribles, mais quand elles sont ouvertes, des mains en filigranes d'argent, avec des doigts à donner des bécots, où donner des bécots).

Dans la journée, avant cinq heures, toute la Colonie fut au courant et même, je

ne saurais dire par quel prodige elle le sut, mais elle sut que l'évadé était Jo la Voix d'Or. En effet, le signalement donné du détenu correspondait avec celui de Jo. Grand fut le désarroi. Comment Jo avait-il pu fuir sans avertir ses lieutenants de Mettray? Où était-il? Peut-être rôdait-il dans les environs, semant autour de lui la panique et la mort, attendant, épiant d'une cachette l'instant heureux pour les délivrer, les emporter tous, les colons les plus beaux et les plus marles toujours, au fond des poches de sa culotte et dans ses bras. La Colonie haletait d'espérance. Le messie était annoncé pour demain.

Pour de pareils [...]

F223 [...] sanglotent [...]

309 [...] sanglottent [...] [Misprint]

F223 [...] Fontevrault. Je dirais [...]

309 [...] Fontevrault. Si les 'ondes' récentes de Mortemart-Rochechouart veillent à la porte, ces cartes de mon coeur ont une architecture ancienne, médiévale, romane, que sais-je? Je dirais [...]

F223 [...] fidèlement.

Malgré Divers à [...]

310 [...] fidèlement.

Comme l'on peut aimer quand on aime hors du monde: et je connais avec mes mots et avec moi-même la même désolante ivresse de deux hommes absurdement beaux qui ne s'aiment que de leur monstruosité, ou deux enfants laids qui s'aiment désespérément dans leur laideur.

Malgré Divers à [...]

F223 Fontevrault lui-même. C'est un monsieur [...]

310 Fontevrault lui-même. Le directeur est un monsieur [...]

F224 [...] absolument perdus. Enfin [...]

311 [...] absolument perdus. Ils assistaient à une messe incompréhensible. Enfin [...]

F225 [...] de poésie charmante. J'y devais [...]

312 [...] de poésie charmante. Je m'étais embarqué avec mon destin douloureux. Pourquoi m'eût-il lâché puisqu'il ne m'abandonne pas dans les coins les plus obscurs de mes rêves. Je devais [...]

+F225 [...] les yeux un tel spectacle. Les mâles aux muscles mouvants [...] taille. Ils formaient [...]

313 [...] les yeux le spectacle le plus beau du monde. Les jeunes hommes aux muscles mouvants [...] taille qu'ils avaient adorablement fine. Ils formaient [...]

F226 [...] malgré sa hauteur.

Il fallait bien que Bulkaen [...]

314-316 [...] malgré sa hauteur.

Les prisons, messieurs, cachent tant de beautés qu'on n'ose les montrer ni nommer. Ce n'est rien, que ce plancher de chêne d'une cellule, qui fut gravé, taillé avec un clou par un Chinois condamné à la réclusion perpétuelle. Accroupis durant des heures, d'autres réclu-[315]sionnaires gravent, comme lui, le sol, la paroi de leur coeur, de paysages de leur enfance. Avec un amour aussi fou, d'un seul coup d'ongle, nous avons



gravé dans le plâtre un ou deux signes mystérieux qui indiquent avec une précision terrible les régions mortes de nos rêves. Sur le matin, j'entends les mêmes bruits intimes que dans le dortoir de Mettray et, plutôt, cette respiration par le nez, et le bruit de la salive avalée, le claquement de la langue contre le palais, séché par le sommeil... c'est ce que faisaient entendre les gosses au réveil, courant en chemise aux latrines, les yeux collés, et ne se reconnaissant pas l'un à l'autre quand ils se rencontraient. Je veux que tout cela soit la plus belle chose du monde, que sanctifie l'amitié.

Comment parlerai-je encore de l'amitié? Je l'ai vu mêlée à tant de choses, et la douceur des gestes qui ne sont qu'à elle, s'insinuer dans une arrestation jusqu'à la rendre douce et l'amitié abominable: dans la foule, un bras se roule autour de mon cou, une voix joyeuse de me reconnaître crie: 'Tiens! mon pote!' et, en tournant la tête, contre le mien, prêt à sourire, j'ai vu le visage de l'inspecteur Peyre. Il fut heureux de sa capture et sans pitié pour ce visage d'où la sérénité s'envola en désordre, et pour couronner son ouvrage, à la fin de l'enquête, il ajouta gentiment:

- 'J'pourrais encore t'mettre une quatrième affaire [316] sur les reins, mais j'suis pas une vache, et j'vais te faire une fleur'.

Il fallait bien que Bulkaen [...]

F228 [...] regagnai l'atelier. Je compris [...]

317 [...] regagnai l'atelier. J'étais très faible. La vue de ce jeu d'amour m'avait épuisé. Je compris [...]

F228 [...] savoir de qui. La vérité [...]

318 [...] savoir de qui, et je crus même qu'il s'agissait de la Voix d'Or. Harcamone, queue détachée chez nous de la Voix d'Or! La vérité [...]

F228 [...] envoyé son sexe superbe [...]

318 [...] envoyé sa bite admirable [...]

F229 Le plus beau jour de l'été.

Ce que je conserve [...]

318-319 Le plus beau jour de l'été.

*Dormir la bouche ouverte et l'espérer venir  
La lourde et la légère, attendre qu'elle passe,  
Attendre sur nos yeux son pied, le retenir,  
Car on sait qu'elle vibre et chante dans l'espace,  
Ni les fleurs ni la mort ni les portes de fer,  
L'ombre et ses gâfes noirs ne sauront, parfumée,  
Traçant son trait fatal empêcher que dans l'air  
Ne la portent vers moi ses ailes emplumées,  
O ma sainte Harcamone, ô vierge de nos lits  
Vous parcourrez le ciel, errante, et seriez nue  
Sans le chant qui vous couvre et surtout sans ces plis  
De clarté qui vous font d'innocence vêtue.  
Mais vous êtes cruelle, ô verge du maçon !  
Pour vous, bouche parée, à bras tendus je chante  
Avec mes mains, avec mes doigts, mais du gazon  
Où vous dormez encore, ô ma belle méchante,  
Que vous portent chez moi, sur mon visage ouvert*

*Vos ailes, vos parfums, votre musique folle!  
 Fermez la porte et sur mes yeux, à mots couverts  
 Chantez! Refusez-vous. Restez! Ou je m'envole!  
 Posez-vous sur mon front, portez-vous à mes dents,  
 O gaule enténébrée et montez à ma bouche,  
 Entrez au fond de moi où la mort vous attend  
 Pâle fille étendue sur sa fragile couche.  
 Hélas, les beaux maçons dont la queue par un trou  
 De la poche s'évade, échangent sur l'échelle,  
 Entre eux ces longs baisers plus chers que le Pérou  
 Pour le pauvre étendu dans l'ombre de leurs ailes.*

Et nous avons des soirs d'une douceur exquise, des soirs parcourus du vol d'autres bites. Mais si je prête l'oreille, je n'arrive à reconnaître aucune des paroles prononcées par les colons. Le texte des discours que l'on tint à Mettray n'est pas venu jusqu'à moi.

Ce que je conserve [...]  
 [A135-136 ibid]

F229 [...] attitudes bouleversantes [...]  
 320 [...] attitudes splendides [...]

F229 [...] l'autre derrière. Un autre, les jambes [...]  
 320 [...] l'autre derrière. Un autre fait le simulacre de saisir par-dessus sa braguette sa queue en criant: 'Tiens, mon pote, avec tes dents, chipe-là!'. Un autre, les jambes [...]

F229 Les marles l'ont fait.

Elle n'avait pas été [...]  
 320-321 Les marles l'ont faite. Elle [une mode] doit être très vieille, autant que la Colonie de Mettray. On disait déjà de mon temps que la Colonie n'était plus ce qu'elle avait été, et Bulkaen me parlait de mon époque, qu'il n'avait pas connue, comme une époque héroïque. Nous vivions sur le souvenir d'un âge fameux où les marles savaient commander aux chefs, et ce passé de légende nous excitait. Nous ne savions pas nous-mêmes que nous vivions une des périodes les plus hautes de la vie de Mettray, puisque plus tard, quand [321] elle fut fermée, un ancien gâfe me dit de la Colonie:

- A la fin, surtout, c'était difficile. Les colons faisaient ce qu'ils voulaient.
- Qu'appellez-vous la fin, demandai-je?
- Une dizaine d'année avant la fermeture.

La mode était donc de tradition. Elle n'avait pas été [...]

F230 [...] à ces merveilles.

Tous les gars qui passent [...]

322 [...] à ces merveilles. J'expliquerai comment je passe du rêve à la réalité, sans déranger l'ordre logique, le déroulement simple, linéaire, d'une sorte de récit sublime où j'étais tantôt acteur et tantôt spectateur.

Tous les gars qui passent [...]

F231 [...] du surveillant.

La sévérité de la vie [...]

323-326 [...] du surveillant.

La beauté du meurtrier qui est vu comme un grand malheureux. Il est l'homme que la fatalité a désigné pour se punir lui-même, et d'une façon magnifique. Il est choisi par les dieux. Un malheur exceptionnel le courbe. (Je suis prisonnier d'un vocabulaire très défini).

Au Quartier, j'étais en grande cellule avec cinq autres colons qui s'étaient entendus pour réunir un peu de confiture que leur faisait passer un cuisinier. Cette confiture était gardée dans une boîte en fer, sous le bat-flanc. Je fus bien accueilli dans la cellule mais, dès le premier matin au réveil, alors que j'étais encore couché dans ma couverture, l'un des gars parla de souris qui mangaient la confiture. Puis il y eut un silence parmi tous les autres colons et je compris qu'ils m'accusaient de m'être levé la nuit pour manger de la confiture. C'était faux. Je n'avais pas seulement songé à le faire. Je vivais habituellement dans un tel climat de considération (quant à ma probité relative aux camarades), j'étais tellement respecté - ou croyais l'être - que cette accusation, en me plongeant dans un monde méprisé où je n'avais songé [324] jamais descendre, me laissa la chique coupée. Enfin je rejetai les couvertures et, dressant mon buste, sans même consentir à me justifier, je leur déclarai, (et je tremblais d'indignation), qu'une telle accusation ne me permettait plus d'avoir avec eux de rapports d'aucune sorte que ceux qui sont imposés par un contact forcé. Qu'ils ne s'attendent plus à rien de bon de ma part. J'étais leur ennemi. Le reste du corps entortillé d'une couverture brune, mais le buste nu, dressé, j'étais un serpent qui siffle, debout sur sa queue. Et de m'être élevé avec cette violence contre eux me fit reculer immédiatement dans un autre monde. Je fus seul. Je fus l'esclave qui se révolte, non en tant qu'homme mais qu'esclave posant ainsi comme valeur absolue le fait d'être esclave. Toute la société était représentée par ces cinq gosses, je me dressais donc contre toute la société et l'ivresse que j'y trouvai fut si forte, de si haute qualité que, depuis, j'ai toujours cherché à la provoquer. Je serai seul au milieu de tous, contre tous.

La richesse d'une image tiendrait volontiers chez moi à l'éclat physique des objets, des choses concrètes indiquées par les mots qui la composent: l'or, les cristaux, le sang, la lumière, s'opposant à des zones d'ombres: les fourrures, l'ombre, les vapeurs, l'ensemble voulant donner une impression de luxe lourd, assourdi, mais du plus haut luxe terrestre, et ce [325] sont des images pareilles que je tends pour essayer de capter la forme émouvante des assassins car je les vois comme le luxe même, celui qui déchire votre plus grande richesse pour n'en tirer quelquefois que le bénéfice d'une mort monumentale. La méchanceté du règlement et des gâfes nous a fait le coeur dur, et l'éclat de notre coeur était dans nos yeux de colons, et dans nos gestes. Nos souffrances (j'aimerais dire que nous ne fûmes jamais malheureux car il m'est pénible d'amoindrir ma jeunesse. En second lieu, ces souffrances ont fait de notre une si étrange oeuvre d'art que j'espère (mais aujourd'hui que je regarde en arrière) que nous comprîmes la nécessité de nous soumettre avec joie - et orgueil - aux exigences d'un destin exceptionnel, mais si j'apporte un peu de pitié dans le rappel de cette époque, si je m'attendris, je vois que nous étions malheureux car l'agressivité n'existe pas dans le malheur, et nous étions agressifs) nos souffrances nous ont permis de supporter les peines de la vie, de les accueillir en riant, aux éclats mais en nous-mêmes, mais surtout elles ont donné à nos trente ans cette cruauté sévère qui nous permet de tuer les enfants, les vieillards, qui nous ferait dépecer les gâfes. Les rondes au soleil d'août, au soleil de décembre, dans le quartier, nos faims, nos soifs, les bagarres, les morsures, les humiliations, nos stations pieds-nus dans les lavabos glacés, [326] tout cela a pétrifié notre coeur, a fait aux meilleurs d'entre nous des gestes de commandeurs. Nous sommes moins violents qu'inébranlables. Nous avons tous grandi dans les supplices les plus aigus, les plus sévèrement observés. Avant de rire de la gloriole dont se pare le dur qui vient de se

farcir du mitard, du quartier, de la salle, voyons si d'abord il ne tire pas cette gloire du fait que le supplice est une épreuve, un baptême. Il n'est pas vain d'y aller. La consécration accordée n'est pas vaine. L'homme est durci et épuré par le travail des instruments de supplice: la faim, le froid, la fatigue, les coups, la marche en canard, les aboiements du chien et la marche à quatre pattes pour obtenir la demi-gamelle de pitance. Cette rigueur convient à notre attitude rigoureuse. La prison n'est pas un couvent de moines douillets, et j'ai vu sur le visage des durs de Mettray et des anciens de Fontevault, dans les yeux de quelques vieux bagnards, cette ombre de légère amertume, de dédain, de regret quand ils disent: 'Oh la tôle, c'est plus comme avant!'

La sévérité de la vie [...]

F231 [...] accusation injuste.

Les supplices [...]

326-327 [...] accusation injuste. Je suis prisonnier d'un vocabulaire très défini. J'ai essayé d'en changer en [327] croyant, grâce au nouveau, découvrir un autre univers.

Les supplices [...]

F231 [...] travaillés par eux.

Je m'épuise à [...]

327-8 [...] travaillés par eux. Nos muscles desséchés, nos corps décapés, brisés, durcis et, au milieu de ces éclats, nos coeurs délicats battant sous la peau de nos poitrines. Toutes nos souffrances - ou plutôt leurs causes - ont dû se cristalliser en un bloc terrible, et chacune d'elles est la facette dont le rayon s'est continué, projetant sur le mur blanc de la vie, l'une un meurtre, l'autre un vol, l'autre un viol, une trahison et, peut-être, l'une d'elles, quelque tendre mouvement, un baiser à un enfant ou le sauvetage d'un chien qui se noie. Ainsi, c'est peut-être les gifles que lui donnait l'aumônier qui sont dans l'image d'une de ces facettes formant le cristal de Sillar. La lumière de cette image a parcouru la vie; les spirales, les tremblements de la projection l'ont peu à peu déformée et quand, arrivée à son terme, au sommet de sa course elle se fixe, voici que nous la voyons devenue l'étranglement d'un curé dans une sacristie pillée. Nous pensions bien que seule la 'Corrida' pouvait former des hommes. Et quelle honte ici nous éprouvons d'apprendre que des gosses de seize à vingt ans, ouvriers sortant d'une usine (ceux que nous appelons des 'Pue-la-Sueur') se [328] font terroristes, anarchistes ou communistes, et nous dépassent dans le courage moral et dans l'audace physique. Par les gâfes eux-mêmes, nous savons que des bandes de jeunes gars, manipulant la mitraillette comme d'autres un étui à cigarettes ou un briquet, arrêtent des trains en marche, entrent la nuit et le jour dans les fermes, tuent, sans voler un sou, et s'embusquent pour égorger des soldats allemands qu'ils appellent les 'Frisés' ou les 'Frisous'.

Le culot que montrent ces enfants nous humilierait si nous ne disions, en nous-mêmes et entre nous:

- C'est des caves. Qu'est-ce qui z'ont à se faire casser la gueule pour rien? Des caves, ces mecs-là.

Et moi-même - et c'est la preuve que j'ai pris le parti du diable - malgré l'admiration que je leur porte, et l'émotion délicieuse de savoir qu'il [sic] sont jeunes et violents, je suis sûr que si j'avais à choisir entre eux et les voyous, je choisirais les voyous. Je mourrai pour eux.

Je m'épuise à [...]

F232 Cependant je suis sûr de n'avoir pas rendu [...]

329 Je vous ai dit tout cela mais je suis sûr de n'avoir pas rendu [...]

F232 [...] l'Univers. La famille [...]

329 [...] l'Univers. Le reste c'était la mort et ses merveilles: ses bals, ses cafés, ses orchestres, ses châteaux, ses femmes, ses navires. La famille [...]

F233 [...] dire douleur.

Nous ne savions pas que les [...]

330-1 [...] dire douleur.

(Par un de ces hommes à l'oeil exercé, qu'on appelle [331] physionomistes et qu'emploient les grands casinos pour repérer les joueurs suspects, j'ai vu se découvrir une bande innombrable de noirs accapareurs qui possédaient tous les marchés de fleurs de France. Arrêtée la bande, la France fut privée de fleurs pendant une semaine). Les mouchards, ou bourriques, jouent gratuitement un rôle quelque peu analogue à celui du physionomiste. Ils flairent. Et leur nez les met souvent sur une piste dont ils ne soupçonnent pas la gravité. Ainsi Larochedieu qui raconta au surveillant que nous nous passions un bout de journal (les journaux étaient interdits à la Colonie, et je dus attendre trois ans pour savoir que Lindberg avait traversé l'Atlantique) qui faisait nos délices et parlait d'un évadé de Fontevrault, grand, fort, beau, lumineux. Il en parla si bien et de son meurtre, que le surveillant comprit qu'il s'agissait d'un détenu évadé il y avait plus d'un an et guillotiné maintenant. Nous eûmes vite connaissance de cela et nous demeurâmes perplexes, nos petits coeurs battants, et nous demandant si c'était bien la Voix d'Or qui avait été guillotiné, ou alors qui était ce tueur par qui nous avons été bouleversés durant huit jours?

Nous ne savions pas que les [...]

F233 [...] policiers. Aussi profondément [...]

332 [...] policiers. En pénétrant à l'intérieur de leurs pages, j'ai connu la véritable désolation, celle qui est sans espoir, car ce monde n'est composé que d'assassins, d'hommes ou d'enfants pour qui n'existe aucun recours, qui ne remonteront jamais à la surface où respire votre monde. De cet univers damné par aucun rédempteur n'est possible le rachat. Aussi profondément [...]

F234 [...] les vertus. Bulkaen me parlant [...]

333 [...] les vertus. Ainsi quelque charité soudaine m'anime, où je voudrais cacher la honte, la voiler, comme on verra que je le ferai de la honte de Divers. Je voudrais vous faire visiter les prisons. Les ombres dont elles sont pleines lèvent la tête vers un coin du ciel, mais la baissent très vite vers les méandres d'une histoire compliquée et complaisante. Et Bulkaen me parlant [...]

F234 [...] d'Hersir. Rares sont les marles [...]

333-334 [...] d'Hersir. C'est le chevalier qui a entendu un trouvère parler de Mélisande, et qui part. Bulkaen n'ayant d'autre ressource, d'autre matière, d'autre espace, d'autre route, que le souvenir fuyant de Rocky, c'est à travers cette terre désolée qu'il était parti à la recherche d'Hersir.

Je devinais qu'il fouillait tous les buissons, les four-[334]rés. Il cherchait même ridiculement sous des faits trop petits pour contenir Hersir et le dissimuler. Mais peut-être a-t-il raison dans ces aventures, la malice peut transformer la Belle en une fourmi ou le buisson lui-même. Rares sont les marles [...]

F234 [...] la violence d'un sanglot.

Parlerai-je des soirs [...]

334-6 la violence d'un sanglot et parce que je suis seul dans ma cellule, aux prises avec mon chagrin, et parlant d'amitié, je me rappelle avec angoisse le cri de Michaëli Andritch. C'était dans la prison de Darmstadt, où nous avons réussi à rester dans la même cellule. Il y avait un mois que nous nous rencontrions et, chaque fois, à la promenade ou ailleurs, le regard qu'on échangeait était méfiant et méchant. Il fallut un mot, une phrase pour que notre conversation se continuât jusqu'au matin.

J'étais fatigué, aucun muscle ne me soutenait. J'aurais voulu dormir, mais il me paraissait convenable que je fisse à l'occasion de cette amitié soudainement déclarée un geste inhabituel, et que je passe la nuit en parlant, comme on la passe à boire, à danser. Enfin je ne pouvais pas le quitter. Je lui dis: [335]

- Tu ne m'intéresses pas énormément...

- Il faut tout de même que je t'intéresse pour que tu restes avec moi jusqu'à six heures du matin.

- Rien ne te prouve que je ne serais pas resté pour un autre, pour... - je cherchai autour de nous qui je pourrais indiquer et mon choix tomba sur un jeune ouvrier de vingt ans, long, sec, portant des lunettes - ...sur le prestidigi...

- Non!

-...gite...Ah!

Je me sentis chanceler. Michaëli Andritch avait crié, mais avec une telle violence que je crus immédiatement qu'il me croyait amoureux.

Ah! Qu'est-ce que tu en sais? Tu n'en sais rien! Tu dis non...

Il eut cette réponse étonnante:

- Oui, je dis non parce que moi je ne serais pas resté avec lui. A moi, il ne plaît pas.

Or, le plus troublant, c'est, qu'en effet, l'ouvrier me déplaisait. Je ne l'avais pas montré, il fallait donc que Michaëli l'eût deviné par son propre dégoût. Mais alors il accordait que nous fussions animés par les mêmes dégoûts et, pour juger ainsi, il devait se sentir avec moi, et les désirer même, d'intimes affinités.

Les saisons passaient sur les arbres, et par eux et les oiseaux, nous avons une connaissance sensible non de [336] l'écoulement du temps, mais de la mort lente de notre jeunesse. Où peut-on trouver ces directeurs et ces gâfes, ces hommes qui osent insulter la beauté? Peut-être ont-ils le sentiment obscur d'ajouter encore à cette beauté en la torturant?

N'est-ce pas le même désir qui me fait un bel adolescent au visage joyeux et clair, frais comme la rose et l'azur, humide, tiède, qui passe en riant dans la rue, le choisir pour lui apprendre l'amour et voir son visage s'embellir et s'embruiner dans la torture de la volupté?

Fontevrault continuera toujours d'agir sur l'âme et sur l'esprit des colons.

Parlerai-je des soirs [...]

F234 [...] se caressaient. Après [...]

336 [...] se caressaient la queue. Après [...]

[A139 ibidem]

F235 [...] cent ans. Nous savions [...]

338 [...] cent ans n'ont pas suffi à créer un langage, (dont il faut, pour voir plus profondément dans son origine, comprendre qu'il se modifie chaque jour). Le colon le tire de soi. Mis au jour par n'importe lequel d'entre nous, chacun le reconnaît comme le parlant depuis le commencement du monde. Nous savions [...]

F236 [...] soupçonnassent les gâfes. Ils entendirent [...]

338 [...] soupçonnassent les gâfes. Les gâfes ont des yeux et des oreilles. Ces organes ne collaborent jamais. Autrement dit, les gâfes sont des cons. Ils entendirent [...]  
[A140 ibidem]

F237 [...] d'armes, [...]

340 [...] d'arme [...]

[A141 ibidem]

F238 [...] ridicule.

Fontevrault est plein de gestes de grâce. C'est le geste [...]

341 [...] ridicule. Le monde de la Centrale est, en effet, bourré d'actes, de cris, qui lui donne cet air nauséeux.

Fontevrault est plein de gestes d'une beauté à pleurer. C'est le geste [...]

F238 Elle cingle.

La Centrale contient d'autres gestes.

D'un jeune et de cent autres ce geste encore, qu'ils font derrière le dos des gâfes, et dont j'ai vu au cours des années la transformation s'accomplir, pareille à l'évolution de certains vocables d'argot. La main à plat frappe la cuisse, remontant à la braguette en faisant le mouvement de saisir la verge, comme pour pisser, geste qui devient celui-ci: la main, après avoir frappé à la cuisse, remonte jusqu'à la bouche, toujours à plat, et fait le signe qui veut dire: 'Jusque-là.'

Le geste méchant d'un gars qui sous la porte d'un rival détesté, mais trop costaud, très vite, glisse quelques poux et des punaises, ramassés sur lui-même la veille ou le matin, et qu'il pousse dans la cellule ennemie, en soufflant, rapidement accroupi.

Je me demande si tout cela est réel tant c'est réel, et si la Centrale n'est pas une maison d'illusion.

Bulkaen excelle à ces jeux discrets.

341-342 Elle cingle.

Le huitième jour de ma rencontre avec Bulkaen, je fus certain que, quoi qu'il fit, quoi qu'on me dît de lui, je l'aimerais toujours. Je revenais de l'infirmerie, accompagné par un gâfe, qui eut besoin de dire un mot [342] à son collègue surveillant l'atelier où travaillait Bulkaen. Comme nous passions pour aller au mien, devant cet atelier, le gâfe me fit entrer. C'était une grande salle, partagée en deux par un grillage percé d'une porte au milieu. J'eus peur. Je craignis un instant que les mecs, me reconnaissent, nous chambrent Bulkaen et moi, mais ils remarquèrent à peine mon entrée. Ils travaillaient dans la poussière. Les deux gâfes se parlèrent et j'eus le temps d'apercevoir Bulkaen de l'autre côté du grillage, mais de très près. Il ne m'avait pas vu. Son travail voulait qu'il fût accroupi. Il était près d'un autre détenu, un vieux. Bulkaen pétait et il riait. Le vieux l'imitait. Ils riaient tous les deux; Bulkaen en mettant sa main devant sa figure et en regardant si le gâfe le voyait, le vieux en laissant son rire éclater loin au fond de lui, si loin que ce rire n'arrivait pas à faire tressaillir les muscles de son visage. Il se tournait vers Bulkaen:

- Toi, tu as entendu?

- Un pour la classe, criait Pierrot.

- Pan! Un pour la Révolution.

Je me demande si tout cela est réel, tant c'est réel, et si la Centrale n'est pas une maison d'illusion. Parfois, un gars libéré frappé dans la porte, énervé qu'on ne la [343] lui ouvre pas assez vite: il clame, il joue la liberté sur la porte sonore et son chant nous

désolé.

Quand je passe, je vois encore des sourires d'amis qui se reconnaissent dans les couloirs. Ils savent qu'ils ne peuvent ni se parler, ni se faire d'autres signes, ils s'envoient comme un message d'amour, très doux sur ces lèvres de punis, un sourire amical.

Bulkaen, toujours lui, excelle à ces jeux discrets.

F240 [...] bagnards. Je m'approchai.

344 [...] bagnards. Sa beauté éclairait le monde. Je m'approchai.

F241 [...] il fallut que je le touchasse.

346 [...] il fallût que je le touche.

F243 [...] la grâce et l'éclat. [change of position, then onto passages reproduced on p. 238 with the following paragraph divisions]

La Centrale contient d'autres

D'un jeune et de cent autres

Le geste méchant d'un gars [ends with 'accroupi' then onto:]

Et tout cela était saisi, fixé dans la glace d'une discipline dont la sévérité s'accordait avec la sévérité, avec l'austérité même des macs et des truands augmentées par la solitude, par l'abandon qui nous force à être ferme afin de n'être pas abandonné de soi-même. Cela accompli pêle-mêle par des casseurs à l'âme délicate, qui vont toute la journée, les mains cachées dans les manches par respect peut-être, comme les mains des Chinois dans leur kimono, et qui ne voleront jamais, dans les appartements qu'ils dévalisent, posée sur la cheminée, la tirelire des petits enfants.

Et la Centrale est pleine de ces marles, qui sont des hommes hardis dont le travail de perceurs de coffres, de perceurs de plafonds veut qu'ils aillent bosser avec un parapluie sous le bras (pour y faire tomber les gravats du plafond) et des rideaux noirs. Et Mettray n'était pas plus limpide, pas moins troublant. Au contraire, notre jeunesse rêvait encore plus monstrueuse une vie qui l'était déjà par mille faits qui déconcertent.

Au réveil [...]

F243 [...] unique cérémonie. Cette double cérémonie [...]

350 [...] unique cérémonie. Cela est sauvage et fort beau. Cette double cérémonie [...]

F244 Il s'agissait de deux très beaux garçons. Les deux frégates - [...]

350 Il s'agissait de deux très beaux garçons, infants dont l'un nécessairement n'était que le bâtard royal, et sans doute cet enfant de l'amour était-il plus noble que l'autre. Les deux frégates - [...]

F244 [...] noires. Notre monde [...]

351 [...] noires. Que tout de même nous appartenions à un monde lointain, terrible à cause de sa profondeur, de son éloignement du vôtre qui est superficiel et poli! Car notre monde [...]

F245 Mettray et d'ici.

Il ne semble pas que les noblesses [...]

352 Mettray et d'ici. Elle les ennoblit. Je sens que nous touchons là l'origine d'un des phénomènes les plus émouvants de l'Histoire, celui de la noblesse féodale.

Il ne semble pas que les noblesses [...]



F251 [...] coup de queue [...]

359 [...] coup de bite [...]

F253 [...] cette même nuit.

Il n'est pas douteux [...]

361-362 [...] cette même nuit.

Quand, à Mettray, nous nous couchions, c'est alors qu'allaient commencer notre vie, nos amours et nos jeux; à Fontevrault les surveillants bouclaient les cellules et chaque détenu, par ce double tour de clé était un peu plus isolé, avec lui seul, coupé de tous contacts hormis ceux [362] du rêve. Il n'est pas douteux [...]

F253 [...] veiller sur lui. Il m'arrive de parler de la Colonie en disant [...]

362-363 [...] veiller sur lui. Tout naturellement, je pensais que Villeroy avait été désigné par la Voix d'Or, et moi par quelque élégant suivant de la Voix d'Or, [263] quelque voleur rapide, endormi dans une cellule voisine de celle du maître. Il nous fallut longtemps pour apprendre finalement que Jo-la-Voix-d'Or n'existait pas, qu'aucun détenu de ce nom n'avait été enfermé à Fontevrault. Quand nous l'apprîmes par le gardien de Mettray qui avait un frère surveillant à la Centrale, nous n'en fûmes pas tellement étonnés. Chacun de nous cacha son émoi. Mais on peut se demander comment s'était formé cette légende et surtout d'où venaient ces ordres secrets qui paraissaient lancés par la Voix d'Or? Quel phénomène l'avait laissée suintier ici? Il n'y eut sans doute aucune mystification. Personne ne jouait le rôle de Jo, mais chacun de nous si ardemment désirait un dieu, que ce dieu devait naître et se manifester chaque fois que nous avions besoin de lui pour justifier nos actes les plus fous. Un Saint-Jean de dix-huit piges écrivait son évangile. Il arrive encore qu'en parlant d'une chose abstraite, pour la définir, pour la rendre visible, il soit nécessaire d'employer des images. C'est donner à cette chose une vie de plus en plus concrète. Elle se vivifie de cette sève que lui transfusent les images, bientôt elle se détache d'elles et délimitée par des qualificatifs concrets, elle vit de sa propre vie. Ce fut le sort de la Colonie. Il m'arriva d'elle en disant [...]

F255 [...] du même sein que moi.

Il m'apparaissait de plus en plus [...]

365 [...] du même sein que moi.

En découvrant l'irréelle existence de la Voix d'Or, Villeroy ne montra rien de son désarroi. Il continua à donner des ordres émanant de l'on ne sait quel ciel. Divers resta impassible. Il m'apparaissait de plus en plus [...]

F255 'Quelle connerie'. Son visage [...]

365 'Quelle connerie'. Et cette simple expression détachait de lui ses couilles, les mettait à la place de lui, les gonflait, les faisait plus grosses que lui-même. Il disparaissait et, devant nous, ne restaient plus que ces belles couilles rondes et un peu brunes, lourdes, dont chacune emplissait ma bouche de sa rondeur et de sa chaleur. Son visage [...]

[A151 ibidem]

F255 Et froide. Il ne palpait pas [...]

366 Et froide. Il était encore comme quelques poèmes très beaux, mais d'une beauté morte, sans vibration, sans la multitude de battements d'ailes qui s'échappent de certains autres, sortent du marbre, du bronze, et courent, se prolongeant à tel point qu'on ne pourra jamais rien pour les arrêter. Il ne palpait pas [...]

F256 [...] accidentellement. En me disant, [...]

367-8 [...] accidentellement. Puisque rien dans leurs manières ne trahissait aux yeux des copains que deux détenus étaient amants, il fallait que je comptasse sur le hasard pour me signaler ce que [368] j'appelais, à part moi, la trahison de Pierrot. Pour Rocky défunt, et pour moi, je devais le surveiller. Encore que j'enrageasse de savoir qu'il était aimé parce qu'à travers lui, Bulkaen était à la recherche d'Hersir.

C'est sans doute un phénomène poétique qui obligea Bulkaen à s'intéresser tellement à l'ami de Rocky. Pour parler de son pote abandonné, ce caïd dut employer un mot ou plusieurs, qui, spontanément arrivés à sa bouche étaient des poèmes d'une force telle qu'ils obligèrent Bulkaen à piquer une tête dans le rêve. Et même si c'est un personnage faux, lointain, mort ou enlaidi par la misère, que Bulkaen recherchait et aimait, le passage de ce personnage dans la vie de Rocky permettait à Rocky d'être aimé. Et j'étais jaloux de n'avoir pas un pareil attrait. Certes, je pouvais aussi évoquer des jeunes gens, et parler d'eux avec des mots bien habiles, mais il fallait que Dieu voulût bien me faire prononcer, à propos de l'un d'eux, quelques-uns de ces mots magiques, qui eussent inquiété Bulkaen et m'eussent fait aimer de lui, parce que j'avais été aimé de ce jeune amant passé. En effet, deux rivaux peuvent s'aimer. En me disant, [...]

F259 [...] oripeaux magnifiques. C'était un roi [...]

372 [...] oripeaux magnifiques, d'un foulard de soie, d'une chemise de crêpe de Chine blanc brodée rouge et vert, d'une culotte bouffante, de bottes. C'était un maître, c'était un roi [...]

F260 [...] traits mais [...]

372-3 [...] traits (les [373] écrivains disent plutôt buriné), mais [...]

F260 [...] m'aimer.

Divers me dit: [...]

373 [...] m'aimer. Un jour même, le huitième de notre amour, il m'avoua:

- Tu sais à quoi je pense la nuit? Quand on va sortir, on prendra un appartement, avec une salle de bains. On restera que tous deux...

Il était sincère. Il voulait m'aimer. Il luttait de toutes ses forces contre son cœur qui l'obligeait à aimer Rocky et, plus loin que lui, dans le cœur de Rocky, Hersir. Mais ces intentions ne l'empêchaient pas de me faire un mal terrible chaque fois qu'il le pouvait et j'étais sous cette impression douloureuse quand je descendis au mitard où je trouvais Divers, à l'amour de qui j'aurais cédé, si je n'avais été hanté par un Bulkaen insolent et indifférent à mon amitié, lorsqu'il me dit:

[...]

F260 [...] au sérieux. A Mettray [...]

374 [...] au sérieux. Il faut que je m'explique. J'ai pu enfin dire à Divers que je l'aimais. J'ai chanté ma passion sur le ton des aveux profonds, dit gravement des choses graves et fait des gestes qui vont avec. Divers ne s'en moque plus et, surtout, il me laisse faire. A Mettray [...]

F261 [...] oreilles collées, un autre un léger bégaiement [...]

375 [...] oreilles collées, un autre une seule couille, un autre un léger bégaiement [...]  
[A154 ibidem]

F261 [...] un charme. Et il n'est pas impossible [...]

375-6 [...] un charme, si bien que longtemps après, quand je me branlais en pensant à lui, c'est sur-[376]tout la blancheur de sa peau que j'évoquais. Et il n'est pas impossible [...]

F262 [...] l'excrément. Et peut-être [...]

376 [...] l'excrément, et lorsque Divers me dira, en passant près de moi: 'Dans l'amour, plus c'est dégueulasse, plus ça me plaît' en pensée, j'oserai lui 'faire minou', introduire ma langue assez profondément dans cette caverne que j'imagine propre mais odorante, et, la nuit suivante que j'imagine merdeuse. Et peut-être [...]  
[A154 ibidem]

+F264 [...] devant moi.

Je m'accroupis en face du gosse. Villeroy avait dû foncer du premier coup, selon son habitude.

- Allez en vitesse.

Ici devrait suivre la description d'un jeu d'enfants que je vous invite à compléter

Comme Villeroy [...]

378 [...] devant moi. Y va te tailler une plume pendant.

Je m'accroupis en face du gosse. Villeroy avait dû foncer du premier coup, selon son habitude.

-Allez en vitesse, tends bien ta bite.

Et comme je n'allais pas assez vite, de ses deux mains, il ouvrit furieusement ma braguette, saisit ma verge bandée et la plaça lui-même dans la bouche du vautour.  
Comme Villeroy [...]

F265 Oh, mignon [...]

380 Oh, macarelle, mignon [...]

F265 [...] je t'en fouterais un coup [...]

380 [...] je t'en fouterais (et clac!), un coup [...]

F265 [...] qui m'insulta.

Je trahissais [...]

381 [...] qui m'insulta. Ce souvenir ne me touche pas. Je trahissais [...]

F268 [...] peu de nuits, [...]

384 [...] peu de nuit, [...]

F268 [...] corps de Botchako.

Au fur et à mesure [...]

384-385 [...] corps de Botchako.

Nous mêlâmes si bien nos haleines et nos corps, qu'il me dit:

- Jeannot, t'en faudrait une dans la bouche...

Je soupirai

-Une quoi?

- Une bite, mon chou!

Ainsi l'amitié provoquait les mêmes réactions, toujours, ou bien suis-je seul, pris dans un réseau de faits dont les arabesques reviennent toujours sur elles. Je crois que j'avais 'inventé' cette réponse de Bulkaen parce qu'elle reproduisait l'expression la plus

précieuse de la plus précieuse amitié que j'ai trouvée.

L'amitié a ses mystères qui surprennent les âmes basses. Parlerai-je encore dans ce livre du plus tendre des amis, de Michaëli Andritch. Nous volions ensemble à Anvers, des vélos qu'on revendait en Hollande. Il était aussi voluptueux que je pouvais l'être et, s'il joua d'abord le rôle de l'amant, il voulut connaître les joies de l'ami et, très vite, nous ne distinguâmes plus de nos jeux les attraits de l'un et de l'autre. L'amitié nous confondait. Nous possédions deux queues en tout pour notre jouissance. Nous arrivions à ne plus savoir à qui [385] l'une était et à qui l'autre. Si l'une était entièrement enfouie dans une bouche ou ailleurs, il restait l'autre que nos mains se disputaient. Ainsi j'avais pensé que Bulkaen enfin retrouvait, dans son plus haut instinct, l'expression du plus haut amour.

Au fur et à mesure [...]

F268 [...] battant. Le rôle de Bulkaen [...]

385 [...] battant. L'idée d'un être de pure beauté ne me possédait-elle pas obscurément? Et n'ai-je pas donné forme à cette idée en découvrant peu à peu les beautés qui devaient le composer, mais qui ne furent jamais en Bulkaen? Le rôle de Bulkaen [...]

F270 On les appelle les âmes en peine.

Chacune des chutes de mon amour pour Bulkaen [...]

388 On les appelle les âmes en peine.

Au moyen âge, deux jeunes garçons, par un pacte sanglant et visible, d'une marque sur le front, liés au Démon n'eussent pas été plus éloignés du monde que Bulkaen et Rocky. Ils étaient les continuateurs de ces couples audacieux qui se livraient au Diable afin qu'il leur accordât tous les pouvoirs terrestres et d'abord ceux de l'amour. Ils appartenaient au mal.

Chacune des chutes de mon amour pour Bulkaen [...]

F271 [...] il était en sang [...]

390 [...] il était sanglant [...]

F272 Le surveillant, qui [...]

390 Le surveillant Rodiba, qui [...]

F273 [...] l'enfer. La cellule était pareille aux autres et pareille aussi la vie qu'y mènerait Harcamone, mais [...]

392 [...] l'enfer. Ainsi en poésie. La cellule était pareille aux autres et pareille aussi la vie qu'il y mènerait [sic] Harcamone, mais [...]

F283 [...] gabion.

Je sortais [...]

404-5 [...] gabion.

Les châteaux nous bouleversaient. Je dois noter mon épouvante quand j'entendis un colon de la famille A prononcer devant Dudule, le nom de Fréjean:

- Mais c'est un château, dit Dudule. Tu connais Fréjean, toi?

- Oui, répondit le même, ma soeur c'est la châtelaine.

Au cours d'une promenade, je m'étais placé près de Toscano - car nous allions quatre par quatre - et sans m'en rendre compte, j'échangeai avec lui des fleurs, ou des herbes peut-être, poudreuses, cueillies en passant, sur le bord de la route. Machinalement, nous les mîmes à nos bouches. A peine fait, ce double geste parfaitement

simultané déclencha le mécanisme des amours. Peut-être mangeâmes-nous les herbes, je ne sais plus, mais il me plaît de croire que c'est ainsi que nous nous fîmes, sans le savoir, nos premiers aveux d'une tendresse qui devait être fidèle jusqu'à la mort. Villeroy ne dit rien de cela, mais moi-même que savais-je de sa vie secrète?

D'une trappe qui s'ouvre au théâtre, il est normal [405] que personne ne surgisse mais, dans notre chambre, qu'une trappe découpée dans le plancher retombe à minuit sur un être qui disparaît! A vrai dire, elle n'avait pas été découpée: on avait décloué deux planches. Je sortais [...]

F283 [...] faire? Peut-être [...]

405 [...] faire? Puisque nous étions sûrs qu'il n'y avait plus de Voix d'Or. Peut-être [...]

F284 [...] à mon oreille. Les phrases [...]

406 [...] à mon oreille, qui le recueillait comme bouche le sperme. Les phrases [...]  
[A168 ibidem]

+F288 [...] parcourait la Colonie. Harcamone! J'étais [...]

411 [...] parcourait la Colonie. J'étais [...]

F289 [...] sans pouvoir y tomber.

Un jour, et j'en ressentis [...]

412-3 pouvoir y tomber.

.....

J'étais à la répétition générale lorsqu'un paysan ramena un des deux colons évadés (le troisième ayant été fait marron la nuit de la fuite). Il arrive donc, traînant Mono les poignets attachés derrière lui par une corde et du sang coulant sur sa tempe gauche. Nous le vîmes passer, triste d'une tristesse plus affreuse que l'impose le retour d'évasion et l'entrée au quartier. Le paysan venait chercher sa prime: cent francs.

- Mais, dit le sous-directeur, vous n'avez droit qu'à cinquante francs. La Colonie ne donne que cinquante francs par colon évadé qu'on ramène.

- Mais y en a un aut' M'sieur d'Lucé.

- Où est-il?

- Ah ben, v'la. J'l'on laissé dans l'sillon. Mort. J'l'on tué d'un coup de fusil, presque à côté d'la Centrale.

[413] Si l'*amitié* peut mettre dans le même lit, ou hamac, des jeunes hommes ou garçons, le cas est fréquent. Mais il est important que l'un des deux demeure le plus fort et s'active. Il faut aussi que le plus faible se résigne gentiment et, quand il se laisse enfiler, qu'il reste couché sur le dos, afin d'avoir contre le sien le visage de son amant, mais aussi pour n'être plus humilié par trop de différence dans la posture. Que tout cela ait l'air d'un jeu et ne soit pas l'essentiel dans l'amitié. Jeu agréable, mais dont l'amitié pourrait se passer car, avec Toscano, je ne fis jamais l'amour. Il n'est pas impossible que le fait que nous fussions les deux frégates les plus choyés, au lieu de nous heurter, au contraire, nous unit. Nous nous aimions dans l'amour que les autres nous portaient. Néanmoins, j'étais heureux de savoir que jusqu'à présent, il avait résisté à Deloffre, et comme avec Deloffre, aux yeux de toute la Colonie pour un petit mec qui défend bien son froc. Puisqu'un jour, et j'en ressentis une peine immense, nous apprîmes qu'il ['Toscano' added to 'Collection Folio' text p. 289] s'était enfin laissé mettre [...]

F290 [...] l'Éternel retour. La faute que Toscano [...]

415 [...] l'Éternel retour. Mais on comprendra que cette interprétation ne permette pas

au poète d'employer de tels gestes qui le font pénétrer au cœur même d'intimités qu'il viole ainsi puisque ce sont les gestes de morts ou de mortes. Il oeuvre donc dans la nuit. La nuit, le poète secrète de la mort. Et lui seul peut s'occuper de cette gesticulation car, à voler des attitudes vous risquez de poursuivre jusqu'au bout le destin dangereux des héros. Cela est arrivé. La faute que Toscano [...]

F291 [...] sur lui. Il avait cédé.

415-416 [...] sur lui et qui sa verge impatiente toucha son [416] ventre chaud. Il avait cédé.

F292 [...] moussait.

A mesure [...]

417 [...] moussait. Parfois, son coude heurtait ma verge dressée.

A mesure [...]

F292 [...] entre ses pieds. Il foulait [...]

418 [...] entre ses pieds. C'était un bras musclé au soleil, jauni des fleurs de narcisse étoilant une prairie. Il foulait [...]

F292 [...] sa main, mais [...]

418 [...] sa main et voulus la porter à ma verge, mais [...]

[A174 ibidem]

F293 [...] vapeur.

Depuis que je l'ai revu [...]

418-9 [...] vapeur.

Au milieu de ces débauches, les répétitions théâtrales continuaient auxquelles prenait part Divers qui avait accepté de jouer le rôle de la vieille comtesse Solange dans une pièce où j'étais sa fille. Nous poursuivions notre jeu de cache-cache. Il m'entourait la taille de son bras en m'appelant: 'mon petit tambour'. Quand il me dit cela pour la première fois, j'eus tant de bonheur que ce m'en fit mal. Les jours qu'il nettoyait du dortoir, son tambour, je sentais sur ma peau une caresse de ses mains, et je crois que j'aurais reconnu entre cent autres le son du sien qu'il appelait: 'Zmik'.

C'est Dudule - le sous-dirlo - qui dirigeait les répétitions. De nous envoyer des répliques que nous trouvions drôles nous divertissait. J'étais la fille de [419] Divers et je lui parlais comme un cœur, sans le truchement des lèvres, parle à sa mère. Et tout alla bien jusqu'au jour où il fallut mettre les costumes. Quand il me vit devant lui dans ma robe à traîne, Divers eut un sourire coquin, mais quand il dut revêtir la sienne, en faille noire, à peine l'avait-il passé, par le haut, que la rage le prit. Il déchira la soie en face de M. de Lucé qui n'y comprenait rien. Il s'enfuit en jurant et ses jurons étaient le hurlement déchirant d'un chien aux couilles dévorées, déchiquetées par une louve. De huit jours, il ne m'adressa la parole. Le sous-directeur choisit un mino pour faire la comtesse.

Après avoir dit que Divers était une tante qui avait dû se cacher, ce souvenir m'inquiète pour la contradiction qu'il m'apporte. Depuis que je l'ai revu, [...]

F293 [...] extravagantes. Ainsi [...]

420 [...] extravagantes, dressées sur un socle monumental, personnages de rêves, de dormeurs par leurs proportions fabuleuses et leurs gestes stupéfaits (il y a des gens du peuple - public - qui croient que les funérailles de Sarah Bernhardt furent nationales et

que son corps embaumé repose au Panthéon). Ainsi [...]

F295 [...] sa personne. Ses pieds [...]

422 [...] sa personne. Le moindre de ses gestes dessinait le fantôme d'une fleur de lys.  
Ses pieds [...]

F296 [...] aux jeux violents.

Divers me disait [...]

424 [...] aux jeux si violents qu'ils donnent quelquefois la mort.

Divers me disait [...]

F297 c'est l'odeur des vergers! Harcamone, paf enrubanné, ivre [...]

425 des vergers, l'odeur des verges! Harcamone, verge d'un pirate, paf enrubanné, ivre [...]

F297 [...] fermés.

C'est moi qui [...]

425-6 [...] fermés.

Les dessins sur le mur, effrayants, avec des dents terribles, des sexes difformes, sont comme les dessins fantastiques, les formes effrayantes que les Chinois inconnus ont gravés dans l'ivoire et peints sur les laques quand la peur les inspirait. Chaque artiste avait vu ces démons, ces animaux. Il y croyait. Pour qu'ils sortent au bout de ses doigts, il fallait qu'ils existassent en lui, informes si l'on peut dire: une tête ici, une corne, un pied, une langue là-bas, mais sous une autre forme - de lignes destinées - puis la peur a donné corps et signification à ces lignes, a rassemblé les parcelles. La peur inspirait l'artiste accroupi en lui-même. Il s'affermissait dans la peur, mais ses mains les caressant apprivoisaient les monstres. Nous les voyons aujourd'hui et découvrons à ces ivoires une poésie délicieuse, car les formes entremêlées n'ont plus pour nous la signification réaliste qu'elles avaient pour l'artiste. Mais comme le front des hommes est le même quand changent les formes des fantasmagories surgies de la peur, ces monstres éveillent en nous un écho atténué de peurs passées, des peurs de l'enfance peut-être. J'éprouve un léger trouble. Les ivoires volés, les jades, ne m'effrayent [426] pas, ma chambre n'est pas hantée par leur présence par des qualités autres que leurs qualités d'objets volés, il faut que je les examine de près pour être bouleversé. C'est ce trouble qu'en voyant les monstres on appelle poésie. Sur le mur de la cellule, les dessins des voyous, qui sont restés à trente ans proches des voyous de vingt ans, avec le même système de représentation, pourraient vous causer ce trouble léger et vous faire croire à la poésie: mais chez moi, le trouble est trop grand car mon enfance est trop proche - ou, plutôt, je vis ma véritable enfance - je reconnais sur le mur avec trop de précision tout ce qui me préoccupe, et ce qui se passe en moi est sans douceur, le trouble qui m'agite n'est pas léger, je ne puis parler de la prison, des gardiens, de la justice, enfin la peur du malheur qui a pris sur le mur la forme de dessins effrayants.

C'est moi qui [...]

F298 [...] une haie de lauriers.

Mais le sort avait [...]

428 [...] une haie de lauriers. Il se baisa sans doute - y en fouta une troussée, disions-nous - et fuma les mégots que le gosse avait récoltés pour lui durant sa maladie. Car les vautours (ou frégates) ne fumaient jamais, mais, généralement chargés de nettoyer les bureaux, ils prospectaient les crachoirs pour y trouver des mégots réservés à leurs

hommes. Renaudeau-d'Arc était gentil. Il aimait son mac à qui il était fidèle. Un jour, il eut le malheur de blesser au bras avec un tranchet volé à la cordonnerie, un autre vautour, celui que j'appelai quelque part, dans une lettre ou dans un poème: 'L'Enfant-Soleil' et qui mourut de sa blessure. L'origine de la querelle était que soeur Zoé, en regardant par la fenêtre de sa chambre, vit Renaudeau-d'Arc entre les haies de lauriers. Elle le confondit avec l'Enfant-Soleil et accusa celui-ci.

Mais le sort avait [...]

F299 [...] jupes. Sur un canapé [...]

429 [...] jupes, sa braguette ouverte d'où s'échappait au milieu des flots de soie de sa chemise la queue bondissante et par ma main vite empoignée. Sur un canapé [...]

F300 [...] dut le séduire.

Pendant plus d'un an, [...]

430 [...] dut le séduire. Je suis hanté par cette idée qu'à toute circonstance périlleuse il existe une issue. Même la situation la plus difficile a sa solution, n'en eût-elle qu'une seule. Il suffit d'un instant de génie pour vous la faire découvrir. Le fameux problème de la chambre hermétique doit avoir sa solution. Ainsi pour m'évader de prison, il existe un moyen simple, net, élégant, mais que sans doute je ne trouverai jamais, encore que bien souvent j'ai eu l'impression - une sorte d'avertissement intérieur - de m'en approcher très près.

Pendant plus d'un an, [...]

F304 [...] chanter un autre.

Je n'ai pas la prétention [...]

436 [...] chanter un autre.

Si pour l'écrire, j'ai choisi dans ma vie punie cette aventure banale, c'est que le destin lui-même vous avait chargé de tous les atours essentiels qui devaient dominer ma vie: vous étiez la beauté offensée et victorieuse, la jeunesse, l'audace avec son sourire, vous étiez la preuve que l'infamie, à laquelle les bonnes [437] gens font les cornes, a le visage radieux, enfin vous étiez Mettray tout entier; vous étiez ma jeunesse et c'est elle que je tenais prisonnière contre moi les rares fois que je vous tins dans mes bras.

J'écris ce livre, Bulkaen, pour me revivre et me revivre en vous. J'entre à tâtons dans vos méandres, dans vos couloirs, je circule en vous le plus lentement possible car l'être que je recrée a la délicatesse du rêve et ses cruelles surprises. Mon livre vous appelle. Je crie après vous et mon cri vous reforme à mesure, mais qu'on n'oublie pas que partir à la recherche d'un amant mort, c'est se perdre soi-même et, en le poussant, si ma voix s'est chargée de toutes les musiques du ciel et de la terre, mon cri est d'un noyé. Mais tu vivras par moi, Guy. Qu'après cette mort que j'ose t'accorder, tu puisses sortir de la défroque de Bulkaen et vivre.

Je n'ai pas la prétention [...]

F305 [...] à la fin du livre.

Parlerai-je [...]

437-9 [...] à la fin du livre.

Ne vis-je pas un jour gravé sur le mur de la salle d'honneur, sans doute avec un clou, un dessin obscène [438] qui voulait représenter le Directeur avec, dans le cul, une énorme bite appartenant à Divers, car cette queue était seule, détachée, mais se terminait à sa base par 'Divers', enfermé dans un nuage. On avait signé: 'Les cinq gosses de l'école du crime.' J'ai rappelé cela à Divers. Il a souri, puis haussé les épaules.



Divers, Villeroy, Harcamone, Bulkaen? Des astres. Les astres chantent. J'entends chanter les astres. Par la fenêtre on a jeté ce cri (c'est une voix d'adolescent): 'Oh je t'aimerai mon amour!' avec l'accent d'une si indicible ferveur que je ne puis que penser qu'il s'agissait d'un gamin qui se l'entendit à lui-même crier par une amante affolée ou d'un môme parodiant une comédienne géniale, et que la parodie, en sincérité poignante, dépasse le modèle. Maintenant que la nuit vient d'être déchirée, il peut, il doit, surgir un miracle de la ténèbre béante. Beaux monstres de mon ciel souterrain, revenez à mes yeux. Le coeur aux aguets, j'attends. J'écoute. Je danse sur la pointe d'une épée. 'Oh! je t'aimerai mon amour' ce cri ne fera jaillir d'autre merveille que le souvenir et ma confusion avec celui que je poussai, un matin, au réveil. Divers dormait à l'un et moi à l'autre bout du dortoir. Assis dans mon hamac par le sursaut du réveil, le buste dressé, je lui criai: 'Oh, Divers, j'ai rêvé à toi cette nuit.' Quelqu'un me dit innocemment, dans l'empâtement du [439] matin: 'Tu l'aimes, hein?' - 'Oh, oui!'. Ce cri s'enfuit de ma bouche malgré moi et dit si bien et si fort mon amour qu'il fut là, visible à tous les yeux et aux miens, et que je flambai de la honte de m'apercevoir soudain nu.

Parlerai-je [...]

F305 [...] fut une fête, avec immolation [...]

440 [...] fut une fête splendide, avec immolation [...]

F306 [...] un énorme Harcamone.

Mais les adolescents [...]

440 [...] un énorme Harcamone.

Quel adolescent, même ironique, me dira: 'Comme je t'aimerais, mon amour!' conditionnel émouvant, chargé de promesse, plus émouvant qu'un futur certain. Mais les adolescents [...]

F307 [...] criait-elle. Ainsi [...]

442 [...] criait-elle. Ces soubresauts violents que j'avais quand Villeroy durement m'enfilait, la France les avait eus. Mais la queue s'amollit, le mâle se retire. Ainsi [...]

F308 [...] de Dorée, [...]

443 [...] de dorée, [...]

F310 [...] et la mort.

Mais Bulkaen [...]

446 [...] et la mort. Je veux mourir.

Mais Bulkaen [...]

F312 [...] conscience de lui-même.

Daniel avait repris [...]

448-9 [...] conscience lui-même.

J'avais abandonné le gosse qui avait servi à mon initiation virile, et j'aimais Toscano de l'amour le plus tendre. Et j'eus ma première peine de coeur, un jour, au réfectoire. Toscano mangeait à la même table que Divers. Je les regardais depuis un moment, et il me semblait qu'ils riaient sous cape. Le lecteur - qui était Harcamone - lut un passage qui devait être drôle car il fit rire tous les colons et même le chef de famille, et Toscano rit plus fort que les autres, si fort que je compris que ce rire n'était pas provoqué par la phrase du livre. Il venait de trop loin, et il avait été contenu trop longtemps. Pour se libérer, il avait pris le prétexte et l'alibi du rire général, mais moi je

devinai bien qu'il était au bord de Toscano depuis le début du repas, suscité par des mots simplement dégoûtants, mais drôles [449] pour lui, que lui murmurait Divers. Je me sentis trahi dans mes deux âmes: d'amoureuse et d'amant.

Daniel avait repris [...]

F315 'Ton panier à crotte' 'Je vais secouer ton panier à crotte' (à 'crottes en l'entendant, l'enfant ajoutait l's infâme). On peut dire [...]

452 'Ton panier à crottes.' 'J'vais secouer ton panier à crottes' (à 'crottes' en l'entendant, l'enfant ajoutait l'infâme). A l'adresse de l'enfant apeuré, ils avaient encore un bruit de lèvres imitant le cloc mouillé de la bite entrant dans le, ou ressortant du, cul trempé de salive et de sueur, que les durs appelaient 'l'fouinedé ou le trou badour'. On peut dire [...]

[A187 *ibidem*]

F318 [...] avec Bulkaen.

Pour avoir été à Mettray, [...]

456-7 [...] avec Bulkaen.

Sous la vie officielle qu'elles mènent, les grandes [457] personnes et la société ont une vie secrète qu'elles ignorent, et qui, si on la met à jour, révèle de plus étranges folies et merveilles qu'un poète n'en inventa jamais. Après sa campagne contre Mettray, menée dans *Paris-Soir*, Alexis Danan me dit qu'il fut accusé par la famille Guépin d'avoir fait mourir de chagrin le père Guépin en écrivant que le vieux était un criminel martyrisant les enfants.

Pour avoir été à Mettray, [...]

F318 [...] la révolte.

On ne vit pas quarante [...]

457-8 [...] la révolte.

A Lemercier, jeune paysan breton de seize ans, qui eut le courage un jour, à midi, de lui présenter une assiette où restait un morceau de viande pourrie, vert et puant, en lui disant: 'On n'en donnerait pas à un cochon', M. le marquis de Lucé (Dudule) sous-directeur de la Colonie de redressement moral de Mettray, décoré des palmes académiques, répondit finement:

- C'est donc que tu es moins qu'un cochon.

Imaginez alors la consternation du Directeur, du sous-Directeur, de l'Aumônier, de la Supérieure, quand ils lurent les articles de Danan. Ils furent scandalisés [458] car ils étaient irresponsables. On ne vit pas quarante [...]

F319 [...] *Marseillaise* muette.

458 [...] *Marseillaise* affolée.

F319 [...] sitôt.

La mort de Bulkaen [...]

459 [...] sitôt. Je fus témoin de scènes d'une atrocité magnifique et moi-même un objet torturé. Quand il vit entre mes mains le briquet de Deloffre, Villeroy ne pensant pas qu'il m'avait été donné par Toscano qui le tenait, en effet, de son marle, la jalousie l'emporta et, le soir même, se penchant sur mon hamac, il me dit que j'étais un petite gueule de con, en me reprochant ma trahison. Je tentai deux secondes de m'expliquer mais mes paroles le rendant plus furieux encore, je me tus. Cette nuit, nous ne fîmes pas l'amour.

La mort de Bulkaen [...]

F320 Interroge la Fouine [...]

459 Interroge la fouine [...]

F320 [...] écoutez encore [...]

460 [...] écoutez ce prodige [...]

F321 [...] pour la première fois, l'aima. Il se souvient [...]

461 [...] pour la première fois, le pénétra. Il connut d'abord la douleur brutale, brûlante, mais cela ne fut rien, comparé à l'horreur qui le saisit, me dit-il, en sentant s'écouler le sperme de l'aigle. Il se souvient [...]

F321 [...] de marles?

Pour Winter, [...]

461 [...] de marles? Mais la beauté s'acharnant sur eux les traînait dans la boue.

Pour Winter, [...]

F321 [...] membre blessé.

Sa jolie gueule [...]

462 [...] membre blessé. Et cette honte légère donnait une étonnante douceur au récit de ses exploits: aux Champs-Élysées, il s'accoudait à un bec de gaz et, sur une flûte de bambou, il jouait des airs de charmeur de serpents. Toutes les femmes de Paris, fascinées, accouraient de très loin auprès du fin marlou en casquette. Elles restaient, formant autour de lui un cercle, arrêtées par l'infranchissable barrière musicale. Elles regardaient ses doigts boucher et déboucher les trous du bambou et sa bouche, sur le côté de la flûte souffler des airs inventés. Quand il s'arrêtait de jouer, c'était, du bout de sa flûte tendue, pour désigner une fille qui, d'elle-même partait trimer à Barbès ou à Pigalle pour lui gagner du fric.

Sa jolie gueule [...]

F323 [...] langue en vrille.

Divers avait des gestes [...]

464 [...] langue en vrille.

Ce qui sort du nez doit être mouché, puis perdu. Il faut encore que je me cache pour sucer le doigt qui vient d'explorer ma narine. Je ne sais plus si cette phrase, aussitôt dite, fut décisive mais, quand un soir, Villeroy voulut, pour la première fois, selon son expression: 'Me bouffer la chatte', il ramena contre le mien son visage mouillé de ma sueur odorante et de son propre foutre qu'il y avait déjà déposé. Alors, je léchai sa moue boueuse et j'enfonçai ma langue dans ses narines, heureux de faire miens les déchets de son corps.

Divers avait des gestes [...]

[A192 ibidem]

F323 [...] m'y voici fait.

Divers a été [...]

464 [...] m'y voici fait et, grâce à lui, en humeur d'enculer tous les girons de la tôle.

Divers a été [...]

[A191-192 ibidem]

F323 [...] collants. Cet endroit [...]

465 [...] collants jusqu'à ce que le paquet de sa queue et de ses couilles s'y distinguât en

relief. Sa queue était parfaite de forme. Elle vibrait parfois, communiquant ses frissons à l'étoffe. Ses couilles étaient assez grosses, mais la peau en était si tendue qu'elles ne pendaient pas. Il ne les portait pas sous lui, mais devant. Cet endroit [...]  
[A192 *ibidem*]

F324 [...] de son sexe.

466 [...] de ses couilles et de sa queue.

F324 [...] nuque. Je me sentais porté par lui.

466 [...] nuque, sa verge contre mes fesses. Je me sentais porté par lui.

F325 [...] profondément et qu'il s'abattit, [...]

467 [...] profondément sa verge, et [...]

F328 [...] me la montre.

Huit jours [...]

471 [...] me la montre. Huit jours [...]

F329 [...] j'ai parlé.

Il fallait que Deloffre fût Parisien, [...]

472-4 [...] j'ai parlé.

Après ma sortie du quartier et avant que Villeroy ne soit parti, je restais souvent seul la nuit, dans mon hamac. Dès les premières minutes de tiédeur, dans le sac à couchage, je pensais à la volupté que nous avons connue ensemble. Je réinventais ses admirables jeux. Avec des délicatesses infinies, pour ne pas faire bouger la tringle, je me branlais. Quand Divers revenait des cabinets, en passant devant moi, il me disait dans l'oreille: 'Tu te fréquentes?' et il s'esquivait, léger. Puis je rêvais, éveillé. J'allais habiter une maison confortable, au bord d'un lac, dans une campagne sauvage. [473] Détail curieux, cette maison, par son architecture rappelait toujours, et quelquefois avec beaucoup d'exactitude, une des familles de Mettray, avec l'escalier extérieur, son unique étage et son rez-de-chaussée. Je dois noter que, jusqu'à présent, en évoquant la Colonie, aucun des détails que je m'efforçais de rendre aussi près que possible n'a pu me rappeler ce goût particulier qu'elle avait; or, en parlant de ces rêveries, je viens, ce goût, cette saveur très propres, de les retrouver. L'évocation de ces rêveries me replonge au coeur parfumé de Mettray, fait de moi pour trois secondes, un colon: j'ai revécu Mettray. Dans la maison, j'ordonnais des pièces agréables sur le lac et je les meublais avec soin. C'est le moyen que j'avais trouvé de rendre plus douce notre demeure. Mais j'avais raison de dire que l'influence de la Colonie auréolait ma vie, car les trois maisons qu'à vingt-deux, vingt-quatre et vingt-sept ans je louai, après les avoir louées je m'aperçus qu'elles étaient l'image assez exacte de la famille B. Et voilà qui m'aide à comprendre que les ouvriers dédaignant une littérature qui les peint, se précipitent au cinéma qui leur montre des palais et qu'ils lisent les romans populaires bourrés de descriptions d'appartements splendides. Ce luxe, au fond duquel ils s'enlisent, leur offre la sécurité, la paix. Une porte close, les lampes éteintes, et c'est la certitude de passer une heure avec [474] des êtres et des choses dont l'existence est avouable, sûre, inattaquable. Si j'avais cette maison, je rêvais aussi d'avoir un château. Je l'avais repéré lors d'une promenade écartée de la Colonie. Je jouissais de savoir seulement qu'il existait, de pierres massives, tenant bien au sol par ses caves et ses souterrains, s'enfonçant loin dans la terre, écrasé par un toit de plomb et d'ardoises, alourdi encore d'épaisses cheminées chargées d'écussons armoriés. Et, pour plus de sûreté, il n'était pas bâti parmi les bois, dont les branches et

les murmures pourraient l'alléger, ni auprès d'un étang où un brouillard magique le ferait apparaître ou disparaître, ni sur une colline environnée d'air pur et qui le présenterait, de dos ou de face, au soleil pour le nimber. Rien de lui ne pouvait me laisser croire qu'il s'agît d'un château de rêve car je l'avais désigné au beau milieu d'une petite ville de province habitée par des bourgeois positifs.

Que ces nuits m'étaient chères! Car notre vie nocturne, dans son souterrain, était légère. Nous la faisons ce que nous voulions qu'elle fût, tandis que nos journées, aux charges, aux devoirs imposées, s'écoulaient dans la torpeur moite d'un cauchemar angoissant. Le soleil de midi était notre soleil de minuit.

Il fallait que Deloffre fût Parisien, [...]

F330 [...] mort? Les tractions [...]

475 [...] mort? Il banda. Les tractions [...]

F331 Pour moi, maintenant, Bulkaen [...]

476 Pour moi, maintnaent, Bulkaen [...]

F331 Personne ne rit.

Enfin, il eut un moment [...]

477 Personne ne rit. A propos de nos cultes, il n'y a plus d'expérience et de compréhension chez un vieux de la vieille, chez un ancien joyeux, ou un ancien colon, que chez le plus subtil psychiatre, c'est moi qui vous le dis.

Enfin, il eut un moment [...]

F331 [...] pour le calmer.

Depuis, j'ai passé [...]

477-8 [...] pour le calmer.

Un jour, nous vîmes venir à la Colonie le gardien de Fontevrault, dont le frère était surveillant ici. Tous les deux étaient très beaux et avaient environ vingt-cinq ans. Le plus jeune était à la Centrale. Sa petite gueule de vache, cornée, était enveloppée de boucles blondes.

[478] Ce n'est que maintenant que je peux recoller les morceaux de la vie secrète des durs à la salle de discipline. Je suis passé par là. La salle émettait jusqu'à nous, jusqu'à nos groupes, jusqu'à nos hamacs, des ondes, des fluides que nous recevions, la tête sous nos ailes, et croyions voir des marlous géants marcher silencieusement les jambes écartées, les mains dans les poches ou, pis encore, les bras croisés sur la poitrine. Quand ils le voulaient, pensions-nous, ils s'arrêtaient, s'accotaient au mur et si le gâfe faisait une observation, ils le traitaient de bourrique; parfois, ils lui caressaient la gueule ou, suprême bonheur, l'allongeant sur le plancher, ils l'enfilaient. Le garde sortait de l'aventure angélicisé et il arrivait chez nous, officiellement pour voir son frère, mais secrètement porteur d'un ordre, d'un message dicté par la Voix d'Or et destiné au plus beau des colons.

Depuis, j'ai passé [...]

F332 [...] au courant. Nous étions [...]

479 [...] au courant. Pour un instant ressuscita parmi nous l'ombre morte de Jo-la-Voix-d'Or, car nous avons le pressentiment qu'il était le chef de la révolte, l'instigateur. Nous étions [...]

F333 [...] affairé. Les vautours mis [...]

480 [...] affairé. Toutefois, un observateur attentif, doué du sens du merveilleux, eût reconnu que nous étions comme allégés, transportés par l'espoir. Les vautours mis [...]

F333 [...] cette réussite.

L'idée d'évasion [...]

481 [...] cette réussite. Les colons ne tenaient pas à se révolter - ils ne se révoltaient pas profondément - parce qu'ils ne subissaient aucune contrainte intérieure. Ils n'avaient pas de lois morales. Les jeunes bourgeois se révoltent.

L'idée d'évasion [...]

F334 au lundi.

Je ne saurais dire [...]

481-2 au lundi.

Quand on envoya Carletti, le plus beau des hommes, à la salle de discipline, et que battu par le gâfe aux [482] yeux de fleurs, j'entendis ses cris monter jusqu'à moi, je n'avais pas plus honte que lorsque je vis pris les sept marlous principaux, meneurs de la révolte. Mais je ne saurais dire [...]

F335 [...] petite femme'.

La vraie révolte [...]

484 [...] petite femme'. Et si je veux dans ma solitude connaître la joie pure, celle que l'on s'accorde à de rares occasions, lorsqu'on a le courage de se jeter au fond de soi, je rappelle à moi la stature impassible du mac volontaire. Je retrouve ses cuisses pareilles aux pylônes où s'enroulent les glycines. Et moi, je suis son ange de seize ans. A quelque jeune voyou que je rencontre à la promenade, je vole le visage. J'en enregistre tous les traits. La nuit, je révèle ce visage et je le coiffe. Avec lui, je m'offre à ce que je me rappelle de Van Roy. Cela est bien si j'ai, dans la journée, rencontré un gosse, un jeunot, mais tout se complique quand je n'ai vu que des costauds séduisants.

La vraie révolte [...]

F340 [...] avec lui-même. Ainsi [...]

490 [...] avec lui-même, et c'est de ce désir qu'est sortie la pièce de théâtre que j'ai intitulée: Journée Castillanne. Ainsi [...]

F341 [...] l'escalier. Mais cette interprétation était erronée.

Si l'habituelle sainteté [...]

491 [...] l'escalier. Selon le sens qu'on accorde vulgairement au mot, j'idéalise l'assassin, et c'est la clarté même de mon amour pour Bulkaen - que je voyais sous les traits d'un chevalier - qui tendait à me le faire paraître ainsi, héros selon les hommes. Mais cette interprétation était erronée. L'essence même du meurtre, de ce meurtre auquel s'était livré Harcamone, et vers quoi j'aspirais, n'était pas de lumière, mais de nuit.

Si l'habituelle sainteté [...]

F343 [...] agilité. Il aimait [...]

494 [...] agilité. Ils vivent sur le souvenir de quelques jours et de quelques nuits étincelantes, alors qu'ils dépensèrent dans les bars les plus élégants le fruit d'un dangereux cambriolage, et ce souvenir des lumières, des bouteilles, des parfums, des alcools et des fées, illumine maintenant la plus sombre des vies et sert de point de départ à ces rêves que n'interrompent même plus les cris, les bagarres, ni les punitions, Bulkaen était un de ces personnages. Il aimait [...]

F343 [...] choisi.

Comme d'autres [...]

494 [...] choisi. Comme d'autres [...]

F344 JE PRENDS LA PEINE A MON COMPTE ET JE PARLE.

495 Je prends la peine à mon compte et je parle.

F346 no double space after 'l'arrêtèrent...'

F347 [...] une grande attention.

499 [...] une grande attention!

F349 [...] son sexe sans entendre [...]

502 [...] sa queue lourde sans entendre [...]

F350 [...] pour qu'il me comprît.

Il regagna son lit [...]

503 [...] pour qu'il me comprît.

Oh! qu'il était, ce mec au petit front têtu, un jeune dieu dévêtu dont la verge mouillée, bondissante, m'a traversé!

Il regagna son lit [...]

F352 [...] par une ficelle, elle sauta). Je quittais Harcamone. Je trahissais Harcamone.

505 [...] par une ficelle). La ficelle sauta. Divers était déjà à ma queue, et déjà sa bouche et sa langue la travaillaient. Je quittais Harcamone. J'allongeai bien mes jambes, je dégageai mon ventre. Je trahissais Harcamone.

F353 [...] contre le mur. En même temps [...]

506 [...] contre le mur. Il banda. En même temps [...]

F355 [...] grelottant.

Il fallait un support [...]

509-510 [...] grelottant.

Mon dégoût pour une imagination qui ne peut concevoir en vue de mon bonheur futur, qui n'est plus, ne pouvant plus l'être, dirigée vers l'avenir (car les plus extravagantes conceptions, les idées, les aventures inventées dans ma solitude et mon impuissance, l'étaient toujours avec l'espoir d'une réalisation, proche ou éloignée - je n'oeuvrais jamais inutilement; toutes les débauches dont les facultés fabulatrices étaient des projets, jamais n'eurent pour but de corriger ma vie écoulée, transformer les événements passés - mais aujourd'hui je n'ai plus d'espoir, et mon imagination me gêne), mon dégoût pour mon imagination toujours déçue m'a fait la refouler en moi. Peut-être est-ce elle qui veut se libérer. Certaine de ne pouvoir être employée pour organiser mon avenir dans le bonheur, elle me procure ces visions et ces rêves qui n'ont plus aucune destination utile et ne s'embarrassent pas du vraisemblable. Visions et rêves, bénéficiant de ce qui, lors des mes rêveries pratiques, était en eux invraisemblable - à tel point qu'ils échouèrent - me mettent au contact du merveilleux à l'état pur. Sans doute avant cela, tout merveilleux n'était pas absent des mes rêveries, mais il était altéré par des considérations pratiques. J'ajouterai à cela que mon abandon pour (ou [510] de ce ce [sic] que j'appelai) les puissances poétiques, c'est-à-dire d'enchantement me faisait être comme happé par les choses et les gens (en effet, le monde ne cessait de m'avaler, de

m'engloutir dans un sein où du reste j'éprouvais un épouvantable bien-être). Cet abandon me permet d'examiner avec plus de sang-froid les choses et les gens, et mon regard, devenu plus aigu, trouve assez de force pour résister à la fascination (qui fut toujours fascination amoureuse). Je ne tombe plus, mais je porte, je projette hors de moi, débarrassées de leurs dangereux charmes physiques toutes ces beautés qui ne risquent plus de m'enliser puisqu'à leur égard aussi, j'ai perdu tout l'espoir et je sais que je n'aurai pas le temps d'inventer, ni d'organiser une autre vie, car je vais à la mort avec une rapidité folle, entraîné par l'allure de Bulkaen. Son allure m'entraînera très loin, ou très près, dans quel état. Bulkaen file! Je suis Brunehaut à la queue du cheval.

Il fallait un support [...]

F359 [...] son sexe surgit [...]

515 [...] sa verge surgit [...]

F360 [...] il s'affala.

Personne ne pouvait [...]

517 [...] il s'affala. Qu'il rentre! Qu'il rentre!

Personne ne pouvait [...]

F360 [...] un mot de journaliste.

517 [...] un mot de mauvais journaliste.

F362 [...] kolo...Nous [...]

519 [...] kolak... Nous [...]

F362 Uni à lui, ma fatigue [...]

520 Uni à lui par ma verge à sa bouche, ma fatigue [...]

F365 [...] guillotine [...]

522 [...] guillottine [...]

F365 [...] l'Univers [...]

523 [...] l'univers [...]

F366 [...] pénétrer dans la bouche. Ils [...]

523-4 [...] pénétrer dans l'étonnante [524] bouche entr'ouverte. Ils [...]

F369 [...] ce regard profond.

J'entendis le pas [...]

528 [...] ce regard profond. Ce qui dura la chute... Les jupes ballonnantes de l'aumônier, du juge, de l'avocat, les soutinrent et leur permirent une descente en douceur, malgré leur bouche ouverte par la frayeur et la verticalité et malgré leurs gestes effarés pour s'accrocher à une paroi dure et lisse comme le marbre. Le bourreau descendit plus brutalement. Enfin il touchèrent un fond solide, soupirèrent, et, rouvrant leurs yeux, ils se virent dans la cellule, en face d'Harcamone qui les regardait en souriant, vêtu seulement de sa chemise de toile blanche et dure et de son pantalon de bure...

J'entendis le pas [...]

F372 [...] de son pouvoir.

532 [...] pouvoir magique.



F373 [...] amitié pour Rocky. Je lutte [...]

533 [...] amitié pour René. Je lutte [...]

F373 [...] une complicité plus minutieuse - [...]

533 [...] une complicité plus terrible - [...]

F374 Bulkaen préférer Rocky. Enfin, je sais que je ne pourrai venir à bout de celui-ci parce qu'il [...]

534 Bulkaen préférer René. Enfin, je sais que je ne pourrai venir à bout de René parce qu'il [...]

F375 [...] de peplum antique, blottissant sa tête [...]

535 [...] de peplum antique (le manteau de Monna Vanna) blottissant sa tête [...].

+F376 La Santé. Prison des Tourelles, 1943.

537 [no place and date mentioned].

## 5.3 APPENDIX C

*Querelle de Brest*, excisions and variants

'tous droits réservés à la succession de Jean Genet'

Page references to a contextualising sample from the *OEuvres complètes* edition of 1953 are followed by the text of the subscribers' edition (with page references to the Gallimard 'Collection L'imaginaire' reprint of 1981 reproduced within parentheses (...), once again to aid contextualisation).

[preface, found only in subscribers' edition]

Une brusque lassitude nous a fait abandonner 'Querelle' que déjà s'effiloçait. Un an après (J'écris cette note en septembre 1947) voici qu'il se reforme en nous, qu'il y impose sa turbulente et joyeuse culpabilité. Nous allons regrouper ses aventures sous le titre: 'Capable du fait'. L'ouvrage fini l'année prochaine au printemps, nous pourrons le vendre à l'automne.

176 [...] sur le 'Vengeur'

*Constamment* [...]

(12) [...] sur 'le Vengeur'.

Les couvreurs travaillent sur les toits des bâtiments de l'Amirauté. Ils sont à plat, couchés comme sur une vague, dans la solitude d'un ciel gris, loin des hommes qui marchent sur le sol. On ne les entend pas. Ils sont perdus en mer. Chacun sur un versant du toit, ils se font face, ils rampent, ils se mesurent du buste dressé, ils échangent du tabac.

*Constamment* [...]

177-178 [...] soleil surnaturel.

Eux-mêmes volant [...]

(14-15) [...] d'un soleil surnaturel. Qu'afin de dérober à l'ennemi des plans précieux dont la connaissance nous sauvera, se prépare un agent secret, le but qu'il poursuit concerne si précisément notre destin, que nous sommes attachés, suspendus à sa réussite, et ce but s'en avère d'une telle noblesse qu'à la pensée de celui qui le réalisera, la poitrine se gonfle d'émotion, de nos yeux coulent des larmes, cependant que lui-même s'entraîne à sa tâche avec une froide méthode. Examinant les plus efficaces, il essaie des techniques, bref, il poursuit une expérience. Ainsi à l'accomplissement d'un acte que nous devons garder secret, que nous conserverons parce qu'il est inavouable, et qu'il doit se commettre dans les ténèbres dont il sera la justification, nous apportons parfois une lucidité glacée dans le choix au grand jour de notre oeil, des détails. Le lieutenant Seblon, avant que de descendre à terre pour la première fois à Brest, prit un crayon au hasard sur sa tablette et le tailla avec soin. Il le mit dans sa poche. Ensuite, supposant que peut-être les parois d'ardoise seraient trop sombres ou trop grenues, il emporta quelques petites étiquettes gommées. A terre, sous un prétexte banal, il abandonna ses camarades de bord et, entrant dans la première pissotière qu'il rencontra, tout en haut de la rue de Siam, après avoir ouvert sa braguette, surveillant les abords avec précaution, il écrivit son premier message: 'Jeune homme de passage à Brest cherche beau garçon ayant belle queue.' Il essaya, sans y parvenir, de déchiffrer les inscriptions obscènes. Il

enragea qu'un si noble endroit fût souillé de graffiti à tendance politique. Se retournant alors vers son propre texte, il le lut mentalement, en éprouvant un trouble aussi grand que s'il l'eût découvert et il l'illustra d'une verge monstrueuse de taille, rigide, dont il exagéra la naïveté du dessin. Puis il sortit avec autant de naturel que s'il n'eût qu'uriné. Il parcourut ainsi la ville de Brest, entrant délibérément dans chaque pissotière.

Eux-mêmes [...]

178 [...] l'ancienne Amirauté.

Acheté [...]

(16-17) [...] l'ancienne Amirauté.

'Pendant les deux années qu'il passa au corps de la Marine, sa nature insoumise, dépravé, lui valut soixante-seize punitions. Il tatouait les novices, volait ses camarades, et se livrait sur les animaux à des actes étranges.'

*Relation du procès de Louis Ménesclou âgé de 20 ans. Exécuté le 7 septembre 1880.*

'J'ai suivi, disait-il, les drames judiciaires, et Ménesclou m'a empoisonné. Je suis moins coupable que lui, n'ayant ni violé, ni dépecé ma victime. Mon portrait doit être supérieur au sien car il n'avait pas sa cravate, tandis que j'ai obtenu la faveur de conserver la mienne.'

*Déclaration au juge d'instruction de l'assassin Félix Lamaître âgé de 14 ans. (15 juillet 1881.)*

'Un homme s'avance, tête nue, les cheveux ondulés, élégant vêtu d'un simple tricot de soie ouvert malgré le froid. Jeune, fort, le regard dédaigneux, il passe devant vous en vous dévisageant, suivi d'un magnifique chien esquimau. A sa vue chacun tremble. Cet homme c'est l'Autrichien Oscar Reich, Inspecteur Général du Camp de Concentration de Drancy.'

*Quatre et Trois*, du 26 mars 1946.

'Un autre soldat étant par cas de fortune tombé sur le visage en combattant, comme l'ennemi haussait l'épée pour lui en donner un coup mortel, le pria d'attendre qu'il se fût retourné de peur que son ami ne le vît blessé par-derrière.'

Plutarque - *De l'amour*.

'Prévost dit en balbutiant:

- Je suis heureux... bien heureux... Ah! oui je suis bien heureux!... que l'on trouve des taches de sang. Elles sont fraîches... bien fraîches... très fraîches!'

*Extrait du procès-verbal relatif au triple assassinat commis par le Cent-Garde Prévost. Exécuté le 19 janvier 1880.*

'Une taille moyenne, un corps sain, des proportions qui exprimaient la force... des cheveux épais, des yeux vifs et petits, le regard dédaigneux, les traits réguliers et la physionomie austère, la voix forte mais voilée, une teinte générale d'anxiété... une

froideur extrême dans les manières... Soupçonneux, dissimulé, ténébreux, il sut, sans conseil et sans étude être impénétrable et garder son secret'.

*Portrait de Saint-Just par Paganel.*

Acheté [...]

181 '[...] quoi.'

Querelle était heureux [...]

(20) '[...] quoi.'

Il pourrait faire servir la passion maladroite que trahissait, pour lui seul, le lieutenant. 'Seulement c'est un con. Un tordu comme ça, i'serait capable de me faire gauler.'

Furtivement l'esprit de Querelle fut traversé par le souvenir d'une scène récente où, en face de lui, le lieutenant Seblon avait répondu avec hauteur, presque avec impertinence, à un commandant.

Querelle était heureux [...]

182 [...] décomposition.

A mesure [...]

(22) [...] décomposition.

Dans une lenteur solennelle, sous le doigt nonchalant, peut-être, de Dieu, le globe terrestre tourne autour de son axe. A notre regard se déploient les Océans, les Sables, les Forêts, les Landes couvertes de bruyères. Le regard de Dieu perce l'azur. Son doigt s'immobilise. Il écarte le brouillard avec la précaution d'une fermière qui voulant s'assurer d'une portée de petits lapins, écarte la couche de duvet qui les protège; avec la même lenteur et la précaution qui nous communique au bras et à la poitrine une craintive audace, dont nous-même écartons du doigt le tissu négligent, lassé, de la braguette d'un garçon imprudemment endormi près de nous. Notre oeil devient fixe. Dieu cesse de respirer. Son regard *anime* Brest.

A mesure [...]

182 [...] armé d'un couteau, nous-même, vous, au coeur [...]

(22) [...] armé d'un couteau, nous-même, vous-même, au coeur [...]

183 - Merde.

Il essaya de voir [...]

(23) - Merde.

Il sentit la résistance du slip emprisonnant sa queue. L'idée de 'merde' (pas encore de l'étonnement) s'établissait en lui, s'emparait de tout son corps à mesure que sa queue durcissait, s'arquait dans le filet, se redressait enfin malgré le slip de treillis étroit, solide et fin. Gil essaya de voir [...]

214 [...] de ses oreilles.

Il frissonna.

(59) [...] de ses oreilles. Enfin, sa façon simple de considérer ce malheur est comparable à l'attitude qu'il eut un jour en face de la mort: les fossoyeurs ayant exhumé le corps de sa mère afin de l'enterrer dans un autre quartier du cimetière, Querelle arrivé trop tôt le matin, se trouva seul en face du cercueil que les ouvriers avaient sorti du trou. L'herbe était mouillée, la terre grasse et le froid assez vif. Querelle entendit un oiseau chanter. Il s'assit sur le cercueil où sa mère pourrissait. L'odeur sortait des planches disjointes

sans l'incommoder. Elle se mêlait naturellement à l'odeur de l'herbe, de la terre remuée, des fleurs mouillées. L'enfant considéra un instant ce phénomène si noble qu'est la décomposition d'un corps adoré: c'est un malheur qui va de soi et rentre dans l'ordre du monde.

Il frissonna.

217 [...] une masturbation discrète. Il regarda Nono [...]

(63) [...] une masturbation discrète. Il n'évoquait alors rien de précis. La dureté dans sa main de la verge suffisait à l'émouvoir et quand arrivait le spasme, sa bouche se tordait si fort que son visage lui faisait mal et qu'il n'était pas sûr de ne pas demeurer ainsi, la bouche tordue. Il regarda Nono [...]

218 [...] la première fois...

La voix de Norbert [...]

(63) [...] la première fois qu'tu t'fais fourrer.

La voix de Norbert [...]

218 [...] C'est pas moi qui t'a demandé. Fous-toi en position.

(64) [...] C'est pas moi qui t'a demandé de t'faire mette. Fous-toi en position.

219 [...] le silence était total. En avançant [...]

(65) [...] le silence était total. Norbert dégagea ses couilles et une seconde laissa libre sa queue de frapper son ventre, puis, en avançant [...]

220 [...] de pantalons retroussés.

- C'est comme ça [...]

(66) [...] de pantalons retroussés. Avec ses doigts, habilement, Norbert enduisit de salive sa queue.

- C'est comme ça [...]

220 Il pénétra tranquillement, jusqu'à ce que son ventre touchât Querelle qu'il amenait contre soi de ses deux mains soudain effroyables et puissantes, passées sous le ventre du marin. La chaleur [...]

(66) Il pénétra tranquillement, jusqu'à la base de la verge, jusqu'à ce que son ventre touchât les fesses de Querelle qu'il amenait contre soi de ses deux mains soudain effroyables et puissantes, passées sous le ventre du marin dont la queue, cessant d'être écrasée sur le velours du lit, se redressa, battit la peau du ventre auquel elle était enracinée et les doigts de Norbert indifférent à ce contact. Querelle bandait comme bande un pendu. Doucement, Norbert fit quelques mouvements appropriés. La chaleur [...]

220 [...] pensa-t-il.

Vaguement [...]

(66) [...] pensa-t-il.

Ses pieds ayant glissé, son ventre s'écrasait à nouveau sur le bord du divan. Il essaya de relever un peu le menton, de sortir son visage enfoui dans le velours noir, mais l'odeur de l'opium l'assommait. Vaguement [...]

221 [...] restèrent secs.

- C'est maintenant que je vais y passer.

Au premier coup [...]

(67) [...] restèrent secs. Il tendit les fesses en arrière.

- C'est maintenant que je vais y passer.

Se redressant légèrement sur les poignets, il tendit encore plus énergiquement les fesses - au point presque de soulever Norbert - mais celui-ci mit toute sa vigueur à l'écraser et soudain, en tirant à lui le matelot qu'il venait d'empoigner sous les épaules, il donna une secousse terrible, une seconde, une troisième, jusqu'à six qui s'espacèrent en s'atténuant dans un total affaissement. Au premier coup [...]

221 [...] la nuque herbeuse qu'il avait mordue. Enfin la masse énorme du tôlier, avec d'infinies délicatesses, se redressa. Querelle n'avait pas lâché son ceinturon.

La découverte [...]

(67-68) [...] la nuque herbeuse qu'au moment du spasme il avait mordue. Enfin la masse énorme du tôlier, avec d'infinies délicatesses, se retira de Querelle. Il se redressa. Il n'avait pas lâché son ceinturon.

'Fais pas le novice, Robert, je les ai enculés. Je me suis emmerdé la bitte, si t'aimes mieux. Tous. Tous tant qu'i' sont, excepté toi. Toi j'ai pas voulu, tu comprends. Alors je peux dire que ma femme elle a couché avec des emmanchés. Sauf toi. Je sais pas pourquoi. Remarque que je veux pas dire que t'aurais pas marché, mais c'est pas parce que j'ai eu les jetons. Pasque les autres i'z'étaient aussi carrés que toi - soit dit sans te vexer - et que je suis pas un de ceux qui se déballonnent. Seulement non. Je t'ai même rien proposé. Ça m'intéressait pas. Remarque que la patronne elle en sait rien. J'ai jamais dit. C'est pas la peine. Je m'en branle. Seulement moi, ce qui y a de sûr c'est que je peux dire que c'étaient des enculés. Sauf toi, forcément.'

Si ce n'était Robert, du moins lui, le cocu, venait-il de baiser un gars qui portait, et très haut, son visage, son beau visage de gosse adoré des femmes. Nono sentait sa force; d'un mot, il pouvait anéantir la paix des deux frères. Cependant cette idée, à peine aventurée, était déjà détruite par la certitude que le docker et le matelot tireraient de leur ressemblance, de leur double amour, assez de force pour conserver leur admirable indifférence, puisqu'ils ne voyaient qu'eux-mêmes où qu'ils fussent, tant leur double beauté mutuellement s'attirait.

Sa féminité quelquefois s'exhalait de lui par un geste trop délicat par exemple dans cette grâce précise à défaire l'hameçon de sa ligne de la chevelure d'un saule. Mais sa puissance écrasait Querelle par le craquement de ses souliers sur le sol. Le poids de son corps les faisait bruire selon un rythme lourd et large cependant qu'on ne pouvait, à cause du bruit même, et de ce rythme, supposer qu'il n'écrasait sous chaque pied tout un ciel nocturne et des étoiles.

La découverte [...]

229 'Pédé, qu'est-ce que c'est? Pédé? C'est un enculé?'

(77) - 'Pédé', qu'est-ce que c'est? Pédé? C'est un pédé?'

232 [...] *des affiches*.

*Quelle joie soudain!*

(81) [...] *des affiches*.

La casquette d'officier durcit mon visage. Cachant le front, elle donne de l'importance

à ma bouche et aux deux longues rides l'encadrant qui sont sévères, presque vaches. Il semble que le signe de ma féminité soit mon front: Je retire ma casquette et, soudain, mes rides paraissent veules, molles. Elles pendent.

Quelle joie soudain !

234 [...] *dussé-je mourir*.

*Il regardait [...]*

(84) [...] *dussé-je mourir*.

Querelle, ton coeur doré...

Il regardait [...]

234 [...] *l'amiral et sa brute*.

*Querelle [...]*

(84) [...] *l'amiral et sa brute*. Il sont beaux.

Lisbonne. Je suis descendu à terre avec le Capitaine. Nous faisons quelques emplettes. Dans un café je pose négligemment mes paquets par terre, assez loin de moi. Le Capitaine les surveille sans cesse. Je vois bien qu'il craint qu'on ne les vole et cette crainte me fait désirer qu'ils soient volés. Insensiblement je les écarte avec mon pied. Je pactise déjà avec les voleurs. Je hais la vulgarité du Capitaine.

Querelle [...]

235 [...] *et de parures*.'

Gil dormait [...]

(85-87) [...] *et de parures*.'

Une douce et délicieuse inquiétude au coeur, le lieutenant se rendit à ses rendez-vous. Il était à la fois fort et tendre. La scène extraordinaire qu'il avait provoquée au Cercle des Officiers de Marine avait fait de lui un héros. En effet. Lorsqu'il s'assit à la table où se tenaient quelques dames avec d'autres officiers, il ne voulut pas abandonner le souvenir de Querelle qui, de ce fait, lui semblait-il, fût resté à la porte des salons. Nous reconnaissons ici, chez le lieutenant Seblon, la présence d'une courtoisie à l'égard des choses. Cette attitude sentimentale ne paraît pas avoir d'origine dans son amour pour Querelle si cet amour lui donne l'occasion d'apparaître. Elle est dans la crainte, elle-même née de l'amour, dans l'importance dévotionnelle que Seblon accorde à la vie. A travers le monde, sa quête d'un bonheur si difficile l'oblige à provoquer par la gentillesse, la bonne volonté des choses dont il craint qu'elles ne se révoltent contre lui. De même que Gil, au fond de sa détresse, après avoir tué Théo, cherche avec beaucoup de maladresse à apprivoiser les objets dont il redoute la volonté méchante. D'un imaginaire mouvement d'épaules, le lieutenant ne se défît pas de l'ombre de Querelle, mais pour davantage lui rester fidèle, alors que sur le bateau il osait s'opposer à lui, il choisit de le représenter si bien en s'opposant aux autres officiers. Ce mouvement se fit en lui-même avec une lenteur harmonieuse mais selon une courbe si douce que lui-même n'eut conscience de son changement de position intérieure qu'à la colère qui fit frémir

sa voix pour répondre à une dame:

- Qu'en savez-vous ?

Le ton et la sécheresse impertinents de la formule firent tous les yeux se poser sur lui:

- Mais c'est ce qu'on raconte... dit la dame gênée un peu, mais cependant souriante.

- Vous en êtes sûre ?

Elle rapportait que les communistes avaient donné à une rue le nom d'un ouvrier mort en voulant sauver une fillette qui se noyait. Elle ajoutait 'qu'à ce qu'on raconte, il était ivre et il était simplement tombé à l'eau'...

- Je n'en suis pas sûre, c'est ce qu'on dit.

On toussa. On fit à la table à la fois du bruit et du silence. Le lieutenant eût voulu n'avoir rien dit, mais le frémissement de sa voix, qu'il devait à sa timidité, à son peu d'assurance, l'obligeait à plus de sécheresse encore pour répondre:

- Ayez donc alors la générosité, en face d'un acte dont le mobile est ambigu, de postuler pour le plus noble.

Les éléments de cette phrase s'étant présentés à son esprit dans une sorte d'amoncellement tumultueux, afin de les diviser et de les organiser selon une syntaxe claire - qui à cause même de ce désordre disposa la phrase en un mode très dur, très noble, presque solennel - obligèrent l'officier à une plus grande attention, à une parfaite lucidité. Il eut du moment, et de sa propre situation une vision tragique. La dame dit:

- Mais...

Quelqu'un, gêné, dit:

- Nous plaisantons entre nous...

Sûr d'être maintenant le plus fort dans un combat dont les armes sont morales, le lieutenant se leva.

- Je crains, dit-il, d'avoir à conserver trop longtemps mon attitude de juge. Vous me permettez de me retirer.

Il sortit. Cette violente projection spirituelle de lui-même lui avait donné tout à coup une vigueur dont il s'émerveilla. Il était fort, viril, mâle au point d'enculer Querelle s'il se fût offert. En passant devant les pissotières où il avait crayonné ses graffiti, il songea avec tendresse, avec une légère mélancolie, à cette forme vague et abandonnée de lui-même, à cette défroque honteuse et molle tapie dans ces coins obscurs, à cet officier qui cherchait la nuit des bittes, comme les pêcheurs, avec des bras admirables, dans les rochers, cherchent l'anguille. Et lorsqu'il parvint au quai d'embarquement, il vit Querelle. Un immense sentiment de fraternité l'unit à son ordonnance. Mais le lendemain sa virilité s'évanouissait, se dissolvait sous le regard malicieux de Querelle, elle ne pouvait résister à la comparaison de cette virilité terrible, indestructible, personnifiée par un corps splendide. A nouveau, il connut la honte et descendit à terre pour s'absorber en elle. Dans les pissotières il retrouva ses propres inscriptions auxquelles ne s'était ajoutée aucune réponse. Pourtant, chacune d'elles lui cause cette délicieuse émotion qu'une fleur, un gant, un mouchoir de l'aimée, met au cœur du jeune amoureux.

Gil dormait [...]

237 [...] il dit:

- Toi? Eh bien vas-y, te dégonfle pas!

(90) [...] il dit:

- Tu m'enculerais, toi? Et bien vas-y, te dégonfles pas!

238 Y en a un qui veut me bourrer?

Ces mots [...]



(90) Y en a un qui veut m'enculer?

Ces mots [...]

238 Théo ricana. Gil le regarda. Froidement il lui dit:

- T'as jamais pu me posséder. Et c'est ça qui te travaille.

(90) Théo ricana. Gil le regarda. Froidement il lui dit:

- T'as jamais pu m'enculer. Et c'est ça qui te travaille.

+238-239 [...] ses hémorroïdes étaient lui. Le soleil vers le soir de ce même jour ayant disparu, le brouillard [...]

(91-92) [...] ses hémorroïdes étaient lui. Les amours les plus saines, ces 'contacts d'épidermes' ne sont pas aussi lumineuses et claires qu'on le veut dire. Si tout à coup le jeune nageur sur la plage bande pour la belle fille nue qui le frôle autant que pour nous la braguette ou le pouce d'un soldat, ce contact du sein, ou de la hanche, le creux de la nuque, contiennent une région d'ombre où s'engloutit soudain la raison du nageur. Il n'est plus alors qu'un désir obscur. Rien n'empêchera donc que nous entretenions ces zones d'ombres où notre raison succombe si nous devons connaître le bonheur. Nous ne parlons pas d'une apparence de mystère entretenu par un rituel usé mais de ces régions d'ombres que l'imagination découvre et dont la fixité de notre regard n'arrive pas à percer les ténèbres, à mesurer le fond; en face desquelles nous sommes pris de vertige. En elles nous nous perdrons assez pour y élaborer les rites d'un culte éternel. Le soleil ayant disparu, le brouillard [...]

242 [...] les cuisses.

Il se croyait [...]

(96) [...] les cuisses. Fulgurante, sa pensée revint à la conasse:

- Oh la petite salope, son joli petit con, je vais y foutre mon gros noeud...

Son attention était portée à la fois sur la bouche et sur le con de Paulette. Il se croyait [...]

242 [...] la sienne.

'Moi je suis un mâle, articula-t-il dans le brouillard. Moi je plante les mâles! Moi je vais te mettre!'

En vain essaya-t-il de composer l'image d'un Théo qu'il baiserait. S'il arrivait [...]

(96) [...] la sienne. La rage l'emporta, si forte qu'elle employait tout le fluide de Gil dont la vigueur paraissait se porter toute de la queue aux yeux. Pour rebander il s'efforça à la tendresse, mais en même temps afin de s'opposer à l'idée trop odieuse de Théo l'enculant, un mouvement de défi, à partir de sa queue, monta en lui.

- 'Moi je suis un mâle, articula-t-il dans le brouillard. Moi je plante les mâles! Moi je vais te mettre!'

En vain essaya-t-il de composer l'image d'un Théo qu'il enculerait. S'il arrivait [...]

250 '[...] avec un frangin qui en prend plein le cul.'

(106) '[...] avec un frangin qui prend des bittes dans le cul.'

252 '[...] Ne t'occupe pas de ta douleur. Saute.'

- 'Ne te décourage pas. Travaille.'

(109) '[...] Ne t'occupe pas de ta douleur. Saute.'

- 'Ne t'échappe pas!'

- 'Je suis là.'

- 'Parle plus bas. Je suis déjà chez toi!'

- 'Je vous aime plus que moi-même. J'ai feint de vous haïr. Mes querelles me séparaient de vous où m'appelle une douceur trop dangereuse. Mon rire c'est le soleil qui chasse les ténèbres que vous établissez en moi. J'ai criblé la nuit de poignards. J'accumule les barricades. Mon rire m'isole, m'éloigne de vous. Vous êtes beau.

- 'Vous l'êtes autant que moi!'

- 'Taisez-vous. Nous risquons de nous dissoudre dans une unité trop exactement précisée. Dresse contre moi tes chiens et tes loups.'

- 'C'est inutile. Chaque querelle t'embellit, te pare d'un éclat douloureux.'

- 'Ne te décourage pas. Travaille.'

260 [...] destin si particulier.

'Qu'est-ce je ferais si je ne l'avais pas?'

(119) [...] destin si particulier. - Nous disons bien 'une absolue solitude' c'est-à-dire solitude qui se veut solitude pour ce qu'elle est source, point de départ d'un univers calqué sur l'autre et le soumettant. Une solitude source de lois singulières, sensible surtout le matin, au réveil quand, pour augmenter cette ressemblance, le corps incurvé par le hamac, enivré par le sommeil, la chaleur et l'ardeur de la nuit, les matelots se retournent à demi, comme des carpes sur la vase, laissant retomber le buste ou les jambes comme les carpes battent le sol ou l'eau de la queue, et comme elles, bâillant d'une bouche ronde où ne demande qu'une bitte de copain à s'engouffrer pour l'arrondir encore et la remplir aussi exactement et si profondément que le ferait une colonne de vent. Il devait sourire à son étoile. Ne paraître jamais douter d'elle. En lui souriant il la voyait distinctement.

'Qu'est-ce que je ferais si je ne l'avais pas?'

260 '[...] veut être quelqu'un.' Avec la même [...]

(120) '[...] veut être quelqu'un.' Le sourire adressé à l'étoile se répercutait à travers tout son corps, y étendait ses rayons ténus tissés comme la toile d'une araignée, et il faisait éclore en Querelle une constellation. Avec la même [...]

263 [...] *Je possède le Marin.*

*J'ai signé avec plaisir [...]*

(122-123) [...] *Je possède le Marin.*

Colère de Querelle insultant le quartier-maître. Le quartier-maître:

- Je vous porte la punition.

- Et moi, je te pisse au cul pour te laver les boyaux de la tête!

*J'ai signé avec [...]*

263 [...] *spasme agite.*

*Querelle à ses camarades [...]*

(123) [...] *spasme agite.*

Le pli à mon pantalon d'officier a autant d'importance que mes galons.

J'aime la mer. Le sabot d'un cheval marquant l'eau. Combat des Centaures.

Querelle à ses camarades [...]

263 [...] *sur la mer.*

*Que ne suis-je matelot!*

(124) [...] sur la mer après s'être mirées dans leurs grains lumineux et tranquilles.

Je l'aime. Les officiers m'ennuient. Que ne suis-je matelot!

264-265 [...] *mon bonheur.*

*Je sors d'un rêve effrayant.*

(125-126) [...] mon bonheur.

J'ai suivi Querelle, de loin, malgré le brouillard. Il est entré dans le plus sale bordel de Brest: 'La Féria'. Il y joue sans doute les maquereaux. Caché dans une pissotière j'ai épié la porte quelques minutes. Il n'est pas sorti.

Trente-deux ans aujourd'hui. Je suis las. Malgré ma carrure je suis loin d'être aussi bien bâti que lui. Rirait-il s'il me voyait nu?

Querelle est mon ordonnance depuis deux mois. Je n'en puis plus de lui résister, de si exactement peser mes mots, mesurer mes gestes. Je voudrais me jeter à ses pieds afin qu'il me foule, je voudrais que l'amour le jette à mes pieds. A faire mouvoir ce garçon, dont les rouages de l'esprit sont délicats, dont le corps est le réservoir d'une force inconnue mais qui semble, comprimée à l'extrême, dangereuse dans son hésitante destination, j'ai la même inquiétude que si j'étais seul en face du tableau de bord d'une forteresse volante. Que fera-t-il de moi ? Où m'emporte-t-il? Vers quelle catastrophe planétaire, héroïque et mortelle aussi?

J'appuie mon pouce sur une manette? Et sur l'autre?

Je sors d'un rêve effrayant.

265 [...] une plaie saignante.

La main de Querelle [...]

(126-127) [...] *une plaie saignante.*

Robert tenait à Madame Lysiane à qui, et de plus en plus, honteusement, il était soumis. La patronne maintenant était sûre de son pouvoir. Un soir, comme elle coulait contre lui son corps aux somptueuses courbes, il fit un geste agacé pour chasser les cheveux qui le frôlaient. Câline et mièvre, elle murmura:

- Tu ne m'aimes pas.

- Je t'aime pas ?

Le cri sourd, lourd de reproches, que poussa Robert, s'acheva par ce geste soudain exécuté: ayant de ses deux mains saisi la tête de sa maîtresse, dans sa bouche, il plongea le nez et l'y agita. Quand il l'eut retiré, tous les deux éclatèrent de rire, tant la soudaineté et la beauté de cette preuve d'amour les confondit. On se rappelle, en effet, que Robert détestait ce jeu cher à Madame Lysiane. Or, c'est celui qu'il choisissait, spontanément, pour protester contre l'accusation de sa maîtresse, mais par quoi se révélait le côté puéril de sa tendresse, son abandon - héroïque car son geste était une provocation - à l'amour

maternel de 'La Féria'.

La main de Querelle [...]

278 [...] à l'égard de Robert.

Or, dans le baigne [...]

(143) [...] à l'égard de Robert.

On s'aimerait drôlement !

Il ne pouvait supposer clairement que deux jeunes gens - à plus forte raison des frères - s'aimassent, unis par le meurtre, unis non seulement par le sang qui coulait en eux, mais par celui qui coulait sur eux. Pour Querelle la question ne se posait pas ainsi, à partir de l'amour.

Entr'hommes on s'aime pas. Y a des femmes pour ça. Et pour tirer un coup.

La question se posait à partir de l'amitié. Mais cette amitié, pour lui, étant cela qui complète un homme, fendu en deux, sans elle, de haut en bas. Certain qu'il ne bénéficierait jamais de la somptueuse complicité de son frère - 'il est trop con pour ça' -

Querelle s'était donc enfermé dans sa propre solitude qu'il érigeait comme le monument le plus singulier, et le plus beau à cause même de ce déséquilibre, de cette inharmonie causés par l'absence d'un ami criminel. Or, dans le baigne [...]

279 [...] au sol. Roger se retourna [...]

(144) [...] au sol. Grâce à lui une rêverie paresseuse et vaine ne pourrait mettre en danger le corps de Querelle. Querelle ne savait pas rêver. Son manque d'imagination l'accrochait à l'accident et l'y retenait. Roger se retourna [...]

282 [...] Gil venait de lui révéler.

Avec une nonchalante négligence Querelle dit:

(148) [...] Gil venait de lui révéler.

Il existe une chambre secrète, fermée d'une porte blindée. Elle contient, avec quelques pauvres chiens en cage, quelques monstres dont le plus émouvant est celui qui demeure au centre de la chambre, il est notre intime reproche. Enfermé dans un énorme vase de cristal ayant à peu près la forme de son corps, il est mauve et d'une substance molle, presque gélatineuse. Il ressemblerait à un gros poisson, n'était la tristesse très humaine de sa tête. Le dompteur qui surveille les monstres méprise surtout celui-ci qui, nous le savons, trouverait quelque paix dans l'étreinte d'un de ses pareils. Mais il n'a pas de pareil. Les autres monstres diffèrent de lui par un léger détail. Il est seul et cependant il nous aime. Il attend sans espoir, de nous, un amical regard, que nous n'accorderons jamais. Querelle vivait tous ses instants dans cette désolante compagnie.

Avec une nonchalante négligence Querelle dit:

285 [...] l'interrogeait en silence. Quelquefois des larmes [...]

(152) [...] l'interrogeait en silence. Cette habitude équivalait à une discipline. Hélas, elle accordait à Gil la disposition malheureuse d'appréhender violemment et spontanément l'essence des choses, et lentement, elle le conduisait, d'étape en étape - il sera bientôt capable de saisir l'essence du granit, l'essence de l'étoffe, la rèche particularité de l'assiette de fer au bord coupant les lèvres - dans une vie écorchée, écorchée jusqu'à l'os. Quelquefois des larmes [...]

289 [...] montait dans sa queue. Pour toujours [...]  
 (157) [...] montait dans sa queue. Il bandait. Pour toujours [...]

289 [...] écarterait les poils, et de la pointe de la langue [...]  
 (157) [...] écarterait les poils, lui ouvrirait le con et de la pointe de la langue [...]

293 [...] assez grave culpabilité.

Lysiane ne répondait pas.

(162) [...] assez grave culpabilité, surtout d'avoir avoué à sa maîtresse que, dans son enfance, quand toute sa famille, les dimanches par exemple, sortait en bande, chacun s'épinglait un petit brin de mimosa au corsage ou au revers du veston.

- Et moi, ça me gênait, mais je voulais pas jeter le bouquet, j'aurais eu l'air d'être fier, alors je me le mettais entre les dents. Au bout de vingt mètres, j'l'avais avalé.

- On ne s'en est jamais aperçu? avait-elle demandé.

- Oh! si, assez vite. Ça fait qu'on ne me donnait plus d'épingle.

Il craignit qu'elle ne se souvînt de cet aveu et crût qu'ainsi s'accusait d'appartenir à une famille honteuse. Lysiane ne répondait pas.

294 - Pasqu'enfin t'as dit saletés.

- J'ai dit ça comme ça.

(163) - Pasqu'enfin t'as dit saletés.

Lentement, l'idée de saleté se précisait à Robert, cette idée enfin se confondait avec l'idée de la ressemblance et de la beauté. Péniblement encore, émergeant de l'imprécision l'image du visage de Jo apparut à Robert: c'était son propre visage. Avec une tendresse infinie (qu'il éprouva par une légère buée sur ses yeux qui ne cillèrent pas néanmoins) il pensa: 'Frangin.' L'image demeura, non immobile, mais passant d'une identité à l'autre. C'était tantôt lui, tantôt son frère. Une douceur presque désespérée l'invitait à faire ces deux images se confondre définitivement, et en même temps une sorte de nausée spirituelle l'écoeurait dont il eût voulu sortir purifié. Toujours aussi lointain son regard remonta un peu et se fixa sur le con velu de Lysiane immobile. Robert vit cette toison distinctement, distinctement il pensa: 'Sa motte, sa grosse motte', mais n'abandonna pas la double et unique image de son frère et de lui.

- J'ai dit ça comme ça.

294 Son corps fit un imperceptible mouvement pour descendre sous les draps. Pour mêler sa vie à la vie ridiculement confondue des deux frères, son amour [...]

(164) Son corps fit un imperceptible mouvement pour descendre sous les draps. En elle s'installait une émotion étonnante, douce et méprisable, tragique. Pour mêler sa vie à la vie ridiculement confondue des deux frères, afin de pouvoir ensuite opérer son choix, trier les éléments vivants et purs, son amour [...]

295 La réduire à zéro, détruire cette armature [...]

(164) La réduire à rien, à zéro, donc détruire cette armature [...]

295 [...] qu'une honte s'emparait d'elle et ainsi [...]

(164) [...] qu'une honte s'emparait d'elle (plus exactement faisait qu'elle ne fût pas ou ne fût que honte) et ainsi [...]

295 [...] aux épaules. Elle avala [...]

(165) [...] aux épaules. Avec beaucoup de maladresse, Madame Lysiane suçait son amant.

Elle avala [...]

296 [...] le célèbre: M.

(166) [...] le célèbre: MW [the letters are superimposed on each other]

297 '[...] moins magnifiquement.'

Querelle jeta sa cigarette [...]

(167) '[...] mais moins magnifiquement.'

Madame Lysiane sentait que cette volonté d'aimer plus tendrement (et volonté d'aimer tout court) serait incomparablement moins grisante que la force irrésistible qui la précipiterait dans les bras du plus viril des deux gars, surtout quand ce dernier a le même corps, le même visage, et la même voix que l'amant blessé.

Querelle jeta sa cigarette [...]

301 [...] d'ensorceler la mort. Querelle répéta [...]

(172) [...] d'ensorceler la mort, puise au fond d'une mémoire attentive un mot qu'il ignore, lu peut-être dans un journal dérobé à un officier s'adressant à un autre officier, et Querelle répéta [...]

303 - T'as qu'à essayer!

Il rit d'un rire gêné cette fois.

(175) - T'as qu'à essayer!

Ils rirent ensemble. Mario se garda de presser l'épaule de Querelle. Il dit:

- Pourquoi pas? Seulement, dis-moi si c'est bon.

- C'est pas mauvais. Pour rentrer c'est pas marrant, mais après ça va.

- Sans blague, c'est bon?

- Ma parole. C'est la première fois que ça m'arrivait. Je croyais pas que c'était pareil.

Il rit d'un rire gêné cette fois.

304 [...] la valeur d'une complicité.

- Moi de causer de ça [...]

(176) [...] la valeur d'une complicité.

- I'doit avoir une grosse bitte. Pasqu'il est balèse le gars. Elle te plaît, sa bitte?

- T'es fada. Je m'en suis pas occupé. Je suis pas si vicieux que ça. Allez, de ça, cause pus.

- Pourquoi? Ca te dérange? Si ça t'emmerde je veux pas t'en causer.

- Non ça m'emmerde pas. Je dis ça en rigolant.

- Moi de causer de ça [...]

304 - Allez! Raconte ça à un cheval de bois.

(176) - Allez! C'est pas ce qu'on vient de dire qui te fait bander, non. Raconte ça à un cheval de bois.

304 - Mais non. Je te dis que t'es pas capable.

Querelle tendit la main [...]

(176-177) - Mais non. Je te dis que t'es pas capable.

- Moi je te dis de te rendre compte. Elle est drôlement raide. C'est un bâton.

Sans quitter les yeux de Mario, en souriant avec ses lèvres frémissantes, de la pointe

extrême de deux doigts Querelle effleura la braguette du flic. Seulement l'étoffe, puis il appuya, mais à peine, et il sentit la verge dure et brûlante. Il dit en tremblant presque et baissant malgré lui la voix:

- Y a rien du tout. Si c'est ca que t'appelles bander!
- T'as pas touché. Serre un peu. Y en a un drôle de morceau.
- Forcément avec le froc. Ça fait un calibre. Y a l'épaisseur du drap...
- Rentre ta main dedans, tu verras.

Querelle tendit la main [...]

305 [...] en souriant. Querelle murmura:

- Pas ici. Y a pas un endroit?
- Querelle entendit, près de son oreille [...]

(177-178) [...] en souriant. Il murmura:

- Branle-moi un petit peu, va.
- Pas ici. Y a pas un endroit?

De tous les points de la nuit, les sentiers déchaussés, les pieds dans la poussière portent le crime. Querelle les écoute venir. Son oreille est familière de ces adorations. Les mages sont en route. Il se penche: luit dans l'obscurité le bout brillant du noeud terrible de Mario.

Querelle entendit, près de son oreille [...]

305 Dans un fracas terrible [...]

(178) Dans un bruit terrible [...]

307 [...] sans doute 'ses crachats!' Le visage et le corps de Querelle [...]

(180) [...] sans doute 'ses crachats!' En face de la rade et de la terre, le front glacé par le brouillard, il imaginait l'histoire que peut-être tous les matelots connaissent, et qu'ils acceptent de Querelle. Devant lui Querelle souriait en rejetant son béret en arrière: 'Ces taches-là c'est rien. C'est les mecs qui me font des pipes. Pendant qu'ils me sucent je les oblige à se branler dans mon froc. Des fois y-z-ont honte, mais je les oblige. Ça leur fait du bien.' 'Il m'obligerait peut-être à me branler pendant que je le suce!' Le visage et le corps de Querelle [...]

309 [...] fut heureux.

Lors du meurtre [...]

(182-183) [...] fut heureux.

Le visage de Nono était composé de virgules: la courbe des sourcils, l'ombre de la courbe de la narine, les lèvres, les moustaches. La suprême formule de la structure de toute sa tête avait son essence dans la virgule. Enculer ceux qui baisaient sa femme suffisait à la paix de son âme.

- Elle ne couche qu'avec des enculés, disait-il. Enculés par moi. Par le patron. Ça y faut pas qu'on l'oublie.

Mario lui accordait son indulgence. La masse physique du tenancier l'écrasait, lui coupait un peu la respiration. Quant à Nono la sévérité du flic qui se tenait devant lui, aigu, sévère, rigide et souple comme la lame triangulaire d'une baïonnette, elle le tenait avec

la férocité de l'acier. Après avoir baisé le gars qui désirait sa femme, à mesure qu'il débandait s'enfuyait l'amour. La culotte tombant sur les mollets, afin de ne pas la souiller relevant d'un doigt léger la bannière de devant de sa chemise blanche, il montrait alors son noeud ramolli et merdeux:

- Vlâ ce que tu fais, tu vois: tu m'emmerdes la bitte. Allez, renculotte-toi et va voir la patronne. Si je t'ai fait jouir, tu recommenceras avec elle.

Lors du meurtre [...]

310 [...] l'âme de Gil. Aux yeux [...]

(185) [...] l'âme de Gil et le sublime sommet du temple dont il n'était que le Grand-Prêtre. Aux yeux [...]

312 Elle aimait Robert. De penser à ses cheveux [...]

(187) Elle aimait Robert. Elle bandait vraiment pour lui. De penser à ses cheveux [...]

313 [...] sans cesse opérait.

Querelle n'osait [...]

(188) [...] sans cesse s'opérait.

Non, ce n'est sûrement pas cela. Ils s'aiment. Ils s'aiment avec leur beauté. C'est des petites vaches. Je ne peux rien faire pour les séparer. Ils se retrouvent toujours. Robert aime plus son frère que moi. Y a pas à sortir de là.

Elle ne sortait pas de là. Seule une femme de cet âge pouvait être atteinte d'un pareil mal. Elle était restée indifférente au désir, en face de la manifestation du désir des autres, mais sa chasteté spirituelle préparait un terrain facile à féconder par le merveilleux.

Querelle n'osait [...]

314 [...] sa braguette, écartait un peu sa chemise pour être tout à fait mâle [...]

(189) [...] sa braguette, en tirait sa queue déjà raide, écartait un peu sa chemise pour libérer ses couilles et être tout à fait mâle [...]

314 [...] musculature du matelot.

Querelle n'aimait pas Nono, encore que, de plus en plus [...]

\*(190-191) [...] musculature du matelot, et il en bandait un peu plus raide. Il mouillait avec sa main, puis il se courbait lentement, se posait sur le dos de Querelle et pénétrait. Aucune douleur maintenant ne crispait plus Querelle. Il sentait seulement le bout rond et dur forcer un peu, et doucement pénétrer jusqu'au fond. Nono restait alors quelques secondes immobile, accordant un peu de repos à son ami. Puis le va-et-vient commençait. C'était très doux, très reposant de se sentir si profondément enfoncé, de connaître en soi une présence aussi souveraine. Le membre ne risquait pas de sortir. Enfilés, ils se tournaient un peu sur le côté et continuaient. Nono saisissait Querelle sous les aisselles, et l'attirait contre soi. Le matelot se laissait aller en arrière, s'appuyait très lourd sur la poitrine de Norbert.

- Je te fais pas mal?

- Non, vas-y continue comme ça.

Ils chuchotaient, l'esprit et la parole égarés, la parole comme une poussière d'or expirée par leur bouche entrouverte. Querelle doucement faisait mouvoir ses fesses et Norbert plus durement ses reins. C'était bon d'être pris au piège par la queue. Et bon de retenir



en soi, par la queue, un costaud qui ne se libérera qu'en vous déchargeant dans le cul. Parfois Querelle sentait en lui le soubresaut de la verge solide à laquelle la sienne dans sa main répondait par un soubresaut pareil. Il se branlait calmement, posément, attentif à sentir en lui le va-et-vient de cette bielle énorme. Quand ils s'étaient boutonnés, ils se regardaient en souriant.

- Tu parles! On est bien des cons, tu crois pas?
  - Pourquoi, des cons? On fait de mal à personne.
  - Mais ça te plaît, à toi, de me le mettre au cul?
  - Moi, ben alors, pourquoi pas? C'est pas mauvais. Je peux pas dire que j'ai le béguin pour toi, ça je mentirais. Le béguin pour un homme, j'ai jamais compris. Ça existe, remarque. J'ai vu des cas. Seulement moi je pourrais pas.
  - C'est comme moi. Je me laisse endaufer pasque je m'en fous, moi je trouve ça marrant, mais faudrait pas me demander d'avoir le béguin pour un type.
  - Et baiser un jeune, t'as jamais essayé?
  - Jamais. Ça m'intéresse pas.
  - Un petit mignon, avec la peau douce; ça te dirait rien? Querelle, la tête baissée pour serrer la boucle de la ceinture la relevait en la secouant de droite à gauche et en faisant la moue.
  - En somme ce qui te plaît, c'est de te faire encaldosser?
  - Ben après. Tu parles ce que j'en ai à foutre. Je te dis plutôt histoire de se marrer.
- Querelle auprès de Norbert ne retrouvait pas la douceur qu'il avait connue dans la chambre du pédé arménien. Autour de Joachim, il avait senti une véritable atmosphère de douceur, de calme, de sécurité. Cela venait peut-être qu'il se sentait être tout pour cet homme qui eût accepté, au moins au moment qu'il était avec lui, toutes ses exigences. Par Joachim, il se serait sûrement laissé mettre. Seulement (il le comprenait maintenant) Joachim eût exigé l'inverse.
- Norbert ne l'aimait pas, encore que, de plus en plus [...]

316 [...] sur le sol.

- Quand même, les juges [...]
- (193) [...] sur le sol. Au début la magie enveloppant la découverte de son nom imprimé accompagnait et illuminait la confusion des deux meurtres, portait sur l'une les ombres de l'autre et sur l'autre le soleil du premier, bref, mêlait ces deux architectures dont l'une était pour Gil irréaliste.

- Quand même, les juges [...]

324 Enfin Querelle désira Gil.

(204) Enfin Querelle se sentit bander. Il s'attacha à cette idée afin de maintenir et d'aggraver son émoi. Il désira Gil.

325 [...] comment s'y prendre.

- Mon petit pote...
- (204-205) [...] comment s'y prendre. S'étant toujours fait baiser, il ne savait pas enculer un gars. Le geste l'eût gêné. Il songea à demander à Gil de lui mettre sa bitte au cul. Il se souvenait d'avoir éprouvé quelque tendresse à l'égard du pédé arménien, mais si, sur le coup, dans son ignorance, Querelle avait cru que Joachim voulait le baiser, aujourd'hui il savait que l'arménien avait des gestes et une voix signifiant qu'en fait il désirait le contraire. Enfin il n'éprouvait aucune tendresse à l'égard de Nono. Nono pouvait crever,

il s'en foutait. Obscurément il comprit que l'amour est volontaire; il faut le vouloir. Quand on n'aime pas les hommes, se laisser enfler peut vous causer quelque plaisir, mais pour les baiser il faut, fût-ce pendant le seul moment qu'on fait aller sa bitte, les aimer. Pour aimer Gil il devait renoncer à la passivité. Il s'y efforça:

- Mon petit pote...

325 [...] son seul parent.

- Jamais j'ai aimé [...]

(205) [...] son seul parent. Il prit le bras et obligea la main de Gil à lui toucher la bitte. Gil la frôla sous l'étoffe du pantalon et lui-même déboutonna le pont. Il caressa la queue raide qui raidit encore: c'était la première fois qu'un homme le touchait ainsi. Il écrasa sa bouche contre l'oreille de Gil qui lui rendit un baiser semblable.

- Jamais j'ai aimé [...]

326 Quand ils se quittèrent, Querelle aimait Gil...

(205) Quand il se quittèrent, Querelle aimait vraiment Gil...

327 [...] plus loin des affiches.

Alors qu'il venait [...]

(207-217) [...] plus loin des affiches.

Nous sommes à Beyrouth. Querelle sortait du « Clairon » avec un autre matelot. Il ne leur restait plus un sou en poche. Ils étaient vêtus du costume de toile blanche que les matelots portent l'été, costume retouché par eux-mêmes qui savaient parfaitement quel détail de leur corps préciser ou voiler d'un léger flottement de l'étoffe. Béret blanc, souliers blancs. Le soir était très doux. A peine hors du bordel, les deux matelots qui marchaient en silence, croisèrent un homme d'une trentaine d'années. Il les dévisagea et plus intensément Querelle. Puis il passa, mais ralentit sa marche.

- Qu'est-ce qui veut ?

Querelle se retourna. Son étonnante indifférence, son manque - non de chaleur profonde - de sympathie, était cause qu'il ignorât tout de ce qu'on nomme le vice. Il crut que cet homme le connaissait ou croyait le reconnaître.

- Ça, c'est un pédé, et un vrai.

Jonas ne se trompait pas. Il était moins beau que Querelle, ce dont ce dernier ne se doutait pas, ignorant même que sa propre beauté envoûtait les hommes.

- Ces mecs-là i-z-ont du fric d'habitude, et plus que nous, les vaches, dit-il en ralentissant.

- Oui, mais on l'a pas, voilà.

- Oh, je dis pas qu'i' faudrait marcher avec, mais des types comme ça, c'est des gonzesses, c'est pas des hommes. Je leur casserais la gueule rien que pour le plaisir.

En prononçant cette phrase Jonas baissa le ton: pour se permettre d'abord d'avoir une voix plus grave (ce qui le fortifiait dans sa virilité, l'écartait du pédé, lui donnait du poids, le rapprochait de Querelle et sauvait la Marine) enfin par prudence car en tournant à demi la tête il avait vu le passant revenir sur ses pas. Jonas se tut une seconde. Il marchait, de se savoir ou se croire distingué, avec plus d'assurance, plus de virilité (ses muscles des cuisses et des fesses tendaient la toile blanche du pantalon) mais en s'obligeant à l'indignation artificielle la colère montait en lui, s'établissait dans tous ses membres - comme il est à remarquer que de toutes les émotions c'est la colère et la peur qui animent à la fois tous les membres, font frémir en même temps le mollet et la lèvre,

la colère rend méchants les orteils et l'ultime phalange des doigts - il dit encore d'une voix légèrement tremblante:

- Des mecs comme ça ils se font mettre en l'air et je les plains pas. Je donnerais plutôt un coup de main. Pas toi?

Il regarda Querelle:

- Moi? T'as raison. Je pense comme toi. Seulement on peut pas le mettre en l'air ici. Y a trop de monde.

Confiant cette fois, sûr que son copain entrerait dans le coup, Jonas baissa encore le ton.

- Faudrait qu'on fasse semblant d'entrer avec lui.

Il s'arrêta net de parler. Le promeneur les doublait, lentement. Les deux mains dans les poches de son pantalon, Jonas contre son ventre tira la toile blanche, espérant faire saillir ce qu'il savait déjà que les pédés appellent le paquet: la bitte et les couilles. Querelle souriait. Le promeneur se retourna, mais très vite.

- Il a mordu, mais faudrait savoir lequel qu'i' veut. Si on reste deux y va pas marcher. Le mieux c'est qui en aye un qui reste tout seul puis l'autre va suivre. Tu crois pas?

- Oui, je crois que c'est le mieux. Tu restes, toi. Moi je connais pas bien. C'est guère mon boulot.

- D'accord. Moi non plus je suis pas un habitué mais je vais le baratiner. Je vais essayer de l'emmener vers la plage. Suis-nous sans te faire voir. Ça va? Quand on va passer à côté de lui tu vas faire çui qui s'en va.

- Ça va.

Ils accélèrent un peu. A la hauteur de l'homme ils se tendirent la main et Querelle dit à haute voix:

- Alors à demain. Moi y faut que je rentre. Toi t'es verni d'avoir une perm' de nuit. Allez, salut, vieux.

Il quitta le trottoir directement, en longues enjambées pour passer au trottoir opposé. Jonas sortit une cigarette de sa poche et ralentit sa marche. Avec plus d'adresse, il s'appliqua à faire se balancer le bas de son pantalon sur ses chaussures de toile blanche. La dernière phrase de Querelle lui accordait soudain une disponibilité qui rendait naturelle la nonchalance de sa démarche toute vouée à ce jeu de l'étoffe. Il était normal que sa désinvolture fût le résultat non prémédité de cette soudaine vacance et normal encore que cette vacance fût spécialement voulue afin de permettre au matelot de se livrer au jeu délectable du pantalon, à cette démarche belle entre toutes qui est la gloire de la Marine, à la possession de soi qui est toute contenue dans cette démarche (étant celle même du matelot) à la possession du soir dont les ténèbres étoilées sont contenues dans cette démarche qui est la plus troublante. Il dansait. Jonas dansait devant Hérode. Il sentait derrière lui les yeux du tyran couvert d'or mais vaincu, détailler la merveilleuse lenteur du matelot de plus en plus nonchalant, puisque la nonchalance est le prétexte de cette danse, en est l'essence. Quand l'homme le doubla, l'un et l'autre simultanément tournèrent la tête: ils avaient l'un et l'autre une cigarette, mais si Jonas l'avait au bec l'homme tenait la sienne modestement à la main.

- Pardon... Oh, vous n'avez pas...

Jonas sourit:

- Non, j'ai pas de feu. Ah! attendez, j'ai peut-être encore une flambante au fond de mes fouilles...

Il fit semblant de bouleverser le fond de ses poches et de l'une il sortit une allumette. Poliment, il alluma d'abord la cigarette du promeneur. C'était un homme plutôt fluet au visage très blanc, allongé de deux rides immenses de chaque côté de la bouche. Il était vêtu d'un élégant costume de soie beige. Tout en tirant sur sa cigarette pour l'allumer, il fixait avidement le cou nu du matelot. Jonas ne se préoccupa pas de l'âge, mais de la

corpulence du pédé.

- Un mataf, ça trouve toujours. Dans la marine, c'est comme ça qu'on flambe.

- Il faut reconnaître que les navigateurs sont rarement pris de court - car on dit de court, n'est-ce pas? - et c'est aussi ce qui fait leur charme plus éclatant. J'ose parler surtout, n'est-ce pas, des navigateurs français.

Il inclina la tête en un léger salut à Jonas. Il avait parlé d'une voix extrêmement fragile, tremblante légèrement de s'aventurer à parler à un matelot si monstrueusement existant, en chair et en os et si bon de vouloir bien l'écouter.

- Ah dame, nous autres y faut bien qu'on... qu'on se débrouille. On est des fois des semaines et des semaines en mer sans voir personne.

Tout à coup Jonas comprenait que le type appartenait au genre cérémonieux et qu'il l'effaroucherait avec des mots trop durs ou des pensées trop vives.

- Des semaines!

Le promeneur fit un geste délicat pour agiter les deux gants qu'il tenait à la main.

- Des semaines, dieux du royaume céleste! Que cela doit être d'une incomparable noblesse ainsi seul sur l'infini! Loin des siens! Loin d'une affection!

La voix était un peu plus vigoureuse mais allégée autrement de ne prononcer que des exclamations très douces, sottes et artificielles. Il n'eût pas été surprenant que ce promeneur devînt un cerf-volant de papier froissé, frisé, cousu de fil et par l'un, armé d'un hameçon lui sortant de la bouche, accroché par la gorge, ni que dans cette soirée pleine d'étoiles il fût simplement entraîné par l'une d'elles. Il ne souriait pas. Il marchait à côté de Jonas qui continuait à balancer son pantalon.

- Ça pour de l'affection, n'en a pas l'air.

- Pas l'air? Qu'est-ce que l'air? Est-il argot?

- Oui, c'est de l'argot. Et de Paris. Pourquoi, vous, vous êtes pas Français?

- Je suis arménien. Mais de cœur si français. La France est Corneille et le divin Verlaine. J'ai étudié dans une Mission Mariste. Maintenant je suis commerçant. Je vends des boissons fraîches. Des limonades gazeuses.

Se sentant soudain libéré d'une oppression, de lourdeurs maintenant précises, Jonas comprit que depuis un moment il redoutait que le pédé ne fût français. Non qu'il eût un scrupule de fumée. L'Arménien toucha, non le bras, mais un pli aigu que l'étoffe faisait au coude du matelot, et plus doucement encore, presque tremblant de son audace, il dit:

- Venez. Que risquez-vous? Je ne suis pas un monstre.

Il rit, hésitant soudain sur les derniers mots, en retirant sa main engourdie, parcourue d'étincelles givrées, d'un rire qui agita toute sa personne comme s'il eût grelotté. S'étant retourné pour savoir si Querelle les suivait, il ne vit personne.

Il craignait, puisque les deux matelots s'étaient si vite séparés, qu'ils n'eussent comploté un mauvais coup contre lui. Le même froid, mais provoqué par une autre raison, pénétrait en Jonas immobile, les jambes écartées et les mains dans les poches, sûr que cette attitude était la meilleure:

- Ah! je sais bien que je risque rien, seulement je peux pas. J'ai rien à risquer. Je suis mataf, je cherche à rigoler, je fais de mal à personne. Moi quand y s'agit de rigoler, je m'occupe de rien. J'ai les idées larges, moi, je comprends tout.

- Oh, n'est-ce pas, mon cher ami. Sur ce monde on doit avoir les idées larges. Moi-même je suis libéré de tous préconçus. Je n'aime que la beauté.

- Moi su' l'bateau, c'est 'Pas de Bile' qu'on m'appelle. Ça veut dire que je m'en fais pas. J'ai jamais jugé personne. Tout le monde est libre. On s'amuse comme on veut. Le principal c'est de pas faire du mal à personne.

- J'aime entendre ce que vous dites, de votre voix si belle. Et de plus en plus je me sens

en harmonie avec vous. Vraiment (il prit le matelot par le bras et l'étreignit avec toute sa pauvre force nerveuse qu'il appela toute pour ce geste au point de faire mal à Jonas) vraiment vous viendrez chez moi boire quelque liqueur. Un marin français ne peut refuser. Voyons, mon très cher ami, venez.

Son visage cette fois était tout à fait grave, d'une grande tristesse et d'un espoir fou portés presque tout dans ses grands yeux noirs. Il ajouta encore, mais plus bas:

- Vous êtes si étonnamment sympathique. Et puis... (sa glotte se serra, sa pomme d'Adam fit un mouvement de déglutition) et puis vous dites que vous êtes si libre à l'égard du bonheur. J'aimerais, car je suis si seul, j'aimerais vous voir un peu auprès de moi.

- On a pas besoin d'aller dans une chambre. On peut se promener un peu.

- Mais, ô mon ami, vous avoir isolé auprès de moi.

- On peut aller au bord de la mer. On peut trouver un coin où y a personne.

De lui-même il fit quelques pas apès [sic] avoir jeté sa cigarette. L'Arménien le suivit un peu.

- Ma chambre est si évocatrice. Je voudrais qu'elle conserve un peu de votre venue.

Jonas éclata de rire. Il regarda le pédé. Gentiment il dit

- Ma parole vous avez le béguin. C'est une déclaration d'amour.

- Oh! vous me... oh!... je suis confondu... mais ne croyez pas, ne vous fâchez pas... je vous aime sans doute...

- Ça va, ça va, moi j'y vois pas de mal. Je vais pas me fâcher pour ça. Pourquoi? Y a pas de mal. Seulement je peux pas. Ça y a rien à faire. Je peux pas aller chez vous. Si vous voulez on marche un petit moment, il fait bon, on va du côté de la mer, ou dans le jardin public... On sera tranquille, on peut faire ce qu'on veut...

Je ne puis. Je ne puis. On peut me reconnaître. Et en allant chez vous? Encore plus.

Ils en étaient à une discussion serrée. L'insistance du matelot pour le bord de la mer inquiéta l'Arménien qui, avec une autorité plus forte que celle de Jonas, imposa leur marche en direction du centre de la ville. La fureur montait en Jonas. Il sentait la résistance presque invincible de ce petit bonhomme d'où sourdait la méfiance. Il savait depuis longtemps que les tantes se défendent parfois avec acharnement: chez elle il ne pourrait que la tuer. Il le pensa un moment. Enfin, il savait qu'elles ont souvent le culot d'aller se plaindre à la police. Il maudissait de ne réussir à l'entraîner, et il redoutait les sarcasmes de Querelle.

'Le pédé se doute de quelque chose. Il doit avoir les jetons.'

Jonas ne pouvait savoir que l'Arménien avait désiré Querelle. En le voyant quitter son camarade, le regret, davantage, le faisait désirer Querelle. Il se contenterait bien sûr du matelot restant mais contre qui se développait un système de résistances dont l'Arménien n'avait même pas en soi le soupçon, et qu'il ne pouvait contrôler. Subtilement, ainsi que beaucoup de pédés, il craignait de s'isoler trop avec un homme plus fort que lui. Aller au bord de la mer accuserait encore sa faiblesse, car la mer est la complice des marins. Chez lui, à portée de sa main, il avait fait installer un procédé d'alarme. De plus, la poésie, pour lui, résidait dans une chambre ornée de fleurs, de cadres noirs incrustés de nacre, de tapis, de rubans, de coussins mauves, de lumières voilées. Il voulait s'agenouiller devant le matelot dévêtu et prononcer des paroles suaves. Et toutes ces raisons puisaient leur force dans celle-ci que Jonas ignorait: le pédé regrettait Querelle et sourdement, lourdement, espérait qu'en lâchant prise, en se libérant de Jonas, il le retrouverait. Enfin à toutes ces raisons, à ces peurs, s'ajoutait une autre peur: plus il aime un garçon et plus il le redoute, et déjà il aime Querelle mais il porte sur Jonas la crainte qu'il aurait eue de Querelle.

- Alors, qu'est-ce qu'on fait?

- Venez chez moi.

- Allez, ça va, va. Salut. On se quitte bons copains. On se reverra peut-être un de ces jours.

Ils étaient dans une rue éclairée et très fréquentée. Jonas, très vite, presque brutal, avait saisi la main de l'Arménien effrayé et disparaissait à longues enjambées houleuses, à larges masses des épaules, à lointaine allure dont le rythme de plus en plus lourd et vaste, croissant à mesure que Jonas s'en allait, entraînait dans le cœur, où il s'entassait, du pédé désespéré. Jonas ne retrouva pas son camarade. Mais dix minutes après cette dernière scène, alors qu'il rentrait chez soi, à un angle de rue, l'Arménien buta contre la marche blanche et haute de Querelle.

- Oh!

Il ne put retenir l'exclamation. Querelle sourit.

- Qu'est-ce qu'i y a? Je vous fais peur? Je suis pas si terrible.

- Oh!... vous êtes terriblement éblouissant.

Querelle sourit plus fort. Il était sûr, instantanément, que Jonas n'avait rien 'pu faire' avec le type mais il ignorait ce qui s'était passé.

- Vous... vous étincelez! Votre visage m'illumine!

Ironique et souriant Querelle fit entendre un léger sifflement dans lequel il mit, naturellement, tant de facile tendresse qu'à son tour l'Arménien sourit. En quittant Jonas il avait éprouvé, à l'égard de soi, une grande rage de laisser s'enfuir une conquête si bien faite, et si belle en somme. De ne retrouver dans un soir peuplé de gens silencieux le matelot entrevu, son désespoir mêlé à sa rage et à la joie si brusque de cette rencontre, lui donnèrent une rare audace qu'encourageait encore le sourire et la gentillesse amusée du matelot. La carrure et la taille de Querelle l'écrasaient mais le sourire prouvait que ce monstre de vigueur était possédé par l'Arménien.

- Vous au moins vous savez jacter!

Très vite l'Arménien persuada Querelle de l'accompagner chez lui. Il refit toutes les mômeries auxquelles il s'était livré devant Jonas, mais il les refit plus brèves, plus serrées, plus compactes. Il était exalté. Il oublia toute prudence, jusqu'à chasser de son esprit la pointe inquiétante de cette idée: 'Pourquoi ce matelot a-t-il dit devant moi qu'il rentrait à bord? Et je le retrouve loin du port.' Dans sa chambre il alluma un bâtonnet d'encens. Querelle admira cet intérieur calfeutré et douillet qu'il croyait somptueux. Une étrange douceur l'engourdissait, le reposait. Les coussins étaient moelleux, le tapis épais, les fleurs compliquées. Le bois noir des meubles et des cadres contenait toute l'essence du repos. Tant de mollesse écrasait Querelle et lui accordait la paix des noyés. Son attention s'émoussait.

- Vous êtes chez vous. Vous êtes le seigneur de cet empire. Disposez.

'Disposez' troubla Querelle mais ce trouble encore était de nature ensevelissante. Il pensa, mais plutôt qu'avec des mots, - et encore qu'il y eût des mots ci et là dans cette vague musique - à l'aide d'images de fleurs aux formes bizarres et savantes, constamment mouvantes, formant une longue guirlande ou mélodie qui voulait dire ceci (dont elle causait l'inquiétude haussée jusqu'à l'angoisse et retombée à l'acceptation): 'Faudra tout de même pas que j'aïlle jusqu'à me faire enculer.' Car pour Querelle un pédé ce n'est encore qu'un gars qui en baise un autre. Si tant de haine (celle qu'il avait remarquée autour de lui, n'en portant soi-même aucune), se répand sur ceux qu'entre matelots on nommait les tantouzes, c'est qu'évidemment (même s'ils ont des manières de femmes) ils cherchent à faire de vous une femme. Sinon - dans le cas inverse - pourquoi les haïr? Querelle détenait cette candeur que l'on confond volontiers avec la pureté. Pourtant son inquiétude, non seulement dura peu, mais encore qu'elle fût nauséuse, elle ne le marqua pas. 'On verra bien.' Impassible au fond des coussins, fumant par longues goulées, il

regardait l'Arménien de plus en plus affolé par l'approche du moment espéré. Querelle le regardait minauder, se poudrer, servir avec les gestes nerveux de mains ravissantes de petitesse et de soins qu'il admirera plus tard chez le lieutenant de vaisseau, une liqueur rose dans de minuscules tasses à café.

- C'est rigolo. Si c'est ça les pédés, c'est pas méchant.

- Je m'appelle Joachim. Et toi, mon bel étoilé?

- Moi?

Il était surpris. Il était délicieusement envahi par cette douceur qu'il connaîtra plus tard, quand, sur le quai d'embarquement, le lieutenant Seblon, entraîné par le poids charmant de ses lourds seins blancs, se penchera sur lui en songeant:

- Mes globes d'albâtre!

Ces globes d'albâtre pesaient. L'officier les savait pâles, laiteux, lunaires, durs et tendres à la fois, mais surtout gonflés d'un lait dont il était sûr de pouvoir nourrir Querelle relevant déjà la tête.

- Oui, toi?

- Moi, je m'appelle Querelle. Matelot...

Il hésita, car déjà il avait compris que l'erreur était commise. Suspendu quelques secondes sur le vide, il se résolut pourtant et dit: ... Querelle.

- Oh! quel beau nom!

- Oui, Querelle. Matelot Georges Querelle.

Sur les coussins l'Arménien était à genoux devant lui. Le kimono de soie rose pâle brodé d'oiseaux d'or et d'argent était entrebâillé sur un torse et sur des jambes parfaitement blancs et lisses. Querelle, à cause de sa fatigue, vit cet étrange dispositif s'avancer vers lui avec l'énormité soudaine des choses qu'on rêve et dont le grossissement paraît être le fait d'une loupe puissante rapprochant l'objet regardé jusqu'à ce qu'il se confonde avec soi. C'était curieux: Querelle sourit. Jusqu'à sa bouche l'Arménien haussa la sienne. Querelle pencha la tête décidant d'aller au-devant du premier baiser qu'il recevait d'un homme. Un léger vertige s'empara de lui. Il lui plaisait de tout oser dans cette chambre destinée à cela vraiment, où il était si peu en vie, si peu éveillé. Il lui semblait faire une conquête. Il souriait mais il était grave. Nous ne pouvons dire mieux que ceci: il était dans cette chambre aussi tranquille qu'à l'intérieur d'un ventre maternel. Il avait chaud.

- Ton sourire est une étoile.

Querelle sourit davantage. Ses dents blanches brillèrent. Il n'était pas troublé par le jeu de Joachim, ni par la vue de sa peau blanche (il le sera un peu tout à l'heure en découvrant que toute cette peau est poudrée et parfumée) mais il le fut légèrement par le trouble amoureux qu'il découvrit dans les beaux yeux noirs fixés sur les siens et battus de longs cils recourbés.

- Oh! tes dents sont étoilées!

Joachim laissa glisser sa main jusqu'aux couilles du matelot. Par-dessus la toile blanche il les caressa en murmurant:

- Ces trésors, ces bijoux...

Querelle écrasa violemment sa bouche sur celle de l'Arménien. Il le serra très fort dans ses bras.

- Tu es une étoile immense et cette étoile toujours illuminera ma vie. Tu es une étoile d'or! Protège-moi...

Querelle l'étrangla. Il sourit durement en regardant le pédé mourir par ses doigts crispés, mourir la bouche ouverte, la langue tendue affreusement, les yeux exorbités, semblable, crut-il, à ce qu'il était lui-même pendant ses jouissances solitaires. Un flot merveilleux scandait le silence de ses oreilles. Le monde bourdonnait. La mer murmurait.

*'C'est l'étoile d'amour...  
 ... Tous les marins ont une étoile  
 Qui les protège...  
 Quand à leurs yeux rien ne la voile  
 Le malheur ne peut rien contre eux'...*

Les yeux de l'Arménien s'immobilisèrent tout à coup, se ternirent. Plus rien ne chanta. Querelle fut attentif à la mort, au changement soudain du sens des objets. C'est très doux, un petit pédé. Ça meurt gentiment. Sans rien casser.

Afin de respecter une tradition devenue cérémonie rituelle, née en lui par la nécessité (afin de couvrir sa fuite, comme cette ombrelle posée ouverte près d'elle et semblant protéger du soleil la jeune fille assassinée dans un pré) de travestir le crime, de grimer le tableau final du meurtre, grâce à un objet qui, disposé d'une certaine façon, semblait avoir 'suspendu' la vie, Querelle, inspiré par l'expression heureuse du visage de la victime, lui entr'ouvrit la braguette et arrangea les deux mains mortes, prêtes pour le plaisir. Il sourit. Les pédérastes, au bourreau, présentent un cou délicat. On peut affirmer - nous le verrons plus tard que c'est la victime qui fait le bourreau. Cette inquiétude chronique, éternelle, que l'on sent trembler dans la voix des tantes, même les plus arrogantes, est déjà un tendre appel à la main terrible de l'assassin. Querelle vit son visage dans la glace: il était très beau. Il sourit à son image, à ce double d'un assassin vêtu de blanc, de bleu, et cravaté de satin noir. Querelle prit tout l'argent qu'il trouva et très calme il sortit. Dans l'escalier un peu sombre il croisa une femme. Le lendemain matin tous les matelots du 'Vengeur' étaient rassemblés sur le pont. Les deux jeunes gens qui avaient rencontré la veille Joachim avec Jonas cherchèrent à découvrir le visage du matelot. Ils désignèrent Jonas qui se débattit pendant six mois contre les interrogatoires, lutta, combattit avec violence et tristesse le mystère d'une femme voilée de noir rencontrant sur le matin un matelot français dans l'escalier d'un Arménien avec qui lui-même s'était promené quelques heures plus tôt dans la rue. Et cet Arménien était étranglé à l'heure même où Jonas marchait en direction du 'Vengeur'. Par politesse à l'égard d'un pays sous mandat français, à cause aussi de l'attitude révoltée de l'accusé, le tribunal maritime condamna Jonas à mort. Il fut exécuté. Querelle avait son étoile. Il quitta Beyrouth chargé de trésors. Chargé de cette étoile d'abord, des beaux noms que lui avait donnés le pédé, et de la certitude d'avoir entre les jambes un trésor accroché. Ce meurtre avait été facile. Et inévitable puisque Querelle avait donné son véritable nom. Il permettait que Jonas - un vrai pote - fût tué. Ce sacrifice accordait à Querelle le droit absolu de disposer sans remords de la petite fortune en livres syriennes et en monnaies de toutes les nations du monde, dérobée dans la chambre de Joachim. Ç'avait été la payer assez cher. Enfin, si un pédé c'était comme cela, un être aussi léger, aussi fragile, aussi aérien, aussi transparent, aussi doux, aussi délicat, aussi brisé, aussi clair, aussi bavard, aussi mélodieux, aussi tendre, on pouvait le tuer, étant fait pour être tué comme un cristal de Venise n'attend que la main large du guerrier qui l'écrasera sans même se couper (sauf peut-être la coupure insidieuse, hypocrite, d'une aiguille de verre, aiguë et brillante, et qui restera dans la chair). Si c'est cela un pédé, ce n'est pas un homme. Ça ne pèse pas lourd. C'est un petit chat, un bouvreuil, un faon, un orvet, une libellule dont la fragilité même est provocatrice et précisément exagérée afin qu'elle attire inévitablement la mort. En plus, ça s'appelle Joachim.

Alors qu'il venait [...]

329 [...] à l'avantage de Querelle. Un soir même [...]



(220) [...] à l'avantage de Querelle. (Par confusion charmante, nous voulons dire un trouble léger mais sensible, qui brouilla sa personnalité, en confondit un peu les traits et de ce fait, fit osciller cette beauté parfaite dans l'indécision, la fit un instant vaciller, rechercher son équilibre et sa netteté, avec une hésitation touchante de se manifester à la surface d'une matière si dure.) Un soir même [...]

343 [...] *j'en suis sûr.*

*Plutôt qu'un guerrier [...]*

(237) '[...] j'en suis sur.'

'Il m'a semblé le surprendre dans un mouvement de sa machine, dans une crispation, m'adressant toute sa haine. Querelle *doit* me haïr.'

'Plutôt qu'un guerrier [...]'

345-346 [...] de ridiculiser son frère. Madame Lysiane éprouvait cruellement, passionnément, que c'était grâce à Querelle qu'elle était, comme Mario et Norbert, sortie de la solitude où son départ les faisait rentrer. Il était apparu au milieu d'eux avec la soudaine promptitude et l'élégance du joker. Il brouillait les figures mais leur donnait un sens. Quant à Querelle, en quittant la chambre de la patronne, il connaissait un étrange sentiment: il la quittait avec peine. Cependant qu'il s'habillait, lentement, avec un peu de tristesse, son regard se posa sur la photo du patron, accrochée au mur. L'un après l'autre il revit les visages de ses amis: Nono, Robert, Mario, Gil. Il éprouva comme une sorte de mélancolie, une crainte à peine consciente qu'ils ne vieillissent sans lui et, vaguement, bercé déjà jusqu'à l'écoeurement par les soupirs et, dans l'armoire à glace, les gestes trop distingués de Madame Lysiane, qui s'habillait derrière lui, il désira les entraîner dans le crime afin de les y figer, afin qu'ils ne puissent aimer ailleurs ou autrement qu'à travers lui seul. Quand il s'approcha d'elle, Madame Lysiane était vidée de tous sanglots. Sur son visage les cheveux que les épingles retenaient mal étaient collés par les larmes, le rouge des lèvres coulait un peu. Querelle la serra contre lui déjà rigide dans son armure de drap bleu marine, et il l'embrassa sur les joues. Voici par quoi nous devons éclairer [...]

(240) [...] de ridiculiser son frère. Le lendemain, il la baisa, deux jours après encore, enfin une quatrième fois. Voici par quoi nous devons éclairer [...]

350 [...] *Jésus mort.*

Immobile à sa caisse [...]

(244) [...] *Jésus mort.*'

Nono conservait l'air placide, indifférent. Il dit:

- I's'engueulent. I'se tapent su'la gueule. On sait pas bien ce qu'i' font.
- Qu'est-ce qu'ils se disent?
- Tu le sais pas, non? Tu vas pas commencer à jouer les pucelles? Et pas me prendre non pus pour un con. T'entends? Qu'tu te farcisses des jeunes je m'en fous, mais ce que je t'demande c'est de pas amener le pétard ici.

La voix du patron était sévère. Il ne regardait pas sa femme. Il continuait d'arranger les bouteilles. Il ajouta:

- I'n'se battent pas pour de bon va. I's'donnent des coups qui s'ront vite guéris. C'est

des chats.

En elle-même le drame s'accélérait. Immobile à sa caisse [...]

350 Elle était seule. [end of *OEuvres complètes* text]

(246-247) [...] Elle était seule. Elle le reconnaissait à une espèce de gentillesse affectée sous quoi Querelle n'arrivait pas à dissimuler son impatience. Quand il fut dévêtu, allongé près d'elle, Madame Lysiane commença ses plaintes et ses menaces. Querelle en rit d'abord. Pour la calmer il plaisanta. Mais peu à peu, par un glissement habituel, la plaisanterie à laquelle se prêtait Madame Lysiane, le conduisit à faire l'aveu de ses aventures avec Nono.

- C'est pas vrai.

- Quoi c'est pas vrai? Pisque j'te l'dis? Demandes-y.

Madame Lysiane était atterrée. Il lui paraissait évident, si Querelle avait couché avec Nono, qu'il avait aimé Robert au point d'avoir un enfant de lui. De plus en plus elle était hors du jeu. Le plus beau, le plus monstrueux s'accomplissait devant elle. Elle dit:

- Des histoires. Je sais bien qu'il y a des hommes et des femmes qui font ça. Mais de la part de Nono c'est pas vrai. C'est des histoires qu'on raconte.

Querelle éclata de rire.

- Si tu veux. Si t'y tiens, tu sais, moi ça me laisse froid.

Elle releva un peu, comme avec pudeur car elle sentait que là résidait sa honteuse féminité, les cheveux qui glissaient sur son visage et regardant Querelle avec une hardiesse désespérée, elle dit:

- Alors tu es un tapette.

Le mot tapette le blessa. Mais il rit parce qu'il savait que l'on dit: 'une' tapette.

Ça te fait rire?

Moi? Qu'est-ce que tu veux que ca m'fasse? Nono aussi alors, ç'en est une.

Et Robert?

Quoi Robert? J'm'occupe pas d'lui. J'fais c'qui m'plaît.

N'osant pas l'injurier franchement, elle dit:

'Ça me dégoûte.' Elle reprit ses plaintes embrouillées mêlées de salive et de cheveux. Querelle d'abord la caressa pour la consoler puis, agacé, il fit mine de partir. Madame Lysiane s'accrocha à lui qui s'échappait cependant, dont le corps lisse glissait, remontant vers le haut du lit quand celui de sa maîtresse, en tirant à elle, descendait. Gémissante, dépeignée, elle n'eut bientôt entre les mains que le talon délicat du matelot qui s'arrachait du lit, les bras nus, tendus vers le papier du mur comme pour se coller à lui, accrocher ses doigts aux bouquets bleus et roses, aux corbeilles fragiles, l'escalader. Quand il fut tout à fait, la verge molle, les cheveux défaits, hors des draps, debout, Madame Lysiane en face d'elle n'avait pas deux adversaires quelconques que l'on peut vaincre par d'habiles coquetteries, c'est un ennemi qui l'écrasait d'emblée par des forces non ajoutées, mais multipliées à l'infini puisque entre ces deux visages existait une entente qui n'était plus d'amitié ou d'utilité mais d'une autre nature, indestructible par le fait d'être scellée, forgée dans le ciel sublime où les ressemblances s'épousent, et plus profondément encore dans le ciel des ciels où s'est à elle-même épousée la Beauté. Au pied du lit, Madame Lysiane fut certaine de son abandon.

- Tu vois! Tu vois!

Elle ne pouvait que répéter ces pauvres mots, mêlés à ses larmes et sa morve.

- Mais c'est toi que je comprends pas. Avec vous autres on sait jamais. Oh puis dis, tu me courres avec tes larmes. J'suis un marin, moi. Ma femme, c'est la mer; ma maîtresse, c'est mon capitaine.

- Tu me dégoûtes!

[subscribers' edition text ends with paragraph moved to 345-346 in *OEuvres complètes*, see above]

## 5.4 APPENDIX D

*Pompes funèbres, Excisions and Variants*

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Page references to the *OEuvres complètes* edition of 1953 are followed by the text of the subscribers' edition with page references to the Gallimard 'Collection L'imaginaire' reprint of 1978 in parenthesis.

9 [...] qui recrutait ses tortionnaires parmi les Français.

(7) [...] qui recrutait ses plus terribles tortionnaires parmi les Français.

10 [...] de Paulo, de Riton.

(9) [...] de Paulo l'enculé, de Riton.

13 Mort sur les barricades du 19 août 1944 [...]

(14) Mort sur les barricades du dix-neuf août mil neuf cent quarante-quatre [...]

14 [...] de ce tombeau qu'est mon corps dévêtu.

(14) [...] de ce tombeau de marbre de Carrare qu'est mon corps dévêtu.

17 Quatre mois plus tôt Juliette [...]

(20) Il y a quatre mois, Juliette [...]

19 [...] du côté des hommes. L'ordonnateur des pompes funèbres [...]

(24) [...] du côté des hommes. Ce suisse, un ordonnateur des pompes funèbres [...]

24 [...] les cuisses d'Erik et Paulo [...]

(31) [...] les cuisses d'Erik, et que je partagerais mes amours avec Erik et Paulo [...]

25 La seule masse de cet homme m'écrasait.

(33) La seule masse de ce type m'écrasait.

29 Pourtant elle ne sembla pas [...]

(38) Pourtant elle ne parut pas [...]

33 [...] avec sa mère.

Il s'en alla.

(45) [...] avec sa mère. Il s'appelait Paul Cramaille. Paulo, que les descriptions de Jean faisaient si beau, si méchant aussi, et qui fut condamné pour avoir dévalisé l'appartement des Chemelats.

Il s'en alla.

34 [...] sans rien dire. Pour ouvrir [...]

(47) [...] sans rien dire, sans expression. Pour ouvrir [...]

35 [...] de la Milice.

La bonne [...]

(47-48) [...] de la Milice. Les galons de capitaine l'avaient ennobli. Chaque matin, il

arrivait à son bureau, le planton ayant fait le ménage, épousseté la table. Au fond de la pièce, dans une vitrine, le drapeau français était déployé. C'était un drapeau dont l'étoffe de soie était lourde étant double, brodée et frangée d'or. Sans même se retourner pour fermer la porte mais la claquant d'un coup de talon en arrière, le capitaine faisait quelques mètres et s'arrêtait à trois pas du drapeau qu'il saluait. Tous les matins il saluait ainsi le drapeau dont il était le gardien. Il ressentait la joie d'être en tête à tête solitaire avec la France, de pouvoir lui rendre visite aux heures qu'il voulait, même la nuit.

Il retirait son béret et s'asseyait à sa table.

La bonne [...]

35 [...] de m'exprimer. Mon désespoir [...]

(48) [...] de m'exprimer. Quand j'eus franchi la porte de l'immeuble et fait vingt mètres dans la rue, je me retournai. Devant la maison, Paulo, assis sur la selle de son vélo, était rangé au bord du trottoir. Il était en short. Une cuisse était debout, droite, le muscle tendu et l'autre, horizontale et nue aussi, était à la hauteur de la main appuyée au guidon. Paulo sourit: c'est-à-dire qu'il releva, sans toutefois découvrir une seule dent, le coin droit de sa bouche. Tout le côté droit du visage fut un instant crispé, puis l'impassibilité revint aussitôt. Un moment je crus que les yeux du jeune homme se perdaient sur cette surface brune, frissonnant d'une toison dorée et bouclée, mais son regard très précis chercha l'heure sur son poignet. Il partit sans me voir. Mon désespoir [...]

36 Une femme vêtue [sic] de rayonne claire, à côté de moi, se démenait. Elle écumait et sur son fauteuil faisait tressauter ses fesses. Elle gueula:

(50) Une femme de saindoux, vêtue de rayonne claire, à côté de moi, se démenait. Elle écumait et sur son fauteuil faisait tressauter ses énormes fesses. Elle gueula:

39 [...] cet amour.

Après [...]

(55-57) cet amour. Paulo avait vingt ans en 1940. A son retour d'Allemagne, fin 42, où il avait fait plutôt le truand que le travailleur dévoué - bien que ce fût la photographie de son visage grave que les services d'embauche du Reich eussent mis sur les affiches de publicité collées sur les murs et sur les palissades de la France entière - il essaya d'entrer dans une organisation, quelle qu'elle fût, qui distribuait à ses membres des armes: d'abord dans la Gestapo française qui ne voulut pas de lui, n'étant pas parrainé. Pour y pénétrer il fallait, en effet, être présenté par un des macs (Corses ou Marseillais) tenant à Montmartre le haut du pavé. Malgré ses grandes qualités, très voisines des qualités d'Erik dont il s'écartait par une grâce plus légère et la chance de pouvoir parler l'argot, Paulo n'était qu'un petit voleur, un cambrioleur sans classe. Ayant échoué à la Gestapo, il essaya la Résistance française qui combattait dans le maquis. Le maquis le refusa. La Milice aussi. Il continua son petit boulot de casseur avec Riton, qui le reconnaissait pour chef. Un soir Riton trahit son admiration pour Paulo. Ils rentraient, après avoir piqué dans un petit hôtel une couverture et un drap. Comme Erik caressait son cou pour être sûr de sa force, Paulo dans sa poche caressait le muscle tendu de sa cuisse. Il le sentait saillir en marchant. Le soir du 20 janvier 1943, il était fauché. Dans la rue, il marchait à côté et un peu en avant de Riton qui portait le drap et la couverture sous son bras. Riton le regarda. Il vit son dos. Le veston de Paulo, gris à gros chevrons, était à soufflet, avec une martingale, et fendu. Le pantalon, de la même étoffe, assez large tombait droit, cachait le talon et se cassait sur le cou-du-pied. Ses jambes étaient très, très légèrement arquées, de sorte qu'on voyait un peu de ciel à la hauteur du genou et des mollets quand on marchait derrière lui, d'en bas de la rue. Il ne se balançait pas, mais, encore que sa

marche fût très souple, il posait sur le sol le pied avec tant de fermeté que cela donnait à tout son corps, à chaque pas, une légère secousse. Il marchait vite. Il semblait s'éloigner de Riton que pourtant il tirait à lui, un peu en arrière, et Riton était tellement séduit par la marche de son pote qu'il crut que Paulo bandait, que cette démarche magnifique faisait bander celui même qui l'exécutait. Riton eut le courage d'un effort héroïque pour ne pas offrir à Paulo d'être sur-le-champ, à trois heures de l'après-midi, emmanché par lui, sur le trottoir, dans la rue des Martyrs. Il marcha un peu plus vite pour se mettre à sa hauteur et il lui demanda, essoufflé, mais souriant:

- Dis Paulo?

- Quoi qui gna?

Il marchait la tête baissée, comme chaque fois qu'il était triste d'être fauché. Le butin même était désolant: le drap et la couverture serviraient au premier des deux mêmes qui retournerait en tôle où, depuis la guerre, on ne donne ni draps, ni couvertures.

- J'ai une drôle d'idée, tu sais!

- Quelle idée?

- J'ai l'impression qu'tu bandes quand tu marches. Ça doit t'faire bander ta marche.

Paulo se retourna vers Riton. Il parut étonné d'abord, puis il sourit.

- T'as remarqué? J'marche bien, non? Ça te plaît?

Il fit encore un pas, s'arrêta et regarda fixement Riton:

- J'm'aime quand j'marche, ça j'dis pas, mais ça me fait quand même pas goder.

Puis il repartit, le dos un peu courbé et les mains dans les poches. Il connaissait sa beauté. Il était un de ceux qui eussent admis, à mon instigation, que les hommes les plus beaux s'emparassent du pouvoir, osant parler alors de la France éternelle. La beauté est puissante et je ne doute pas qu'un jour on arrive à l'utiliser à des fins pratiques, comme donner de la lumière ou une force motrice.

Après [...]

41 [...] après.

Ma main en cherchant ses cheveux pour les caresser frôla son visage et c'est la joue que je caressai.

Porter les chemises [...]

(60-61) [...] après.

- Oh, Jean!

Ma main en cherchant ses cheveux pour les caresser frôla son visage et c'est la joue que je caressai. Pendant que je me tournais pour allumer, il dut faire le geste de repousser les draps (nous étions mouillés par la sueur) car, à la lumière, je le vis qui considérait, loin de lui, à bout de bras, ses mains tendues dont les ongles et les extrémités étaient rouges. Son visage où la sueur perlait avait de longues marques de sang. Je regardai mes mains. Elles étaient tachées de sang. Je m'étonne qu'il m'eût adressé le poème qui suit, car Jean ne paraissait jamais troublé par ces interventions, et il considérait les actes non avec cette peur légère qui fait toujours le fond de la vision poétique, mais sèchement, pratiquement.

- Qu'est-ce qu'il y a? On saigne?

Il tenait toujours ses mains en avant, semblant les chauffer à des roses, mais il inspectait posément les draps. Ma verge saignait. Je compris avant lui. Parce que j'y avais été trop dur, sans souci de ses plaintes j'avais écorché son cul, et ma queue, prise dans un cheveu ou un poil s'était coupée légèrement. Ainsi nous avons mêlé notre sang. Il me dit:

- Tu as mal?

- Non c'est rien. Et toi?

Il haussa une épaule et sauta du lit jusqu'au lavabo. Quand il se recoucha il avait les mains glacées. Il me parla avec tant de calme qu'afin de ramener un peu d'émotion parmi nous, ou peut-être par cruauté, pour me venger de sa lucidité, je passai mon index entre ses fesses, le retirai sanglant et traçai en souriant, sur sa joue droite une faucille avec un marteau rudimentaire, et sur sa joue gauche une croix gammée. Il se fâcha. Nous nous battîmes. Rageur, honteux, il se rhabilla en vitesse, en silence, et il rentra chez lui. Quelques jours après il m'apporta ce poème:

*La paume de mes mains refusant tous ces dons  
La nuit dansera seule au bord de notre tombe  
Une danse arrachée aux objets les plus pauvres  
Le pas du sel, du blé, la pavane du plâtre*

*Et des cristaux de soufre. Accroupi dans la mousse...  
Quoi, le malheur me tue et me parle d'un pâtre!  
Laisse-moi me vêtir pour gagner tes misères  
Ces reposoirs de sel des marches souterraines*

*Les bosquets de sapins, puissance des ténèbres  
Ton oeil. A voir dans les minutes entrouvertes  
Immobile un galop s'échapper sous tes pieds  
A remettre à tes doigts mes armes dangereuses*

*Je te reconnais juste et sainte dans le sang  
Beau jeune homme au poignet de qui cent roses tintent  
Cette faucille est endormie dans l'herbe noire  
Chantant, chantant la mort les morts de la victoire.*

Porter les chemises [...]

41 [...] en mon corps.

Le langage

(62) [...] en mon corps.

Le poème, était-il beau, je ne peux y répondre honnêtement ne sachant ce qu'est la beauté. Les mots 'beaux' et 'beauté' dans ce livre (et les autres) ont un pouvoir qui tient à leur matière même. Ils ne signifient plus rien d'intelligible. Je les emploie comme on met un diamant sur telle indifférente partie d'une robe et non pour qu'il serve de bouton. Le poème était autre chose. Ces quatre vers, j'ai voulu les mêler à douze autres (comme son sang s'était mêlé au mien. Je sais que ces jeux sont puérils, mais pas plus que les cérémonies de la signature d'un traité entre grandes puissances, pas plus que les solennités de la purification au carrefour de Retondes, pas plus que le jeu des initiales entrelacées dans l'écorce, pas plus...) ces quatre vers sortant par la bouche de Jean (je tiens au mot) un (un corps ou une âme?) révélaient une âme irisée, mais de tons nocturnes ou très vifs, riches en paysages avec des acteurs aux gestes étincelants. Le langage [...]

41 [...] votre sperme.

Avec le souvenir [...]

(63) [...] votre sperme.

... *mes armes dangereuses* ...

Avec le souvenir [...]

44 [...] il s'encornait.

Toute ma jeunesse [...]

(67-68) [...] il s'encornait.

## ERIK

Voici quelques notes qui essaient de préciser l'image d'Erik. Je prends des gestes choisis sur des jeunes gens qui passent. C'est tantôt un soldat français, un américain, un voyou, un barman... Ils m'offrent tout à coup un geste qui ne peut être que d'Erik. Je le noterai. Les réflexions notées furent entendues ou prononcées par moi.

Les sentiments sont les miens. Il m'arrive d'essayer de refaire le geste découvert. Je note l'état qu'il me fait connaître. Je note encore certains sentiments que je crois être à Erik en face de certains faits.

Suivront quelques faits qui préciseront l'image de Paulo, de Riton, de Hitler, de Pierrot. Je m'accrochais au cou du bourreau.

Un jour j'exigeai d'assister comme aide, comme second, à l'exécution d'un criminel. C'est moi qui tins la tête sur le billot. Je n'aspirais pas à la place de bourreau fonctionnaire, mais je me tuais moi-même afin de pouvoir tuer plus tard sans danger.

Quand j'étais en colère les chiens aboyaient contre moi.

Le bourreau, c'est ma femme. Je le méprise de se laisser mettre. Pourtant sa queue est deux fois plus grosse que la mienne. C'est par elle - sans se servir d'elle - qu'il me domine.

J'aime les gosses de treize à quinze ans. J'aime leur douceur. Je les aime par haine du bourreau qui est leur contraire. J'aime en eux ce que je fus: un enfant blond, yeux clairs, bouche grave. Ils me sont aussi très étrangers. Je suis un homme. Un homme botté. Mon regard est à un autre niveau que le leur: pour les voir il se dirige vers le bas. J'éprouve de la tendresse pour eux. Pour regarder le bourreau je lève la tête.

Je voudrais être un pur salaud et tuer ceux que j'aime, les beaux adolescents, afin de connaître par une plus grande douleur mon plus profond amour pour eux. Au milieu de cette douleur je voudrais découvrir la présence lumineuse de la liberté. Et pourtant j'aime rire. Toute ma jeunesse [...]

47 Leurs genoux trouaient la brume.

(72) Leurs beaux genoux trouaient la brume.

49 [...] c'était le boulevard de Ménilmontant. Ménilmontant quartier du gosse.

Une phrase [...]

(75-76) [...]c'était le boulevard de Ménilmontant. Ménilmontant, c'était son bled, au gosse.

L'aventure militaire mena Erik à Paris. Place du Combat, à Belleville, il rencontra une nuit un groupe de jeunes miliciens à qui il demanda son chemin. Parmi eux était Riton. Erik conduisit sur son visage le rayon de sa lampe de poche, puis instantanément, il le dirigea sur la braguette de Riton. Le coin sombre fut auréolé et le même lui dit avec l'accent canaille:

- Tu veux la bronzer?

Riton ne vit pas le visage du soldat. Il en fut un peu agacé. En passant dans l'ombre, Erik lui caressa la joue et s'en fut de son pas large, aventureux, vers l'hôtel où il avait loué une petite chambre. Cet hôtel s'appelait *l'Henry's Hotel*.



La caresse d'Erik mit un peu de fraîcheur dans l'âme de Riton. Elle lui apporta la promesse d'une aurore, le réconfort d'une épaule où s'appuyer, d'une poitrine où cacher toute la détresse qui faisait le fond de la vie de miliciens dont Riton portait, avec beaucoup de coquetterie, le costume bleu sombre. Cet uniforme rendait plus lumineux l'éclairage de son petit visage dont la beauté était blessée, de ce fait exalté par l'arrogance constante, épuisante, qu'il devait soutenir contre le mépris.

Une phrase [...]

51 [...] leur mort m'est précieuse.

Le recrutement de la Milice se fit surtout parmi [...]

(79) [...] Leur mort m'est précieuse.

La Milice était une organisation de gars armés dont l'Allemagne avait permis en France la création, à condition qu'elle fût dévouée au gouvernement français imposé par l'Allemagne et d'abord dévouée à l'Allemagne. Le recrutement s'en fit surtout parmi [...]

54 [...] être enfilé.

Quelque temps après [...]

(83-86) [...] être enfilé.

Peu à peu les deux amants se liaient. Ils mélangeaient leur linge et leurs gestes. Une sorte d'amitié les unissait, cependant qu'Erik ne pouvait s'empêcher de savoir que la pureté du ciel et la fraîcheur des arbres lui étaient refusées car ils étaient pleins du rire moqueur et inaccessible des filles. La nuit, quand il sortait de chez le bourreau pour regagner la caserne, il entra dans une pissotière ou un bosquet et sur ses joues il mettait avec les doigts une légère marque rouge afin de laisser croire à ses camarades qu'il venait de quitter les filles.

Le bourreau couvrait Erik d'un pauvre luxe criard. Il lui achetait des chemises de soie, des chaînes d'acier, des couteaux, des bagues d'argent. C'était peu, mais cela suffisait à désarmer l'enfant qui n'avait pas la force de s'arracher à cet épais confort retrouvé chaque soir. Or, la rancœur s'amoncelait en lui et fortifiait son désir de liberté. Pourtant, au cœur de cet esclavage Erik avait pris une attitude et une voix autoritaires qui le soulageaient un peu. Un jour que son ami lui reprochait d'avoir trop dépensé, Erik ricana et dit:

- Je t'emmerde.

Le bourreau était assis devant la table, il le regarda:

- Calme-toi.

Ses grosses mains, épaisses et larges étaient posées à plat sur la nappe.

- Je ne te le dis pas pour te le reprocher.

- Je me moque de ton argent. Si j'en veux je sais où en trouver.

- Où?

- Ça me regarde.

- Qu'est-ce que tu veux dire?

- Tu voudrais que je t'explique?

- Où? Dans le Tiergarten, comme les putains?

- Et après?

- Salaud!

Le bourreau se leva. Pour la première fois contre Erik il osait avoir des mouvements vifs. Il voulut contourner la table, mais il comprit que le gosse qui déjà était près de la porte, serait plus lesté que lui.

- Erik!

Il le fixa d'un regard qu'il croyait méchant.

- Erik, ne sors pas.
- Pourquoi?
- Ne sors pas!
- Et si je sors?

Il y eut un instant de silence. D'une façon toute naturelle le bourreau mit sa main dans sa poche, et sur un ton plus doux, presque de prière, il ajouta:

- Non, ne sors pas Erik!
- Tu ne m'empêcheras pas...
- Je te tue.

Le bourreau murmura l'exclamation en tirant de sa poche son couteau qu'il venait d'y ouvrir. Il ne le brandit pas, mais il eut un geste pour viser, sans presque faire remuer son poignet.

- Salaud! Si tu fais un pas de plus je te cloue!

Erik eut peur. Cette lame dans une pareille main déchaînait à nouveau toute la fantasmagorie sanglante que le mot de bourreau avait évoquée dans le Tiergarten. La bouche sèche il put dire:

- Tu es fou.
- Je vais te tuer.

La position du corps du monstre était effrayante et sa face. Erik dit encore:

- Tu peux frapper, je ne me défendrai pas.

C'était une suprême rouerie qui Pour un moment les sauvait tous les deux. Le bourreau n'oserait pas toucher un gosse sans défense, mais devant tant de bassesse il montra une telle rage ou du dégoût, que sa main trembla. Dans un grand geste théâtral il porta cette main armée à son front comme pour chasser une injonction au meurtre qui risquait d'être plus forte que lui, il regarda son couteau avec effroi, et il le lança par la fenêtre. La fenêtre était fermée. Le couteau traversa une vitre et tomba dans la rue. Faisant croire au bourreau que son geste était violent, ce bruit de carreau cassé semblait couronner une situation tragique, la clore. Il permettait aux deux héros de reprendre haleine, poser pied. Le bourreau eut un petit frisson, comme s'il surmontait un grand désir de meurtre, comme s'il échappait à la folie du sang où tout - sa nature et sa fonction - l'entraînait. Il regarda Erik et dit doucement:

- Va t'asseoir, mon petit.

Erik hésita. Enfin, - paraissant accorder une exceptionnelle faveur, lentement, il revint à sa chaise. Le bourreau avait perdu. En effet, si toute son attitude, quand il tira de sa poche son couteau, avait effrayé Erik, le gosse fut vite rassuré en voyant le geste pour le lancer: au lieu de saisir la lame par la pointe, ce qui eût fait tournoyer et décrire à l'arme une parabole en hauteur, il la jeta par le manche, et la main basse. Toute sa faiblesse se trahit par ce geste. Sa nature était sans éclat. Elle s'effilochoit. Erik comprit qu'il venait d'assister à une comédie. Ce soir-là il ne montra rien de sa supériorité, ni de son mépris auquel pourtant se mêlait la terreur du métier de son ami et dans son âme une sorte de sentimentalité pour le compagnon.

Quelque temps après [...]

54 [...] que vous leur devez.

Quand je le vis en face de moi [...]

(87-88) [...] que vous leur devez. Ainsi la voiture des Pompes funèbres, l'enterrement de Jean croisa un jeune boxeur dont je rencontrai le visage gracieux et salaud. Au retour, je remarquai un très beau soldat américain. Le soir même je me branlai pour le boxeur et le lendemain matin j'allais le refaire encore quand je sentis que ce serait commettre une impolitesse à l'égard du Ricain, et c'est pour lui que je me cognai un rassis, tandis

qu'au fond de moi quelqu'un pleurait sur la mort de Jean.

Plusieurs fois Erik rencontra Riton et jamais il n'eut l'occasion de l'aborder. Il le regardait de loin. Riton ne pouvait le reconnaître puisqu'il ne l'avait jamais vu. Il oublia la caresse dans la nuit. Puis un jour il dut aller porter un pli à l'école (transformée en caserne) où Erik était caserné. Il le rencontra sous le porche. Il se heurta à l'admirable statue habillée de drap noir. Il l'aima. Il était sept heures du soir. Au lieu de se diriger vers le réfectoire, quand il rentra à la caserne, le coeur battant, Riton se rendit aux lavabos, vides à cette heure. Il défit ses lacets se déchaussa et se lava les pieds. Il prit bien soin de récurer les plis de ses orteils et les ongles. Puis, les pieds mouillés, les godasses à la main il grimpa au dortoir et changea de chaussettes. Il se lava les pieds tous les jours, et tous les soirs il lava - et la mit sécher sous son matelas - la paire de chaussettes, qu'il portait tout humide encore le lendemain.

Sous le porche, Erik tout d'abord n'avait pas eu le temps de voir le visage du gosse. C'est en se retournant qu'il reconnut sa démarche, sa stature, l'incomparable élégance de son dos et le ceinturon de cuir qui faisait deux fois le tour de sa taille. Quand il repassa devant lui, leurs regards s'entremêlèrent, mais ni l'un ni l'autre ne se dit un mot. Ils se rencontrèrent encore sur les boulevards sans avoir le courage de se parler.

Une autre fois Erik apparut à Riton, très droit, dressé près d'une des piles de pierres soutenant le métro. Du col de sa veste ouvert, de celui de sa chemise, sortaient la pomme d'Adam très marquée, son cou doré. Sur son bras gauche, il tenait un bébé de quelques mois, rose, vêtu de blanc. La beauté de cette apparition affola Riton. La présence du soldat, debout, était exaltée, semblait-il, par la présence du même. Faut-il penser que l'apparence de la paternité augmentait son charme de mâle, ou que le gosse paraissait être l'extrémité vêtue de dentelle, de sa verge monstrueuse de taille, arrivant jusqu'à hauteur de sa bouche afin qu'il la baise?

Une autre fois encore, un soir, il apparut presque lumineux tant son bloc était sombre, formé de ténèbres compactes, dans l'angle d'un pilastre. Sans voir Riton, il se détacha de la nuit, et marcha dans la direction opposée à celle du milicien. Son calot noir était sur l'oeil. Comme un chien qui rapporte, entre ses dents il tenait un gant qu'un mouvement très gamin de sa tête faisait osciller de droite à gauche. Il avait une main dans sa poche. Mais ce gant, surtout, lui donne aujourd'hui la douceur d'un chien de chasse aux longues oreilles pendantes.

Quand je le vis en face de moi [...]

55 [...] champs d'asphodèles.

Ces rencontres [...]

(90) [...] champs d'asphodèles.

Un autre soir, Riton reconnut Erik derrière la glace d'un bistrot de Montmartre. Il introduisait une pièce de deux francs dans un appareil à sous afin d'entendre des disques français qu'il écoutait debout, les pouces dans les poches, accrochés au bord et les quatre doigts sortis, dans la même attitude que venait de prendre Riton pour l'examiner dans l'ombre du boulevard.

Ces rencontres [...]

60 [...] de cuivre.

Le capitaine [...]

(98-99) [...] de cuivre.

Dans ma chambre, pendant de longs jours, j'avais appris les gestes de l'ennui. Couché, je sus pianoter contre le panneau du lit, derrière moi, etc...

Avant le coup du chat, j'avais essayé en vain, de mettre un type en l'air. C'était la nuit.

J'avais chaussé des souliers à semelles de caoutchouc. (J'eusse préféré aller dans les quartiers riches pour deux raisons: les types ont du fric et ils savent moins bien se défendre que dans les quartiers ouvriers. Ils ne savent pas se servir des poings. Ils se battent en duel.) Dans le haut de la rue du Temple je repérai un type, pas trop grand. J'ai une bonne matraque. Je suivis le mec. A chaque mètre je me disais: 'Y a personne, je l'descends ici.' Impossible. Je ne pouvais pas taper par-derrière. Il a fallu que je passe sur l'autre trottoir, que je descende plus bas que le type, et que je remonte sur son trottoir pour revenir dans sa direction. Je baissais la tête. Je marchais comme un homme qui réfléchit. Je l'ai bousculé en passant, puis je l'ai insulté et je l'ai frappé: un coup de poing dans la gueule. Il a été le plus fort. J'ai dû foutre le camp.

Avec Erik on se parlait tout le temps, on bavardait. De n'importe quoi. A croire que le langage pur est une onde d'échanges amoureux.

Le capitaine [...]

+61 Riton pensa rougissant [...]

(99) Riton pensa [...]

61 [...] à la hauteur du con.

A l'heure [...]

(100) [...] à la hauteur du con.

. . . . .

- C'est pas vrai. Tu mens!

- Je le jure sur la tête de mon père.

Je pouvais être sûr que Jean disait la vérité.

C'est ainsi qu'il me jura que la bonniche n'était pas enceinte de lui.

- Sur la tête de mon vieux!

Il crut qu'il serait noble d'élever l'enfant d'un autre. L'enfant mourut.

A l'heure [...]

63 [...] mais le registre des poètes est réduit.

(103) [...] mais le registre des poètes est assez réduit.

64 [...] des histoires monstrueuses. Mes précédents livres [...]

(106) [...] des histoires monstrueuses. Un détail: mes précédents livres [...]

66 [...] paisibles.

Les deux chambres [...]

(108) [...] paisibles. Le visage du bourreau, peu à peu, redevient harmonieux. Je sais qu'il était la déformation de celui de Jean. De mon souvenir, comme derrière une vitre, je voyais le visage du gosse me regarder. A mesure que je parlais du bourreau, que j'écrivais de lui, je m'éloignais, me semble-t-il, du visage de Jean, je me rapprochais, je choisissais mon angle d'action. Enfin, l'ayant trouvé, je regardais Jean fixement. La courbure (concave) de son nez, la hauteur de son front, la proéminence de son menton m'imposèrent l'image du bourreau. J'accusai tous ces caractères en voulant, mentalement, l'écrasement de bas en haut de ce visage. Ma pensée, méchante comme tout créateur, obligea ce visage à s'écraser encore. La racine du nez disparut presque entre les yeux - eux-mêmes de plus en plus profonds - le menton devint horizontal. J'obtins un visage bête, sournois, où restait quelque douceur et une indicible tristesse.

Les deux chambres [...]

66 [...] la blennorragie.

Erik [...]

(109) [...] la blennorragie.

En deux ans, physiquement aussi, Erik [...]

66 [...] la mère de Jean.

Il lui arrivait [...]

(109-110) [...] la mère de Jean.

C'est au lit que d'abord le bourreau parla à Erik de sa beauté. Tout naturellement, lors de l'excitation amoureuse il devait accorder à son ami les qualités les plus hautes.

- Tu es beau. Je t'aime. Mon petit!

Le sang-froid revenu, avec moins d'exaltation le bourreau caressait ce corps allongé près du sien, pourtant il ne pouvait ne pas s'apercevoir de la lourdeur des muscles, de la gravité de la bouche et des yeux, de la mollesse des boucles, enfin de tout ce qui cause la beauté d'un adolescent fatigué par l'amour. La main s'attardait sur le sexe au repos, le bourreau se soulevait sur un coude et contemplait son ami:

- Mon petit! Tu es vraiment beau.

Parfois il l'obligeait à se lever:

- Apporte-moi à boire.

Et quand le gosse enfilait le pantalon, encore courbé et ses deux jambes vêtues jusqu'à mi-cuisses, il criait très vite:

- Bouge pas. Attends.

Il le regardait dix secondes, l'admirait, puis il le laissait libre. Erik s'immobilisa ainsi dans plus de cent postures dont son amant voulait épuiser le charme.

- Ah! tu es beau.

En aucun moment Erik ne montra d'impatience. Au contraire, à chaque instant il attendait le cri qui le saisirait net, prouvant qu'il venait d'atteindre un point de beauté *saisissante*.

Ne croyez pas qu'il chercha, qu'il inventa des poses: il se mouvait au contraire très simplement, mais il prit l'habitude de se savoir très beau et, peu à peu, il en vint à se considérer comme un être qui ne peut agir qu'en fonction d'un beau geste. Mais que tant d'admiration lui soit prodiguée l'empêchait d'admirer celui même qui la lui prodiguait.

Il lui arrivait [...]

67 [...] d'en sortir.

J'ai dit plus haut que [...]

(111-117) [...] d'en sortir (la beauté de l'instant est faite de la fatigue de la figure mouillée de l'enfant, de ses haillons, de sa gêne à soutenir son copain, d'un léger frisson, enfin d'un inconfort qui veut cesser). Mais je me trompais encore, car si nous voulons avoir conscience de nous, nous sommes obligés de faire certains actes qui précisent notre dessin. Ainsi Paulo sachant qu'on le regardait quand il enfourchait son vélo, accusait quelques gestes dont la grâce était naturelle, il en inventait quelques autres qui dessinaient avec précision - pour mon oeil et pour le sien - le gigolo.

Le bourreau ne se fatiguait pas d'aimer, mais si Erik s'accommodait de cette admiration, il s'énervait malgré elle de se sentir le plus faible. Après une scène à propos d'argent, il eut le courage de rester une quinzaine sans revenir.

- C'est fini. Je ne le verrai plus.

Il voulut se délivrer de cette espèce de glu. Haïr n'est rien mais aimer ce que l'on hait cause l'écoeurement. L'embrasser ou se laisser embrasser par lui n'était pas terrible mais ce l'était que bander et jouir sous ces baisers reçus et donnés. Le lendemain même de la

grande décision de ne plus voir le bourreau, il sortit en ville avec des camarades. Ils marchèrent sagement sur les trottoirs, et rentrèrent à la caserne. Le surlendemain Erik sortit seul. Et dix jours ainsi, traînant son ennui: il ne pouvait pas mettre ses mains dans ses poches à cause des règlements militaires, ni siffler - les voyous berlinois ne savent pas. Il n'osait parler aux filles. Le dixième jour, fort de l'argent de sa solde, il entra dans un cabaret. A peine fut-il assis qu'une entraîneuse vint à sa table.

- Je peux prendre quelque chose?

Affectant l'indifférence il dit:

- Oui.

La musique jouait des airs héroïques et du jazz. Depuis longtemps il n'était pas entré seul, libre, dans un cabaret. Il buvait de la bière. La fille avait demandé un verre de liqueur.

- Je m'appelle Martha.

'Que pense-t-elle de moi? Elle ne serait pas mal si... si quoi? Si. Elle n'est pas mal. Elle doit voir que je n'ai pas l'habitude des femmes, mais peut-elle voir que...?'

- Tu es très jeune.

- Ah! On n'a pas l'habitude des clients de mon âge ici? - Guère.

Erik regardait ses bras blancs, ses lourds cheveux.

'Elle a l'air honnête. C'est une honnête putain.' Il recula vivement sa jambe, qui sous la table avait frôlé la cuisse de la fille.

- A boire!

Ils burent longtemps, et l'ivresse le gagna.

- On ne va pas rester là. Viens!

- Non mon petit, reste. On va boire encore.

- Après tu ne pourras plus te lever. S'il vient des officiers... Au mot officier il se redressa, puis s'affaissa très vite. La fille le prit par le bras et ils sortirent. Dans la rue elle le soutint un peu.

- Tiens-toi bien. Fais un effort.

Il eut un hoquet et marcha dix mètres avec la raideur d'un automate.

- Ça va? Il faut que je rentre. Hein? Il faut que je rentre, toi c'est par là.

Elle montra une direction.

- Oui... Oui, mon petit...

Il dit 'mon petit' en même temps qu'il mettait la main droite à sa poche, selon le geste familier au bourreau, le pouce seul à l'intérieur, accroché au rebord de l'étoffe. Il respira largement. Sa poitrine s'élargit et tout à coup il la sentit pleine de quelque chose de nouveau, une sorte de gaz très léger, très pur - un air des sommets - qui la gonflait.

'C'est cela un sentiment.'

Il vit le visage de son ami, ses bras, ses jambes, il l'entendit prononcer Erik...

'Je suis sûrement saoul. Je...'

La femme n'était plus à côté de lui. Il longeait les bords de la Sprée. Erik se tenait très droit, mais les yeux baissés. Il restait attentif à ce qui se passait en lui.

'L'amour... Ça c'est bizarre.'

Il respira encore. Le même gaz extraordinairement léger élargit sa poitrine qui s'en était un peu vidée. Et s'allégeait tout son corps qui eut comme *une idée de titubement*.

'Si je tombe, où je vais tomber?'

'Dans ses bras' est un mot qu'il ne formula pas mais il se vit nettement tomber dans les bras que le bourreau tendait pour empêcher sa chute. Quand il releva les yeux il s'aperçut, à l'imprécision des objets, qu'il pleurait.

'Il faut que je sois saoul pour m'apercevoir que je l'aime. Il ne faut pas l'aimer...'

Il tourna son visage vers la muraille qu'il considéra avec tendresse. La fille était partie.

'Elle est partie...'

Ses jambes devinrent plus molles. Il eut soudain mal au coeur.

'Je vais vomir mon amour...'

Il s'appuya au mur. La tête penchée, il dégueula sur le trottoir.

'Il ne faut pas l'aimer... Il faut le haïr... oui.'

L'oeil d'abord fixe cherchait à regarder plus haut que la paupière, presque à se révolter. Il eut encore un hoquet, vomit, puis éprouva un peu de calme.

'Il faut le haïr...'

'Martha. Elle est blonde. Elle est forte. Elle devrait me soutenir... Ah! les femmes... Elle est partie... Décidément mes jambes sont en laine...'

Il sourit, puis il éclata de rire. Mais tout à coup il se rappela qu'il était un jeune Allemand et son rire s'arrêta net.

'Nous sommes le blé en herbe pour la moisson prochaine...'

'Martha est forte. Elle doit m'aider à le haïr...'

Ses jambes étaient si molles qu'il songea aux cuisses du bourreau, entre lesquelles il eût pu s'asseoir, et sur quoi il eût posé ses mains, bien à plat, comme sur le rebord épais d'un fauteuil de cuir.

'Le haïr...'

Mais il n'avait plus aucune force physique et Erik se sentit s'enfoncer dans son amour en même temps que dans l'ivresse qui lui révélait son amour. Le lendemain, durant les marches, les manoeuvres, les défilés dans les rues de Berlin, les yeux perdus il s'interrogeait:

- Je ne peux pas aimer autre chose qu'une fille. Pour lui j'ai peut-être de l'amitié... Mais quelle fille? Je n'en connais pas.

Souvent quelque jeune Berlinoise lui souriait, il rendait le sourire et ne s'attardait pas. Il craignait d'avoir oublié les gestes et les mots de l'amour normal.

- Et puis après? Lui, c'est ma maîtresse...

Il revint au bourreau. Très beau habituellement, il fallait qu'une fois il fût rencontré par Erik, sur le Kurfurstendamm courant, et dans chaque main un gant qui battait à côté de lui comme deux petites nageoires. Erik le regarda un instant. Le bourreau courait avec le postérieur, tout à coup très large, en arrière. Il courait mal. Il se pressait à un rendez-vous sans doute et il craignait d'être en retard. Erik enfin le vit entrer dans un café. Il l'y suivit tout naturellement. Dans le café il n'y avait personne sauf le bourreau. Erik s'approcha de la table et releva ses cheveux avec la main:

- Je t'ai vu entrer.

Je me levai pour être à sa hauteur. J'hésitai une ou deux secondes, enfin je tendis la main.

- Tu t'assois?

- Oh non, je ne veux pas te déranger.

Marchant sur cette dernière phrase, une femme s'approcha. Dans la glace Erik la reconnut. Il se retourna. Elle était beaucoup moins jolie qu'aux lumières et si, sur le coup, il avait eu un moment de joie à l'idée qu'il pourrait montrer à son ami qu'il avait des maîtresses, il eut honte de cette fille. Elle vint vers lui.

- Bonjour. Ca va? *Tu* es bien rentré l'autre jour.

- Oh oui, très bien.

- Tu m'excuses, n'est-ce pas, je ne pouvais pas t'accompagner. J'ai ma mère malade.

En parlant elle se drapait dans un manteau très large qui fit tout à coup ressortir une poitrine trop ample. Je regardai cette poitrine avec un sourire amusé.

- Tu étais un peu souffrant.

- Oui, un peu.

Elle restait droite. J'observais Erik qui bougeait à peine debout en face d'elle, ses deux mains appuyées à ma table. Il me regarda, vit mon sourire, et il sourit lui-même. Je sais qu'il me tendit aussitôt la main *contre* cette femme. Elle arrivait à point pour nous lier en nous liant contre elle. Et le soir même, parmi les baisers désordonnés j'eus la surprise de sentir les lèvres d'Erik se poser sur ma paupière, doucement, peut-être par une erreur de sa part mais par une attention délicate du sort, en un baiser amical et reposé.

Erik allait à son destin avec la même fougue que Jean D. allait au sien. Et la même volonté de franchir le mal. Leur vie s'insinuait à travers les obstacles, elle passait malgré les barrages. Un jour que j'allais voir Jean espérant passer la soirée avec lui, je le trouvai habillé, cravaté comme rarement il l'était, prêt à sortir. Mon arrivée sembla le gêner.

- Tu sors?

- J'vais avec des copains. Y a des filles...

Cette seule affirmation, apportée un peu plus tard me rendit soupçonneux.

- C'est pas vrai, tu vas avec des types!

- Oh! tu es fou...

Il savait que je tolérais qu'il sortît avec des filles, qu'il eût avec elles des amourettes ou de sérieuses amours, mais que la jalousie m'eût rendu enragé si je l'avais rencontré avec d'autres hommes que des gosses de son âge.

- Tu vas rester avec moi.

- Tu es fou, j'ai promis. On fait une petite fête avec des filles. . .

- Reste.

- Non.

- Reste.

Nous nous battîmes, mais j'obtins qu'il n'allât pas à cette partie. Il me le promit. Mais je demeurai fort incertain de sa promesse. Je dis:

- T'as juré mais tu vas y aller quand même, en douce... - Non je te dis.

- Tu vas y aller...

- Non je te dis. Je te dis que non.

- Jure-le.

- Oui.

- Jure-le sur la tombe de ton vieux.

- Oui.

- Dis je le jure.

- Oui je le jure.

- Sur la tombe de ton père?

- Oui.

- Ben dis-le. Prononce.

Il hésita, enfin, sous mon regard fixe il dit:

- Je le jure sur la tombe de mon père...

. . . . .

Je remarquai sur-le-champ qu'il avait, consciemment ou non, prononcé très vite et embrouillé les mots 'tombe de mon père', les rendant presque indistincts. Mes habitudes mentales et ma rouerie me firent m'y attacher. J'y reviendrai.

J'ai dit plus haut que [...]

67 Il avait dix ans.

D'autres préoccupations [...]

(117-118) Il avait dix ans.

Cette attitude de Pierrot n'était pas seulement commandée par l'orgueil, mais par une



sorte de profonde tendresse pour toutes les choses. Jamais il n'eût osé ce geste de garder le ver dans sa bouche si, obscurément peut-être, il n'eût considéré le monde avec un regard calme, confondant les objets et les êtres dans un égal amour, qui équivalait finalement à une indifférence d'où émergeaient de rares prédilections. Un jour de soleil et de poussière à Paris, des manoeuvres pavaient la rue. L'un d'eux tenait une foreuse dont le bruit se mêlait à la lumière et à la poussière. Chaque muscle de son corps hardi, chaque muscle, était ébranlé par le tressaillement de la machine. L'homme avait les manches retroussées sur des bras solides et bronzés. Sous ses pieds immobiles jaillissaient des éclats de silex et des étincelles. Chaque mèche de cheveux tressautait. Un cercle s'était formé autour de lui, où était Pierrot qui regarda le paveur maintenir et diriger sa machine. Il ne pensa rien mais quand il quitta le cercle il conserva longtemps l'image - et souvent il fut visité par elle - d'un homme puissant armé d'une foreuse.

D'autres préoccupations [...]

68 [...] ma liberté.

Un soir [...]

(119) [...] ma liberté.

J'attendis impatiemment de monter en ligne, afin de trouver l'occasion. Un soir [...]

73 [...] a désagrégé. 'Il s'en va en couille.'

(128) [...] a désagrégé. On dit: 'Il s'en va en couille.'

74-75 Du grand art.

. . . . .

Debout sur le balcon [...]

(130-132) Du grand art. Elle savait que son fiancé s'activait clandestinement, portait chaque jour des tracts et des armes. Son amant était maintenant capitaine de la milice et l'ennemi naturel de Jean. Quand elle alla le voir à la caserne, il était dans son bureau, presque endormi au fond d'un fauteuil de cuir volé à une banque juive. Il achevait un cigare. Il songeait qu'en effet la capote des soldats devait arriver autrefois à trente centimètres du sol. Trente centimètres et non vingt-neuf ou trente et un. Mais enfin quand il contrôlait à la grille de la caserne avec une règle qui était son gabarit, la longueur réglementaire des capotes de chaque soldat qui sortait en ville, le caporal marseillais avait eu raison de laisser tout son visage, toute sa gueule brûlée de soleil, s'écrier sans broncher:

- C'est dans l'oignon qui te les faut les trente centimètres! Aujourd'hui les miliciens ne portaient plus de capote, et il était capitaine. Cette visite le surprit:

- Tu vas bien, petite?

La bonne n'osait rien dire, même pas le regarder.

- Tu sais...

- Eh bien, ça ne va pas?

- ... Je voulais te dire...

En elle se précisait une idée qui levait depuis longtemps: 'Je sais que Jean transporte des tracts, des armes, des explosifs. Il ne se méfie pas de moi. Je pourrais le dénoncer. Je connais le capitaine. Jean a confiance en moi, je ne le vendrai pas, mais enfin je pourrais le faire.' Cette idée ne m'a pas seulement frôlé. Les idées ne me frôlent jamais. Je me sentais fort de ma liberté, ivre de ma liberté, ivre un peu. 'Je pourrais, je peux... et je ne le fais pas. Je ne cède pas.' Je me retenais au rebord de ma veste. Il fallait que je m'accroche à quelque chose de solide, d'existant, et qui ne fût pas moi-même, et c'est alors que je fis un geste pour saisir le gland du rideau que j'empoignai, à pleine main.

- Qu'est-ce que tu fais?
  - Hein?
  - Qu'est-ce qui te prend?
- Le capitaine avait peur.
- Rien.

Et j'ajoutai négligemment: 'Je me tiens au rideau.'

'Il ne sait pas ce que je sais. Il ne sait pas que je peux dénoncer Jean. Je ne le ferai pas, je ne le ferai pas, je ne le ferai pas... Je suis libre, libre, libre!' Ma main tenait encore le gland, par quoi j'étais accroché à une chose solide, vraie. A la vérité même. 'Si je lâche le rideau?...' L'ayant lâché je me sentis encore plus léger. Ma main venait d'abandonner le balancier. 'Je dis ou je ne dis pas? Si je dis, après? Après? Après c'est l'envahissement sentimental auquel j'échappe en ce moment par ma préoccupation d'un équilibre à garder. Ma situation est inconfortable *mais elle est propre*. Elle est propre tant que je peux dire ou ne pas dire, encore que durant cette hésitation j'aie choisi de ne pas dire puisque je ne dis pas et pourtant que je ne dise pas n'a pas la stabilité du fait, le 'je ne dis pas' est encore mourant, tremblant: 'je peux dire'

- Je voulais te dire...
- Qu'est-ce que tu veux?
- Le petit est mort.

Il ne comprit pas sur le coup. D'ailleurs la petite bonne ne pleurait pas. Elle n'était même pas en noir. Enfin il réalisa.

- Nom de Dieu!

Et tout de suite il ajouta:

- Faut pas causer de ça, hein? T'as de l'argent? Attends.

De la poche arrière de son pantalon il tira une liasse de billets de mille francs, d'un fermoir d'or en arracha cinq qu'il mit dans les mains jointes sur le ventre de la bonniche. Elle fit un geste de refus.

- Si, si, garde-les... Et... et tout...

Elle haussa les épaules.

- J'étais pas venue pour ça, dit-elle.

Elle lui tendit la main et sortit, les yeux secs, le visage clos.

Debout sur le balcon [...]

75 [...] tout.

J'ai [...]

(133) [...] tout. Ainsi Jean, parfois, se révoltait contre sa conscience. Quand il me quitta, après avoir juré sur la tombe de son vieux, il avait d'abord éprouvé de la rage à se voir lié par un serment qu'il n'osait rompre. Son âme naïve craignait une intervention sinon céleste, du moins des choses elles-mêmes révoltées, ou de l'âme de son père et de sa mère. Pourtant l'idée qu'il irait, malgré le serment, avançait déjà une pointe aiguë dans son esprit. Il eut l'habileté de me dire:

- C'est malheureux de promettre et de ne pas aller au rendez-vous.

Je ne répondis pas. Il descendit les escaliers du métro. Sa rage s'accrut. Autour de lui les gens se pressaient à leurs fêtes intimes. Lui seul était retenu par le lien qui s'opposait le plus à sa nature: le respect. Il ne se passa rien d'extraordinaire. Il pensa que son vieux, dans son trou, n'oserait pas le maudire. Et que se passerait-il s'il le maudissait? La fête l'appelait. Le désir le torturait.

- Pour une fois, mon vieux, y comprendra.

J'ai [...]

75 [...] à leur côtés. Je note [...]

(133-134) [...] à leurs côtés. Pourtant je dois confronter cette honte avec la rougeur que je sentis à mon visage dans l'obscurité d'une salle de cinéma, quand aux actualités je vis partir en chantant pour le front russe les premiers volontaires français sous l'uniforme allemand. J'essaierai d'expliquer cette contradiction. Je note [...]

76 [...] la première fois.

Sa beauté [...]

(135-136) [...] Sa bravoure: 'Un homme comme moi...'

'Un homme comme moi ne peut pas mourir', se dit-il un jour dans les neiges de Russie. Il comprit très vite le parti qu'il pouvait tirer de ce sentiment d'orgueil. Il n'était pas très sûr qu'en cas de trop grand froid la neige se déroulant d'un talus qu'elle drapait ne l'eût enveloppé des épaules aux pieds pour le protéger.

Un jour, il dut prendre le commandement d'un groupe de sept hommes pour aller en reconnaissance. Au moment de partir, il commanda:

- Garde à vous!

Les soldats habitués à de pareils ordres, rectifièrent la position, encore qu'il ne fût pas dans les habitudes d'exagérer la discipline formelle sous le feu. Erik sourit:

- Vous avez marché? Vous avez cru que j'allais vous emmener au pas! Il rit et ses camarades avec lui. Pourtant, et bien qu'il l'eût prononcée en riant, sa réflexion trahissait son amour secret du commandement. Il n'osait pas le manifester ouvertement, par pudeur. La patrouille partit. C'était la nuit. Les vêtements blancs étaient givrés par le gel et par la lune. Ils avancèrent avec tant de ruses et grâce au courage de leur guide qu'Erik s'aperçut qu'ils avaient franchi les lignes ennemies. Il eut alors l'idée de désertir. La fatigue le lui commandait et pour être d'accord avec lui-même, il croyait devoir trahir Hitler, mais il éprouva qu'il existe envers le diable une certaine fidélité, laquelle ne ressortit plus à la morale.

- On doit être loyal, et la trahison apparaît comme un mal dérivant de la mort.

Au surplus, sa beauté [...]

76 [...] de plus en plus secrète.

Il pillait la France [...]

(136-138) [...] de plus en plus secrètes.

'C'était quand même un ami. Il faut bien avoir un ami.' Enfin, un jour d'attaque toute son angoisse tomba. Nous étions en Russie. Chaque maison était tour à tour abandonnée des Russes et prise par nous. Je savais que derrière le mur gisaient les cadavres des derniers défenseurs de la maison. Avec un peu de chance je pouvais pénétrer par une brèche ouverte en plein mur. La mitrailleuse braquée, j'allais m'approcher, mais un camarade, plus rapide que moi, avait déjà gagné le mur. Accroupi il déchargea quelques balles à l'intérieur de la maison, au hasard, il attendit cinq secondes, et désespérément escalada la brèche. Je le regardais faire. Il posa son pied chaussé d'un gros soulier ferré sur un coin du mur et fit ainsi écouler [sic] des briques et un peu de poussière de ciment. Pour la première fois, je fus touché de comprendre qu'au milieu de la plus mortelle des guerres puisse prendre place un événement aussi important que la chute de quelques gravats. Un soldat qui court à l'attaque, porte sa vie à l'ennemi, est-il vrai que son pied déplace quelques cailloux? La guerre était donc composée de gestes d'une banalité très grave? A mon tour je franchis la brèche. Les femmes? J'y songeais. Mes camarades recevaient des lettres de leurs fiancées! Moi pas. Je savais que le facteur était porteur de baisers. A la distribution du courrier, c'était une fête où les femmes s'épanouissaient,

d'où j'étais exclu.

- ...*elle* t'a écrit...?

- ...qu'est-ce *qu'elle* te dit?

- ...tu *la* verras...'

Les gars étaient tristes ou joyeux, mais ils étaient à cette fête organisée par des mains de femmes, des yeux, des lèvres de femmes. J'étais seul. Sauf *qu'au* loin je sentais veiller - pour être prêt à l'aube, le bourreau de Berlin. Et je l'aimais par rage. Il ne m'écrivait plus. C'est alors qu'il me fallut beaucoup de courage pour conserver mon élégance: trouver des chemises de soie, des chaussettes, des parfums. Je pillai. Enfin ce fut la France. Erik pillait les maisons abandonnées et les boutiques françaises. Il s'enrichissait. Sachant que la répétition d'un instant heureux est de moins en moins intense, il accumula ses richesses selon un ordre qu'il s'était fixé, pour un résultat défini: pour avoir un appartement de douze pièces sur le Kurfurstendamm à Berlin. Il en avait prévu le mobilier dans ses détails, le nombre de domestiques (cinq), deux voitures, le nombre de costumes, de chapeaux... Il fallait qu'il eût tout cela. Pourquoi *cela*? On ne sait pas. Cette décision, ce choix seraient, me semble-t-il, entachés d'un peu d'arbitraire si ne les avait commandés une rêverie, plutôt qu'un calcul raisonné. La vie sociale - et pour Erik la vie - se trouverait enfin réalisée par la possession du confort matériel qui suffit à un homme. Atteindre à ce confort et à une fortune qui assure la liberté, donc la puissance. Il suffit d'un minimum et il décida un jour du nombre de millions de marks. Pour d'autres, de nature plus riche, la vie se présente comme une marche continuellement renouvelée, or Erik agissait afin de jouir de ce résultat durant un instant assez bref (mais qu'il lui faudrait rendre public, universellement ou presque) afin que son destin fût achevé. Erik en somme désirait sa propre réalisation. C'est le cas de n'importe quel épicière sans doute, sauf qu'Erik avait compris que la contemplation d'une réussite ne doit pas s'éterniser. Il pillait la France [...]

78 [...] Jean était allé à une fête [...]

(141) [...] Jean était allé à la fête [...]

78 [...] était désert. Nous étions près [...]

(141) [...] était désert. Il faisait absolument nuit. Nous étions près [...]

79 [...] me plaît.

- Allez, suce, jusqu'à ce qu'il décharge.

Je tremble de honte au souvenir de cet instant, car c'est moi [...]

(142) [...] me plaît.

- Suce encore. Allez, suce, jusqu'à ce qu'il décharge.

Je tremble de honte au souvenir de cet instant. Je tremble? Bah! C'est moi [...]

79 - Tu peux causer maintenant. T'as de la veine [...]

(142) - Tu peux causer maintenant, va. T'as de la veine [...]

83 Quand j'entrai après trois coups [...]

(149) Quand j'entrai trois coups [...]

85 [...] il se moquait.

- Paulo n'est pas là?

(151-153) [...] dont il se moquait. Quand il comprit que j'étais un voleur, je crus qu'il se détournerait de moi mais il me dit:

- Tu fais ce que tu veux, je m'en fous.

Ce n'était pas indifférence. C'était concilier d'emblée son amitié avec ses dogmes politiques. Il accepta même, pour me rendre service, de m'assister durant certaines opérations. La première fois ni la seconde il n'exigea d'être rétribué, mais à la troisième il parla de son dû. Il s'agissait de bidons d'essence.

- Qu'est-ce que tu me donnes, là-dessus?

Je le regardai fixement, d'un air que je croyais sévère. Mais je ne pouvais aucune sévérité contre une aussi robuste santé morale. Il se méprit sur le sens de mon regard car il répéta en souriant, et cette fois, légèrement inquiet.

- Et bien oui, quoi, tu ne vas pas me donner quelque chose?

- Con!

- Mais pourquoi? J'ai droit à quelque chose, non?

Il dit cette phrase avec une inquiétude si grande qu'elle accentua encore plus le côté canaille et enjôleur de son regard et de sa voix.

- Allez!

Il garda la bouche entrouverte sur le...« lez! » souriant et la langue sur le bord des dents inférieures. L'oeil en coin.

- Tu me fais chier. Ce qui me fout en boule, c'est de sentir que tu acceptes de dépendre de moi. Mais nom de Dieu apprends à avoir d'autres droits que ceux de ton charme sur moi. Finalement ta façon de putain va finir par blesser notre amitié en blessant notre orgueil.

Ce rapide discours ne parut pas le troubler. Il garda son sourire.

- Alors, ça t'embête que je te demande...

- Oui. Tu peux prendre un autre ton.

Il sourit un peu plus et dit:

- Alors, qu'est-ce que tu vas me donner là-dessus?

De la formule et du ton, la répétition aussi exacte qui m'avaient agacé fit sourire. Je haussai les épaules.

- Tu le verras bien.

- Comment je le verrai bien?

Cette fois il naissait à l'audace. Le ton était agressif.

- Je te donnerai ce que je voudrai.

- Pardon j'ai mon mot à dire.

- Dis-le.

Il hésita un instant:

- Alors en somme je fais la moitié du travail et...

- Et quoi?

- J'ai droit à la moitié, mon vieux. Parfaitement j'ai droit à la moitié. J'ai fait ce que j'avais à faire. Je me suis arrangé pour retrouver le chemin. Dix fois de suite j'ai été en reconnaissance. Il y avait autant de danger pour toi que pour moi...

- Personne ne te dit le contraire. Tu auras la moitié.

Mais enfin il n'aimait pas l'argent. Je ne sais pourquoi cette expression avait suivi chez la mère le « il n'était pas croyant ».

- Son frère, lui..., dit-elle.

- Paulo n'est pas là?

85 [...] sa durée inviolables.

Petit homme [...]

(154-155) [...] inviolables.

Gérard avait distingué Paulo en passant sur un pont qui surplombe, à Berlin, la voie

ferrée. Au milieu des manoeuvres au torse nu il le vit qui s'acharnait sur un rail. D'abord, de son belvédère, penché à la balustrade, Gérard ne s'occupa que de cette mousse qu'étaient les chevelures en désordre; il s'étonna qu'elles couvrissent des crânes et surtout des crânes d'ouvriers et servissent à leur beauté. Pas plus qu'Erik, il n'aimait les ouvriers. Les mains noires et calleuses pouvaient quelquefois, en le caressant, lui causer une jouissance très vive, mais le plus souvent elles lui rappelaient qu'il eût suffi d'un rien - la volonté de refuser le destin - pour qu'il ait au bout des bras deux mains pareillement sales, au bout des mains des rails de fer, dans les bras la fatigue de longs jours de travail, et avec elle l'humiliation d'être un esclave. Il s'attacha d'abord à reconnaître d'en haut les visages cachés par ces mottes de cheveux dépeignés. Peu à peu, il pensait chevelures, il pensait chevelures joyeuses, chevelures joyeuses d'être libres, au vent, à peine grattées par une main rapide et indifférente. Sa propre chevelure, encore que très belle lui parut une herbe morte, triste, fanée comme les cheveux de Jean dans son cercueil. Gérard éprouva la nostalgie de cet état qu'il refusait encore. Accoudé à la balustrade du pont il regardait les têtes, les torses noués, hâlés, les muscles et tout le désordre humain d'un chantier de travail - et la légère et douce tristesse qui l'étreignit était semblable à ce que j'éprouvai moi-même quand du haut de la terrasse du jardin public de B. mon regard plongea à l'intérieur de la cour de la prison. A chaque vasistas entrouvert, je voyais un visage. On devait se faire des signes, se parler de fenêtre à fenêtre, de choses mystérieuses, d'où j'étais exclu, et c'est moi qui me sentais en exil. Nous regrettons la beauté que nous avons perdue, la douleur et le malheur même immenses qui causaient notre beauté. Tout à coup Gérard fut étonné de la nonchalance des ouvriers, qui tous étaient français. Chaque bras, au lieu d'agir, avait l'air de considérer d'un air résigné le rail. D'où il était, Gérard n'entendait pas ce qu'on disait et du reste, il n'eût rien compris mais cette gélatine de gestes, une main vivante, au bout d'un bras très noble, s'agita de façon nerveuse, intelligente, et il comprit, passionnément intéressé, que l'être auquel appartenait cette main rapide, pensait et savait agir. Il voulut voir son visage. Il fallait pour cela descendre sur la voie. Gérard s'efforça donc de distinguer la chevelure et le pantalon bleu afin de le reconnaître, et trois minutes après, quand il fut sur la voie, il se trouva face à face avec un beau garçon qui avait son âge et essuyait avec son bras la sueur de son front. Gérard le réclama au contremaître allemand pour une raison qu'il ne dit pas.

Gérard sorti, j'étais habilement passé derrière Paulo et de ma verge je lui caressai les fesses. Je fis cela moins parce que j'éprouvai le désir mâle de le baiser qu'à cause de la beauté de la croupe de Paulo, croupe massive et pleine de tous les frémissements des nuits tropicales sous le pantalon de toile bleue, paraissant couverte, malgré lui, d'un pelage ras, tigré, électrique, croupe lourde et sûre de sa force, au contact de quoi je me fortifiais. Petit homme [...]

86 [...] prison, poignards?

- Tu as peur?

En tremblant [...]

(156) [...] prison, poignards?

- Toi peur?

En tremblant [...]

89 [...] les gestes de son âge. C'est alors [...]

(161-162) [...] les gestes de son âge. Très souvent avec mes gigolos, réserves de beauté nécessaire à ma puissance, je m'efforçais de dire des mots et d'avoir une vue des choses plus jeune - peut-être, dira-t-on, afin qu'on me crût plus jeune, encore que ce fût pour

mieux dérober toutes les beautés des gars, pour que ma machinerie fût plus apte à pénétrer dans les recoins où les secrets, peut-être importants, des enfants trop beaux se retranchent, je voulais aussi donner le change et provoquer des confidences que la jeunesse n'accorde mystérieusement qu'à la jeunesse - mais je n'arrivais le plus souvent qu'à minauder - car à cinquante ans je n'en avouais, dans l'intimité, que trente-cinq, j'ignorais qu'un jeune homme se vieillit toujours et que son caractère se manifeste par le contraste de sa jeunesse avec son vieillissement simulé alors que je trahissais mon âge par le contraste de ma vieillesse avec mon rajeunissement simulé. Je sus avec Paulo avoir des gestes naturels. Mon corps d'un seul bloc lentement se tourna vers le gamin et mes mains cherchèrent les boutons. Je voulus ouvrir la braguette et sous mes phalanges à travers l'étoffe bleue la bosse de la verge déchargea dans mon bras une secousse électrique. Moi-même j'ouvris mon pantalon. C'est alors [...]

89 Hitler resplendit.

Ce fut le grand désordre [...]

(162-163) Hitler resplendit comme un Apollon.

. . . . .

Paulo dans la rue siffle un air en marchant, et la certitude de son souffle et de son art, sa maîtrise enfin et la sécurité de sa marche dans un corps solide lui donnent une autorité calme qui, me disais-je, s'accorde mal avec la méchanceté mais je compris que ce calme signifiait aussi indifférence et que c'est elle qui faisait aussi le fond de sa méchanceté.

En prison, il demanda à l'aumônier un livre de prière. Chaque fois que le prêtre venait dans la cellule Paulo l'écoutait, le regardait droit dans les yeux sans sourire, jusqu'au bout. L'aumônier le fit admettre à l'infirmerie où il montra, avec les religieuses, la plus exacte piété. Sa sévérité en imposait. C'était aussi de la droiture.

On le croyait très près de Dieu car il était naïf.

Ses lèvres serrées, ses yeux fixes, son visage sans sourire effrayaient les détenus qui le détestaient, voyaient (croyant voir) plus clair que personne et se disaient:

'J'joue bien de la comédie, le gars. Comme musique qu'est-ce qu'il leur sert aux frangines!'

Dans la cour il ne jouait jamais, les voleurs - ni les macs - ne sont des sportifs. Le jeu est une activité sans but.

- C'est pas la peine que je lance un ballon, il revient.

Le voleur supporte son métier à cause de l'attrait romanesque mais s'il n'était pas nécessaire le métier serait sans attrait. Cette nécessité entraîne le voleur dans l'aventure où le jeu ne va pas. On peut refuser les aventures du jeu, pas celles que propose le vol qui est nécessaire. Enfin l'activité du voleur contient déjà cet élément esthétique que cherche dans le jeu et le sport l'homme soumis aux métiers moins nobles.

L'aumônier circulait parmi les détenus repentis, parmi les mômes et les hommes. Quand un matelot frôla ma jambe avec le bas très ample de son pantalon, je frissonnai délicieusement. Il m'arrive d'attendre ces contacts légers avec le pli du froc d'étoffe lourde et chaude qui, du pied qu'elle cache presque, monte à la ceinture, à la taille qu'elle étirent si étroitement, car c'est un grand besoin de tendresse qui fait l'inverti caresser furtivement les hommes.

Paulo s'arrachait des lambeaux de peau et même de chair. Il ne sentait rien.

Ce fut le grand désordre [...]

90 '[...] dans un jardin.'

. . . . .

Un instant [...]

(166) '[...] dans un jardin.' Cette pensée le fit débâter et Hitler eut la stupeur de voir le membre magnifique, sous ses yeux s'amollir, diminuer, fondre, s'affaisser sur les couilles brunes et velues. Il en fut étonné, humilié. Ses doigts habiles cherchèrent dans les plis de chair flasque un point d'appui solide, et avec les plus grands soins, ils réussirent à ramener dans sa forme accomplie et parfaite le sexe adoré. Mais quand il l'eut en main, bien serré, il ne le lâcha plus qu'il n'ait dégueulé son foutre. Un instant [...]

93 [...] à la fois, son orgueil, sa honte [...]

(171) [...] à la fois, son orgueil, sa honte [...] [misprint]

93 [...] le cou du Frisé:

- *Gute nacht*, Erik.

- *Gute nacht*, bô nuit, Riton.

(171) [...] le cou du Frisé:

- Gut nacht, Erik.

- Gut nacht, bô nuit, Riton.

94 [...] la qualité du granit [...]

(173) [...] la qualité admirable du granit [...]

95 [...] fut tout à fait immobile. Enfin quand le premier [...]

(174-175) fut tout à fait immobile. Peu à peu, il sentit son noeud grossir, se mouvoir sous le slip et, prenant de plus en plus de force, remonter de lui-même sa tête vers le ventre. Enfin quand le premier [...]

95 [...] il comprit son désir. Une demi-heure [...]

(175) [...] il comprit son désir. Il porta sa main à la bite et l'y laissa, par dessus le pantalon et la braguette fermée. Une demi-heure [...]

95 [...] du mot éperdument.

(175) [...] du mot éperdûment.

97 La maison sentait la mort. Elle glissait vers [...]

(178) La maison sentait la mort. La main douillettement posée sur les couilles d'Erik, Riton pouvait mourir. La maison était minée. Elle glissait vers [...]

98 [...] où sont les boutons. Enfin [...]

(179) [...] où sont les boutons, les couilles et la queue. Enfin [...]

98 [...] trésor en vrac. Je préjugeai de sa splendeur dans l'action et l'emprisonnai, fillette endormie, dans ma grosse patte d'ogre. Je la protégeais.

(180) [...] en vrac. Elle trouva les couilles, chercha la bite et la reconnut à une légère consistance encore qu'elle ne bandât pas. Je préjugeai de sa splendeur dans l'action et l'emprisonnai, fillette endormie, dans ma grosse patte d'ogre. La possession dans la main de la queue d'Erik, sans défense dans le sommeil, me remplit alors d'orgueil et d'assurance. Je la protégeais.

99 [...] et dansante. Puisqu'il venait de [...]



(180) [...] et dansante. Dans une inquiétude mortelle que l'espoir à mesure chassait, j'attendis. Puisqu'il venait de [...]

99 [...] chaque fois plus précise. Erik ne fit pas [...]

(181) [...] chaque fois plus précise et de plus en plus comme si je l'eusse branlé par-dessus le pantalon. Erik ne fit pas [...]

100 [...] à rester. Un autre bruit se fit entendre. Ils attendirent un instant.

J'ai tué, pillé [...]

(183) [...] à rester. Un autre bruit se fit entendre. Ils attendirent un instant.

J'aimais sentir décharger sa queue et m'oublier accroché à elle par la bouche.

Parfois elle se gonflait comme la gorge des pigeons qui font l'amour.

Je suis un adolescent nu couché dans un pré émaillé de narcisses. Des insectes volent sur des graminées, l'air est saupoudré de pollen, le ciel est clair.

Sous ses mains, mes hanches tremblaient.

J'ai tué, pillé [...]

100 [...] sans conscience.

Le Führer [...]

(184) [...] sans conscience.

Un acte est élégant. Ou ne sera pas.

Le Führer [...]

101 [...] une plaie sanglante.

Comme tous [...]

(185) [...] une plaie sanglante.

En passant, son regard accrocha le portrait du roi Michel de Roumanie. Sur cette photo le visage du jeune souverain de dix-huit ans montrait cette tristesse que j'explique ainsi chez Erik: comme tous [...]

101 [...] ses yeux un éclat de haine.

. . . . .

Dans les yeux [...]

(185-187) [...] ses yeux (j'étais à genoux devant lui, lui-même allongé entre mes cuisses) un éclat de haine. Une gouttelette n'était pas loin de la bouche. Comme je la voyais couler lui-même la sentait. Il ne bougeait pas. Nos deux regards s'embrouillaient leurs fils. Il attendait que le calme revînt en lui - ou plutôt la rage. Enfin il fit le geste de s'essuyer avec le bras, mais sur le biceps du foudre avait giclé qui coula, froid, jusqu'à son cou. Je tendis une serviette que je venais de ramasser en me penchant. Depuis ce jour s'il me montrait quelque hargne, Erik conservait une peine très légère qui était comme un peu de brume sur son visage. Vêtu comme un prince. Cette vie inhumaine risquait de conduire trop rapidement Erik au détachement. Son instinct de conservation freina presque sans que lui-même s'en rendît compte. Ses mains crispées se raccrochèrent à ce qu'elles frôlaient en passant, les soieries, les bijoux, les montres, les cuirs. L'argent du bourreau permit qu'il s'habillât avec une élégance parfaite, toujours mesurée, car le moindre excès l'eût démonté. Il se passionna pour les mécanismes d'acier, les boucles, les chaussures de daim, les chemises de soie, les lainages, les ceintures, les cravates. Il

fut un des jeunes hommes les mieux vêtus de Berlin, mais cette élégance affolée était poursuivie sans conviction et toujours était crevassée d'une brèche par où le désespoir passait un pan. La braguette de tous les pantalons était à fermeture éclair. Personne ne pouvait y toucher. Sa simplicité était aussi importante que la simplicité de Racine ou que les méandres des poèmes de Jean D., qu'afin de n'en pas laisser fuir le sens, le secret, un entrelacs fermait comme les motifs compliqués, les statuettes des dieux, les fleurs sacrées ornent les serrures de bois qui gardent closes les cases des nègres.

. . . . .

J'ai voulu tuer le bourreau. Un matin je suis entré dans sa chambre. Il dormait. Les fenêtres étaient fermées. J'ai été assommé par la présence de ce corps immense, allongé, émettant une chaleur, une odeur suffocantes qui m'amollissaient, désarmaient mon bras de sa force.

Si je vois encore l'extrême pointe, l'ombre de mes sourcils, c'est parce que je porte un peu baissée la tête et je regarde sans vouloir la relever.

Comment Erik apprit les langues étrangères: Qu'après le meurtre du dragon à Siegfried le chant des oiseaux devint clair et il n'est pas impossible qu'ayant tué un enfant de France par lui fut comprise et parlée notre langue. Il était très beau. Et très malheureux. Il sentait le misérable de sa condition - non seulement de lopette sévère - mais de beau gosse de qui la beauté ne semble pouvoir sortir. Elle était prise en lui qu'elle éclairait. Erik était semblable aux expressions trop belles. La beauté ne saurait s'échapper de lui qui la conserve. La beauté fait d'une formule une chose fermée, une chose en soi, un objet qui demeure comme objet d'art et dont on a tendance à se contenter. Je me méfie des expressions brillantes. Leur éclat arrête l'esprit, les fixe sur elles-mêmes qui le contiennent en entier. On les dit alors spirituelles. Mais parce qu'elles sont prison pour l'esprit qui les dore et refuse de s'évader. Je me vêtirai comme se vêtait Erik. Très élégamment. Un voleur est élégant par nécessité. Avec les vêtements chics apparaissent les gestes civils. L'élégance donne à la pensée une grande aisance. Enfin un saint doit se mouvoir d'abord dans un climat physique tempéré par des habitudes polies. Erik choisissait d'admirables ceintures de cuir. Il disait:

'Elles sont en cuir fauve.'

. . . . .

Dans les yeux [...]

102 [...] à jour.

Le Führer [...]

(188) [...] à jour. Cette idée: 'Je peux lui donner encore ce gosse' ne se formula pas ainsi dans sa tête. Elle s'y présenta sous la forme d'une volute irisée où s'enroulait, comme autour d'un mirliton, le mot, plusieurs fois répété: 'geben' (donner). La valse même de ce mot gonflé comme une bulle de savon, l'écoeura et eût pu lui causer une nausée si son attention n'avait été saisie par la pointe féroce que contenait le sens français du mot donner, car ici le mot se présentait bien avec ce sens sous-entendu: le donner aux fauves, le donner au bourreau, enfin le 'donner' tout court, comme nous disons, nous, dans notre argot 'il l'a donné'. Cette idée s'enfuit. Elle disparut selon le mode assez fluide de son apparition, laissant voir derrière elle, plus claire cette autre idée: 'Le gosse ne parlera pas, il est comme les autres.'

Il voulait dire qu'on croirait qu'un fou seul peut oser une semblable aventure. Il jeta son mouchoir à Paulo qui s'essuya la bite, puis il lui servit du champagne et il lui recommanda de manger des gâteaux et de fumer des cigarettes. Il sortit sans dire autre

chose, emportant dans tout son être une provision de forces vives. Après avoir sonné, sans attendre même que Gérard vînt, dix secondes après, reprendre Paulo pour le reconduire hors du palais, le Führer [...]

102 [...] *commander* au monde?

Riton ne se tuera pas [...]

(189-191) *commander* au monde?

Son histoire avec le Führer avait transformé Paulo. Elle ne lui avait pourtant rien enlevé de sa méchanceté qui toutefois s'était comme amollie. C'est-à-dire qu'au lieu de piquer, Paulo désirait mordre. Si dans l'amour Hitler l'avait emmanché, le gosse, poursuivant sa vie, eût éprouvé sans doute le besoin de se retourner avec violence pour jeter à bas le fantôme dont il aurait senti la présence sur son dos, mais c'est lui qui avait enculé Hitler et il allait dans la vie avec une démarche un peu arquée comme s'il eût porté, à bout de bite, le seigneur empalé. Les membres conservent le souvenir de gestes qu'ils pourraient accomplir.

Lorsque dévêtu, abandonné dans le lit, un gosse refusait de se laisser enculer, dans l'ombre des draps je savais trouver quelques gestes pour exprimer mon désespoir. Je ne saurais retrouver à l'air libre ces gestes (expressifs sans le secours de la bouche et des yeux). Il s'agissait d'une certaine façon de pétrir l'épaule, d'allonger nerveusement ma cuisse, de plaquer contre son dos mon ventre, d'enrouler mon bras autour du sien peut-être, mais le gosse par une caresse m'apprenait qu'il avait compris mon chagrin et voulait m'en consoler. A peine fut-il libre, c'est-à-dire qu'il fut sûr, après le salut de Gérard qui le raccompagnait jusqu'à la rue, de n'être suivi d'aucun espion, que Paulo considéra cette aventure passée, où il eut très peur, avec son regard fixe et mauvais. Il se sentait fort des mille marks glissés discrètement dans sa poche. La tête un peu tournée à gauche, il marchait dans la rue, la bouche pincée, l'oeil aigu. Comme toujours il était prêt à fondre, malgré sa petite fortune, sur la première occasion, et d'abord sur une chemise qu'il achèterait, mais qu'il emporterait comme un larcin.

Mon art consistant à exploiter le mal, puisque je suis poète, on ne peut s'étonner que je m'occupe de ces choses, des conflits par quoi se caractérise la plus pathétique des époques. Le poète s'occupe du mal. C'est son rôle de voir la beauté qui s'y trouve, de l'en extraire (ou d'y mettre celle qu'il désire, par orgueil?) et de l'utiliser. L'erreur intéresse le poète, puisque l'erreur seule enseigne la vérité. Je répète ici que le poète est asocial (apparemment), il chante les erreurs, il les enchante ensuite afin qu'elles servent - ou la soient - la beauté du lendemain. La définition habituelle du mal me fait croire qu'il n'est que le résidu de Dieu. La poésie ou l'art d'utiliser les restes. D'utiliser la merde et de vous la faire bouffer. Par mal, j'entends ici le péché contre les lois sociales ou religieuses (de la religion d'État) alors que le Mal n'existe réellement que dans le fait de donner la mort, ou d'empêcher la vie. N'essayez pas de prendre appui sur cette définition rapide pour condamner les meurtres. Tuer c'est souvent donner la vie. Tuer peut être bien. On le reconnaît à l'exaltation joyeuse du meurtrier. C'est la joie du sauvage qui tue pour sa tribu. Riton tue pour tuer, mais il n'importe. Le péché n'est pas là. Il tue pour qu'il vive puisque ces meurtres sont le prétexte et le moyen d'une vie plus haute. Le seul crime serait de se détruire soi-même car du coup c'est tuer la seule vie qui compte, celle de son esprit. Je connais mal les théologiens, mais je les soupçonne d'être profondément de mon avis sur ce point.

Riton ne se tuera pas [...]

106 [...] d'être en deuil, aujourd'hui [...]

(196) [...] d'être en deuil, tout à vivre, aujourd'hui [...]

106 [...] au calot noir.

..... Les fleurs [...]

(196-197) [...] au calot noir. Qu'on l'encule sur la tombe de sa fille, je serai content.

.....

Cependant que Paris préparait son apothéose, Riton sentait dans sa main, toujours davantage fondre la queue d'Erik. Il la pressa un peu, fit passer dans sa main toute son ivresse, mais Erik sommeillait et sa queue, entre les doigts émus de Riton ne fut pas plus qu'une limace, une rose mouillée.

.....

Les fleurs [...]

107-108 [...] mais ce livre n'est pas fini.

.....

Depuis [...]

(199-202) [...] mais ce livre n'est pas fini.

.....

Une autre fois, un soir Riton rencontra Erik qui fumait une cigarette adossé à la balustrade de fer du pont qui surplombe à la Chapelle la voie ferrée du Nord. Sa silhouette se détachait sur un enchevêtrement de rails. Immobiles, rigides l'un en face de l'autre, un instant ils parurent accomplir, pour se joindre, se rejoindre, s'unir pour réussir un travail commun accordant et refusant le vertige, les mouvements mystérieux du buste, des jambes, des bras, qu'accomplissent, aux fêtes foraines, les garçons enfermés comme des écureuils dans une balançoire en forme de cage métallique. Une seconde d'immobilité fut sur le point d'être fixée et de rendre éternelle - dans l'immobilité houleuse de leur corps et de leur esprit. Une seconde ils furent prisonniers de la cage au-dessus de la fête foraine, saisis dans l'amour au sommet de l'équilibre, car leurs yeux se rencontrèrent, mais ils n'en eurent pas conscience car Riton - un train passa sous le pont qu'il ébranla, obligeant Erik à un mouvement de la tête qui le détacha du gosse. Riton continua son chemin. Ces deux enfants mourront ensemble, au faite d'une maison, sur un toit où ils s'étaient retranchés et dont les caricaturistes se sont tant moqués sans soupçonner le pathétique d'un tel abandon. Riton aurait pu fuir avant la Libération de Paris, mais il était comme ces jeunes otages qui préfèrent, la rançon payée, rester avec le forban qui les a capturés et mourir avec lui. Si Riton ne prononça pas la phrase admirable que me dit Jean D., quand je roulais sur son dos ivre de bonheur, pour la première fois: 'Maintenant, j'ai l'impression que je t'aime encore plus qu'avant', du moins la tendresse profonde qui la fit naître, il l'exprima en posant un baiser sur l'épaule d'Erik. Cette phrase, que m'a dite un jeune mort, je l'ai gardée pour l'enchâsser dans le passage le plus précis de mon livre qui devient de ce fait une sorte de reliquaire encore indigne d'accueillir la plus rare des reliques. Je m'étais à peine détaché de Jean, ma sueur me collant à son dos. Sa tête était tournée, une joue posée sur l'oreiller. Je ne bougeais plus, étourdi par le don si longtemps espéré et par ma décharge plus formidable que jamais, quand - sans que son corps gracieux et un peu maigre eût bougé - je l'entendis murmurer, la voix un peu cassée, un peu angoissée par la pudeur de l'aveu: 'Maintenant, j'ai l'impression de t'aimer plus qu'avant.'

Quelques jours après, nous étions allongés, côte à côte et chastement. Jean se serra un peu plus contre moi et il me dit:

- Je crois bien que je t'aime.

Je me reculai légèrement, le regardai dans les yeux et je dis, les yeux écarquillés et la bouche entrouverte:

- Non? C'est vrai?

Je posai cette question de la même façon que le jeune mari, à qui sa femme annonce qu'il est possible qu'elle soit enceinte. Ce que l'on appelle un heureux événement nous arrive à l'improviste, sans nous, et nous fait croire que nous sommes l'objet d'une grâce, d'une attention particulière. Je le pris par le cou, car je voyais bien qu'il était plus triste que joyeux. Quand le garçon d'amphithéâtre eut ouvert les portes de la salle où son corps était gardé, c'est encore cette phrase qui venait me hanter. Quand je montai l'escalier en courant, le mouvement de mon corps accéléra peut-être mon mouvement tragique, et tout à coup, je vis Jean. Je voulus approcher, mais une horreur un instant plus forte que mon amour me retint. Je luttais. Je luttais, les mains couvrant mon visage en larmes. Ce geste était horrible. Tous les gens me regardaient combattre cette pieuvre qu'était l'horreur ayant pour tentacules mes dix doigts qui m'étreignaient le visage. Ce geste est à présent sacré, car il était un rapport entre moi et le mort, à deux pas, dans son cercueil. Il était ce qui nous liait l'un à l'autre. La torsade figée, le noeud de mes bras, la cage de mes mains où mon visage était pris formaient un appareil étrange que la mort de Jean venait de fabriquer. Puis l'amour fut le plus fort. J'approchai du cadavre et je baisai son front de pierre. 'J'ai l'impression de t'aimer plus qu'avant.' J'ai songé à mourir.

'Je peux mourir maintenant, me disais-je. Qui me retient? Ma douleur dépasse toute douleur. Si je me tue, je perdrai le bénéfice, quand ma peine aura passé, des joies futures. Mais, me disai-je encore, je ne perdrai rien puisque ces joies ne sont pas encore et celui qui les éprouverait n'est pas même encore, puisqu'il sera fait de ces joies. Supposons que je tue à l'instant Jean Genet et qu'aussitôt de ce mort naisse Jean Genet... Je coupe ici ma vie. C'est fait. Je ne saurais regretter un futur qui ne sera pas.'

Depuis que j'écris ce livre [...]

109 [...] des vertus de vos livres. En face d'un tel malheur, il reste les larmes ou la colère. La bonne était captive.

. . . . .

Mais cette vie [...]

(204-210) [...] des vertus de vos livres. Pour connaître ma tristesse que l'on songe à ce naturaliste qui rêvait d'offrir à son Musée une collection de papillons unique au monde. Il passa trente ans dans la jungle, risquant mille fois les morts les plus diverses, et quand il rapporta au Musée ses insectes multicolores, il vit une collection plus rare que celle pour quoi il avait dépensé tant de peine. En face d'un tel malheur, il reste les larmes ou la colère. La bonne était captive.

. . . . .

Il faisait nuit quand j'arrivai en prison. Un gâfe me conduisit devant la porte de ma cellule, puis il m'y laissa, le nez au mur. Il avait oublié ses clefs. La prison regorgeait d'êtres chauds, nus, échauffés, frottés d'ail, forts, tassés contre des types flasques, sales et sans grâce, mais dont l'ignominie elle-même, en macérant, achevait de fertiliser les cellules. Je prêtais toutes les oreilles de mon corps. Dans l'obscurité, il y eut une lutte rapide, très courte. La cellule oscilla un moment. Quelqu'un grogna, puis j'entendis:

- Qu'est-ce qu'il t'a fait?

- Y m'a foutu un coup d' pied...

En même temps que la première disait: 'Où?' La seconde voix répondit... 'Dans les ténèbres'... et d'une voix si voilée - car la douleur lui coupait la chique, que je compris que le pote avait reçu un coup de pied formidable, de cheval peut-être, dans la partie la

plus ténébreuse de lui-même.

'Un coup d'latte dans les roustons, que j'y ai mis', dit Paulo. Encore que je fusse derrière une porte épaisse, je pus voir un gosse s'allonger sur le côté, se ratatiner sous la couverture, les deux mains plaquées à la racine de ses cuisses, emprisonnant dans un nid douillet ses deux petits oeufs de rouge-gorge. J'étais en cellule avec Paulo. Il connut cette honte d'apprendre que le Président qui l'avait condamné au Tribunal, était lui-même exécuté par les Allemands pour avoir fait sauter, avec des bombes fabriquées par son fils, à vingt reprises, vingt locomotives dans un dépôt de machines. Un tel exploit dépassait les exploits des gangsters. La délation était dans l'air du temps avec la trahison, le pillage et le meurtre. En effet, depuis les plus illustres chefs d'État (Hitler, Staline) jusqu'au plus simple journaliste, en voulant imiter sottement les hommes de la Renaissance, l'Arétin et les princes de Machiavel, on transforma la morale privée en apportant dans la morale publique les éléments destinés à la détruire. Le juge de B. agit en bon Français. Ai-je l'air d'ironiser? Et mes livres sentent-ils la blague? Le juge était un petit vieillard qui se tassait sur soi-même. Il disparaissait presque au fond d'un fauteuil, et il se voyait ainsi disparaître dans une glace placée sur le mur en face de lui. La peau de ses joues n'indiquait plus de chair, presque plus d'os mais du cartilage qui semblait lui-même fondre. Les yeux s'inquiétaient derrière des broussailles de poils durs, ses gestes s'appauvrissaient.

'Qu'est-ce qu'il peut m'arriver de pire? se disait-il. Sûrement, si je continue sur ce mode, je vais disparaître, fondre sous le nez du greffier...'

Le greffier, qui écrivait en face de lui, dit au juge:

- Aujourd'hui, nous avons l'affaire Cramaille, Monsieur le Juge.

- Hum... Hum... l'affaire?

Sa voix elle-même s'amenuisait.

- Cramaille, Monsieur le Juge.

Parmi les dossiers, à sa droite, le juge, d'une seule main, chercha le dossier Cramaille et le trouva. Il s'agissait de cette histoire de cambriolage dont j'ai parlé, des pillages exécutés par un Milicien (Riton) par Paulo Cramaille et par Pierrot. Les autres comparses étaient connus, mais libres. La police n'avait pu arrêter toute la bande et comment l'aurait-elle pu puisque cette bande renaissait sans cesse? De jour en jour se découvraient de nouveaux complices. Arracher les racines du mal eût consisté à détruire le monde, car pour être subtiles, entre les criminels de vingt ans et le reste du monde (et les choses elles-mêmes) les relations étaient étroites. Bref le monde était inoculé, le mal était dans le sang et la police n'y pouvait rien puisqu'elle-même faisait partie du monde. Le juge parcourut un instant les différentes pièces composant le dossier: les casiers judiciaires des trois voyous, les rapports de police, une attestation de témoin, les plaintes et une commission rogatoire de T.

- Ils sont là? dit-il.

- Je vais voir, Monsieur le Juge, dit le greffier qui sortit et rentra presque aussitôt précédant Cramaille tenu par un garde à l'aide d'une chaîne d'acier. Cramaille s'assit. Aux premières questions il répondit sur un ton très poli, si noble quelquefois que le juge étonné le regarda pour la première fois. Paulo soutint son regard simplement, sans arrogance, ni faiblesse.

- C'était la nuit, Monsieur le Juge, dit-il, en précisant l'heure du délit. Le juge à nouveau regardait le dossier, et machinalement lisait le rapport de police.

- La nuit? dit-il. Et tout à coup, éclairé par le mot 'nuit', il se tourna vers Paulo:

- Mais, vous êtes fou. Vous voulez que votre vol soit qualifié et passer devant les Assises? Je ne vous demande pas si c'est la nuit.

'Il ne faut pas que je disparaisse. Pas encore. Pourtant... Tous des petits salauds... Mais

il faut être juste, je dois rendre la justice', pensa-t-il.

Et s'adressant à son greffier:

- Vous n'avez rien écrit, j'espère?

- Non, Monsieur le Juge.

Que les juges trop généreux prennent garde. Un élan qui part du coeur le voyou le reconnaît et il y répond par un élan aussi vif, mais qui risque de le perdre malgré le juge le meilleur. Paulo dit:

- Y a le rapport du flic...

Le juge chercha dans le dossier, trouva ce rapport et le lut. En effet, il y était question de l'heure et le mot 'nuit' était souligné. Ce trait, sous le mot nuit, sauva Paulo et perdit le Juge.

'Qu'un agent de police, raisonna-t-il, en se précisant, encore que ce fût mentalement, les termes, fasse un rapport, c'est fort bien. C'est dans la règle. Il doit donc observer le règlement basé sur des règles fondamentales. J'admets qu'il emploie n'importe quel mot ou disposition des mots, pour signaler ou décrire les faits qu'il rapporte, mais il ne doit pas les commenter car ceci revient à la justice. En soulignant le mot nuit, l'agent ajoute à ce mot, un sens qu'il n'a pas philologiquement. Parce qu'il est souligné le mot nuit devient aggravant, infamant. C'est ce sens qui conduira Cramaille aux Assises. Outre que le tiret pour souligner n'est pas un signe grammatical, donc autorisé par les règles, ni par le règlement basé sur ces règles, il ajoute au mot un sens ou même un jugement qui n'est pas inspiré d'un sentiment de justice, mais d'un sentiment d'obscur vengeance. Ce tiret sous le mot nuit, c'est une délation, et ce rapport l'oeuvre d'un mouchard, je m'en passerai donc. Je vais faire acte de profonde justice et peut-être remonterai-je le cours?'

L'espoir sembla lui donner un peu de vie. Il se gonfla un peu. A la façon des arbres au printemps il sentit qu'il reverdissait. Si la fonction d'un juge est de juger, c'est-à-dire départir le juste et l'injuste (juger mal n'étant plus juger) il aurait pu devenir de moins en moins juge et se fondre complètement, ne rester qu'une mare de pipi au pied de son fauteuil.

'Je *veux* être juste.'

Mais juste signifie aussi charitable. A haute voix, il ajouta:

- Je ne parlerai pas de la nuit dans votre interrogatoire.

- Je vous remercie, Monsieur le Juge, vous êtes un chic type.

La voix de Paulo reprit un accent canaille, car elle venait en droite ligne du coeur pour porter les mots qui s'y trouvaient. Pendant une seconde et quelle seconde! il fit la paix avec la société. Mais le souvenir du rapport du flic l'attrista un peu. Mis en confiance par le juge, il osa dire:

- Vous croyez que le Président va lire le rapport, Monsieur le Juge... des fois...

Le juge ne répondit pas. Il regardait le papier pelure dactylographié et il lisait le mot nuit, souligné. Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour! Nuits d'ivresses, de caresses... Et nous avons des nuits plus belles que vos jours... La nuit sur nous étend ses voiles... Nuits-Saint-Georges... Nuits de la Saint-Jean, nuit de Valpurgis... C'était à trois heures du matin, un point. La Nuit. Un trait sous le mot nuit. Le juge avait cessé de penser pour se laisser partir dans une rêverie un peu nauséuse qui peut tenir lieu de réflexion. Quand le raisonnement cesse, soit parce qu'on a épuisé tous les arguments et qu'on les a confrontés, soit par le fait de la fatigue, ce glissement vous met dans une sorte de vague, de confusion où la décision se fait d'elle-même, de vous se détache sans douleur. Le regard du juge fixé sur la feuille était très loin d'elle, derrière ses verres très loin en lui-même, et roulé dans ces vagues dont la douceur enveloppante était encore plus forte d'être appelée par le mot nuit, depuis un moment il ne jugeait plus. Il pliait en quatre le rapport de police, et toujours hors d'ici, il le déchirait en petits morceaux qu'il jeta dans

le panier sous les yeux humides de Paulo, sous les yeux indignés du garde et sous les yeux indifférents du greffier. Paulo put à peine articuler le mot merci, un torrent de larmes eût coulé de ses yeux, car il comprit qu'il avait été, lors d'un moment très bref l'objet d'un grand amour. Le Juge continua son interrogatoire sur un mode machinal. Puis, sans s'arrêter de questionner, il prit une feuille de papier blanc, y griffonna très habilement un mot qui signalait aux autorités allemandes que Cramaille (Paul) avait été trouvé porteur d'un plan mystérieux, marquant certains emplacements, mal définis, de presque toutes les villes de France. La veille de sa sortie de prison, Paulo fut traduit devant trois officiers allemands du service des renseignements. Quand il entra dans le bureau, les trois officiers levèrent la tête, regardèrent Paulo, puis dans un même mouvement regardèrent la carte étalée sur la table. Paulo la vit. Il rougit. A brûle-pourpoint l'un des officiers dit:

- Le rose de votre joue est un aveu.

Paulo ne comprit pas, ou plutôt il comprit mal car les mots 'rose' et 'joue' appartiennent à la littérature et au langage délicat des tantes. Il avala un peu de salive. Une sécheresse bizarre brûlait le bord de ses paupières. Il ne baissa pas les yeux.

- Racontez!

Ce fut dit d'un ton sec. Paulo ne broncha pas. L'officier allemand s'impatienta:

- Vous savez ce que votre silence peut vous coûter?

Enfin, peu à peu la confusion se précisa pour se dissiper en même temps. Paulo connut la honte d'expliquer aux officiers boches que cette carte indiquait, dans chaque ville, l'endroit où se réunissaient les pédés, où il se rendait ou désirait se rendre afin de mettre en l'air les plus confiants. On l'expédia au camp de concentration de Rouillée. Mais avant il dut assister à la révolte de la prison. Par le travail qui consiste à sauver un homme en s'opposant aux hommes et à cet homme lui-même dans leurs décrets - dans leur Verbe - (détruire une pièce rendue officielle par des cachets) le juge se sentit épuisé en même temps qu'un grand orgueil l'exaltait d'avoir osé un geste de prince, d'avoir fait son vrai devoir et magnifiquement sans autre témoin qu'un voyou - car il avait commis un crime pour le garde qui se demandait s'il serait habile pour son avancement d'en parler - lui causa ce frisson pareil au frisson de honte et dont on éprouve pourtant une grande joie, mais il venait de retirer tout aux hommes et de s'écarter d'eux si loin qu'il ne put résister au besoin de leur donner un gage et, spontanément, presque mystiquement il se chargea de ce péché même qu'une argumentation retorse lui avait permis de détacher d'un flic. Et son crime de délation était la conséquence de sa trop grande humanité. Il n'eut aucun remords pour aucun de ses actes.

Mais cette vie [...]

111 Il n'est pas sûr que Juliette entendit [...]

(214) Il n'est pas sûr que Juliette entendît [...]

112 [...] par la main de Riton.

Était-il vrai que [...]

(215) [...] par la main de Riton qui resta accrochée à la bite du Frisé.

Était-il vrai que [...]

113 [...] cimes du monde.

. . . . .

Jean!

(217) [...] cimes du monde. Depuis longtemps la nuit tombait lentement. A un certain



moment, son regard inquiet chercha quelque chose dans l'immense pièce. Enfin Hitler se dirigea vers le bureau et il saisit un énorme crayon vert, de la marque 'Koo-Hi-Nour' - qu'il s'appliqua contre la fesse. Puis il sourit, et reposa l'objet à sa place. Il était satisfait: De toute évidence, quand il l'avait frôlé, en passant derrière lui, le soldat avait senti la bite du Führer lui caresser les miches. Fort de cette certitude, pacifié, nous nous remîmes au travail, à la guerre, en poète presque toujours heureux. Poète il savait se servir du mal. Il serait fou de croire qu'il n'a pas vu que la morale selon les principes du coeur, des religions et des moeurs, n'est pas du côté d'un communisme plus ou moins égalitariste. Il détruisait pour détruire, il tuait pour tuer. L'institution nazie ne cherchait qu'à se dresser orgueilleusement dans le mal, ériger le mal en système et hausser tout un peuple, et soi-même au sommet de ce peuple, jusqu'à la solitude la plus austère. De la plus abominable condition des hommes, de la soumission infamante et de la tyrannie. Hitler tirait des effets magnifiques par un truquage de l'orgueil que l'on nomme l'art.

. . . . .

Jean!

114 [...] les dents des femmes. Il fallait [...]

(219) [...] les dents des femmes. Voici comment c'est arrivé. Il fallait [...]

115 [...] à sa main bandée.

. . . . .

Si sa [...]

(220-221) [...] à sa main bandée.

. . . . .

Quelques jours après mon arrivée la prison se révolta.

Si sa [...]

116 [...] ossature indestructible.

Le capitaine fit un geste [...]

(222-228) [...] ossature indestructible. Il ne savait rien de l'aventure de Juliette et du Capitaine qu'il ne connaissait pas. (Aventure qui ne fut jamais poussée dangereusement que dans l'esprit de Juliette.) Lorsqu'un jour je retournai chez la mère de Jean, la bonne encore ouvrit la porte.

- Entrez, monsieur Jean.

- Y a quelqu'un?

- Oui. Ils sont là.

Je passai dans la salle à manger sans rien dire, sans même jeter un coup d'oeil à la bonne. C'était elle tout de même qui détenait, plus pur, le souvenir de Jean, mais pourquoi ne dénonçait-elle pas Erik, ni sa maîtresse? C'est peut-être qu'autrefois elle avait tellement peur de dénoncer Jean, tellement eu peur de *pouvoir* le dénoncer au Capitaine (un jour elle dut s'accrocher au gland de velours et d'or des rideaux, les empoigner, se retenir à eux, pour ne pas lâcher l'aveu) qu'aujourd'hui elle se sentait coupable comme si elle l'eût fait.

'Si je parle d'un soldat allemand, si on met le nez dans cette affaire on va sentir que je suis la grande responsable. C'est moi qu'on va arrêter.'

C'est en franchissant cette porte que je songeais au danger que représentait la bonniche. Je n'en aimai que plus violemment ces aîtres [traîtres] et leurs hôtes. Maintenant je vis au milieu d'eux. J'eus tort de croire que Paulo serait plus dur à la détente, que la mère de Jean ou qu'Erik.

Le surlendemain de ce jour qu'Erik me serra la main en me disant: 'A demain, Djian', je revins, apportant un paquet de cigarettes.

- Portez-les à Erik, dit la mère, il est dans la chambre, avec Paulo.

Elle-même arrangeait dans un vase très large d'ouverture un bouquet d'arums. Sa réponse, au milieu de ces fleurs blanches, significatives, me firent battre le coeur. Je me parus être au centre de fiançailles.

- Où est-ce?

Elle se retourna, me sourit et étendit son bras armé d'une paire de ciseaux:

- Passez par là.

J'entrai dans cette chambre que j'avais souvent aperçue, profonde et riche dans son obscurité. Il y avait beaucoup de mousseline, et en face du lit, je remarquais déjà cette glace placée entres des portes elles-mêmes drapées de grands rideaux rouges, si bien que, du lit où chaque soir nous couchions tous les quatre, la tête un peu dressée, c'est dans les décors d'un théâtre de guignol que je vous apercevais. Nous dormions là, et parfois nous conversions, presque immobiles, en silence, et sous l'aile de la mort de Jean.

Quand j'entrai, assis dans le fauteuil, Erik fumait. Les mains dans les poches Paulo le regardait fumer. A mon entrée ils sourirent l'un et l'autre. C'est d'abord à Erik que je tendis la main.

- Ça va? dit-il, en même temps qu'il donnait un coup d'oeil à Paulo.

- Ça va. Et toi, Paulo, ça gaze?

Il sourit en regardant Erik.

- Ça va.

Nous restâmes un moment sans parler. C'est alors que je remarquai au mur une photo accrochée: un jeune footballeur, en short était debout, un pied chaussé d'énormes souliers posé sur le ballon, la jambe encore plus solide et musclée par le fait du bas de laine, formait une arche qui semblait résonner de la marche héroïque d'un bataillon de choc.

- Qui c'est? dis-je.

- Qui? Çui là?

- Oui.

Paulo me regarda en souriant un peu, puis il regarda Erik qui lança son mégot mais sortit une seconde cigarette.

- Il est beau gosse, hein?

- Pas mal

Je me sentis sourire un peu. Paulo se leva, arracha du mur la photo et me la tendit. Et avec un peu de tristesse:

- Tenez, c'est un sportif, lui.

Puis:

- Ça vous plaît les beaux gosses?

- A moi?

- Oui.

- Oui, pourquoi?

- Oh! pour rien.

Il rit.

A la fête foraine du soir j'entrai dans la baraque intitulée 'Le train fantôme'.

- Viens, on va voir. Les fantômes moi ça m'intrigue, me dit le matelot rencontré le soir même.

Après avoir marché dans l'obscurité, monté des marches qui basculaient sous nos pieds, nous arrivâmes dans une petite pièce où, contre le mur, un cercueil ouvert était dressé. Nous étions une dizaine de personnes, gars et filles, regardant cette chose. Robert était un peu en arrière du groupe, mains dans les poches, jambes écartées. Rieur. Dans le

cercueil était allongé un squelette rouge, mais l'éclairage rendu nous révéla un jeune homme enveloppé dans un drap. Le marin rit, se poussa un peu en avant et cria:

- Le beau gosse! Les beaux gosses moi ça me plaît!

L'étrangeté de cette exclamation provenait de ce qu'elle était prononcée par un beau gosse. J'eus l'impression d'assister à une sorte de partouze intime où le seul partenaire, pour s'adorer mieux se partage en deux, ou encore où le double du miroir vient à la rencontre du jeune homme et se confond en lui, où la beauté se reconnaît, se sait une, ne reconnaît qu'elle, et s'unit à elle-même, où un beau garçon est si humble qu'il s'ignore d'être beau, et aime les beaux garçons, où il est si sûr de lui que cet orgueil prononce des paroles très humbles, mais où lui-même avec l'autre gosse les pétrifient ces paroles qui nous écrasaient tous. De quelle mystérieuse rencontre n'étais-je pas exclu?

- Lui aussi ça lui plaît.

Il me montra Erik.

- Il a raison.

Je sentais la volonté de Paulo d'amener la question sur le tapis, je ne voulus pas avoir l'air de traîner la patte, et je dis:

- Alors vous deux, c'est le grand amour?

Il rit encore, à peine gêné.

- Pourquoi pas? On fait pas de mal.

Erik n'avait pas encore bougé. Il tendit alors le bras et me demanda du feu. Je lui présentai une allumette et lui, afin que Paulo prenne du feu, lui présenta sa cigarette allumée, mais Paulo - peut-être ne vit-il pas ce geste - se retourna si vite que son derrière, si pur de forme, rond et dur, fut à hauteur de la cigarette d'Erik et je crus un instant qu'il allait la saisir entre ses miches serrées et la fumer par le cul. Cette situation un peu comique blessa l'image si noble de Paulo, causa dans son marbre cette fissure que j'osai développer et montrer dans quelques attitudes humiliantes. Puis il se retourna, se pencha vers moi, et prit du feu à ma cigarette.

- Je descends...

J'éclatai de rire. Tous les trois nous tournâmes la tête. La mère d'Erik avait ouvert la porte.

- Je descends, je viens aux commissions.

Elle vit et entendit mon rire.

- Qu'est-ce qu'il y a? dit-elle.

Les deux autres me regardaient, étonnés.

- Rien, dis-je, et j'avouai confus: 'Je pense tout seul. Je suis un peu cinglé.'

Quand elle fut sortie, Paulo me regarda d'un air sévère: - Dites, vous n'allez rien dire à ma vieille?

- Tu es fou.

- Alors pourquoi vous avez ri?

Il alla se placer auprès d'Erik, s'asseyant sur le rebord du fauteuil. C'était le geste d'un grand abandon.

- Pour rien... Mais tu as ma parole...

- Sûr?

- Je te le dis.

Il se leva du fauteuil, les yeux brillants, puis il y revint et entoura de son bras droit le cou d'Erik qu'il embrassa. Il passa dans la pièce à côté.

Je regardai Erik:

- Paulo vous aime beaucoup.

Il sourit et, difficilement dit:

- Oui, je crois, beaucoup.

- Mais... sa mère?

- Elle sait.

Il fumait nonchalamment. Nous restâmes quelques secondes sans parler, enfin nos regards se rencontrèrent, et nous sourîmes. Je laissais ces sourires me noyer au fond de mon fauteuil, et quand l'eau s'en fut refermée sur moi, je me secouai un peu et je dis en me levant:

- Qu'est-ce qu'il fout là-bas...

Je passai dans l'autre pièce, Paulo était accoudé au balcon. Je m'étonnai qu'un tel garçon trouvât un moment de flânerie mélancolique (cette position au balcon évoquait des souvenirs de vagabonde rêverie). Quand il se retourna je m'aperçus qu'il pleurait: il était ivre.

- Eh bien Paulo, ça ne va pas?

Il s'approcha de moi, me prit par le cou et m'embrassa.

- T'es mon meilleur ami...

- Qu'est-ce qui ne va pas?

- Ça va.

- Alors, pourquoi tu chiales?

- Oh, pour rien. Viens.

Nous rentrâmes dans la chambre. Erik n'avait pas bougé. - Qu'est-ce qu'il doit leur coûter comme pipes, pensai-je. A cent balles le paquet!

- Je vous le ramène, dis-je.

Erik le regarda. Il vit ses larmes, parut étonné mais il sourit. - Qu'est-ce que tu as?

Paulo répondit dans les larmes et la morve:

- Rien.

Toujours souriant, Erik se leva et vint jusqu'à lui et posa sa main sur son épaule.

- J'ai rien, dit Paulo en torchant toute sa figure d'un revers de manche.

Puis il se blottit contre Erik qui le serra sur lui.

- Va te coucher, va.

Paulo hésita, ses yeux devinrent tout à coup méchants, durs, et il dit:

- Oui. Je vais y aller.

Au bout de dix secondes:

- On va tous y aller.

Il eût pu en prison faire cette réponse. Rien que sa méchanceté pouvait lui faire trahir ses potes. Sa méchanceté lui permit de ne pas trahir. Le capitaine fit un geste [...]

121-122 [...] l'Allemand, le dominaient.

Il y eut une escale de lumière. C'était 'Jaurès'. Des voyageurs descendirent. Par le fait d'un accord déjà noué, ni Riton ni le Fritz ne se dérangèrent, sauf que Riton sortit sa main droite de sa poche.

La rame partit dans l'obscurité. Il ne bougeait pas.

(236) [...] l'Allemand le dominaient. Pourtant, une fois il se dit:

- Sûrement qu'i bande. C'est sa bite que je sens. Faudrait pas que ça soit son pétard qu'i fasse le con après, en m'en foutant un coup dans le cul.

Il y eut une escale de lumière. C'était 'Jaurès'. Des voyageurs descendirent. Par le fait d'un accord déjà noué, ni Riton ni le Fritz ne se dérangèrent, sauf que Riton sortit sa main droite de sa poche.

- J'vais la laisser pendre quand i fera noir, jusqu'à sa bite, en douce, j'verrai si c'est vrai.

La rame partit dans l'obscurité. Erik bandait toujours. De sa poche sa main redressa sa bite par son slip serré contre sa jambe gauche. Il voulut la dégager et sa manoeuvre, sur

les fesses de Riton, donna lieu à un désordre de coups, de chocs, de frôlements légers. Riton ne bougeait pas.

122 [...] d'un temple grec. Le train eut un cahot [...]

(237) [...] d'un temple grec. Riton laissa pendre sa main droite et, pour qu'elle frôlât la braguette du soldat, il fallait qu'il se tourne un peu sur le côté mais alors il ne recevrait plus le coup de bite qu'Erik s'appliquait, avec sa main dans la poche, à pointer de plus en plus exactement entre les fesses. Le train eut un cahot [...]

123 [...] leur impudeur. Sans se concerter [...]

(238) [...] leur impudeur comme si elle eût été manifestée par cette petite bite à vif, rouge sang, qui sort du poil des chiens. Sans se concerter [...]

123 [...] aimant, aimé; enfin il [...]

(239) [...] aimant, aimé. Il savait nager et conduire une voiture; il était donc élégant, enfin il [...]

125 [...] Quand le Yogi marche [...]

(242) [...] Quand le Yogui marche [...]

125 [...] comme il peut.

Avec le capitaine, le directeur, le surveillant-chef [...]

(243) [...] comme il peut. Ce qui compte c'était la réussite. Erik s'aida aussi de tout ce qu'il put, mais il réussit.

Durant la campagne sur le front soviétique, un journaliste interrogeant un de ses camarades sur l'horreur du meurtre, Erik entendit répondre:

'...Et puis on s'y habitue.' Il revit son premier meurtre. Ses remords. Et chaque fois qu'il tuera, après trente cadavres, s'il songe à la mort, c'est le gamin assassiné le premier qu'il évoquera. C'est le seul qui compte, contenant tous les autres. Tournant sur son petit ventre comme sur un pivot, nageant sur la lande comme un apprenti nageur sur le sable, essayant de ressaisir avec ses bras et ses pieds dérégés, la vie qui fout le camp, le gosse mourant avait exécuté, une fois pour toutes, la danse grotesque et touchante qui fait des victimes un insecte féroce, sordide, griffu, une araignée, un crabe ayant la forme même du remords incrustée dans l'âme comme les morpions le sont dans les couilles. Pierrot plus tard n'aura qu'à se reporter à sa première trahison. Avec le Capitaine, le Directeur, le Surveillant-Chef [...]

134 [...] un certain point, incapable.

On désigna [...]

(256-257) [...] un certain point incapable.

Dans les égouts s'organise, sans qu'on y prenne garde, une vie merveilleuse qui va durer plusieurs jours. Quelques milliers de soldats allemands s'y étaient réfugiés et bientôt Paris fut habité par une ville étrange, qui était à l'ombre de la ville libre, son enfer, son double honteux, au sens exact, ses bas-fonds. Cette ville avait ses lois, ses règles, ses coutumes. Des groupes s'étaient installés, pour une vie qui pourrait être longue, dans des retraites de maçonnerie. On y dormait presque toujours, sur des couvertures et des capotes. Les soldats espéraient la délivrance. Ils maigrissaient. Les barbes couvraient les visages. Ils étaient sales, puaien la crasse, la merde, la souffrance dans lesquelles ils continuaient à s'aimer. Les miliciens restés libres, les partisans allemands, les membres secrets de la Gestapo, leur passaient de la nourriture et des vêtements qui permettaient à certains de

sortir au clair de lune. Chaque groupe accordait une permission d'une heure à quelques-uns qui la passaient accroupis dans les bosquets des Tuileries ou du Luxembourg où des Français avaient déposé des munitions et des vivres. Je voudrais encore marquer la beauté des Allemands vaincus, fuyards. Leurs yeux sévères, les traits rigides, quelquefois un sourire d'une tristesse infinie. Ils n'avaient plus d'espoir. Ils ne vaincraient plus, mais ils combattaient encore. Ils n'avaient plus de foyer, plus de famille et ils luttèrent contre les rats, l'odeur, la faim, pour faire encore l'amour dans les égouts. Les miliciens camouflés les aidaient encore. Chaque milicien ne prétendait l'être que pour se sentir en fraternelle compagnie, pour aussi turbiner plus à l'aise et le gars resté seul, libre, refusant d'avoir partie liée avec qui que ce fût, par sa seule attitude, leur était un reproche. Au surplus, c'était un rival. Pour les miliciens, aux yeux du flic qu'ils étaient devenus, le voleur travaillant seul était un ennemi. Autre cas: s'il avait désiré entrer dans la Milice et qu'on l'eût refusé, avec ce cave, les scrupules devenaient inutiles.

On désigna [...]

135 [...] révolutionnaire.

. . . . .

A la première heure [...]

(259-260) [...] révolutionnaire.

. . . . .

- Tu dors?

La pression de la main posée sur son ventre, le son de la voix le réveillèrent tout à fait. Il ouvrit les yeux. Roger était accroupi à côté de lui.

- Tu veux tirer? et il lui mit dans la bouche, sans la lâcher, la cigarette allumée, qu'il retira de la sienne. Riton avala deux goulées et renvoya la fumée.

- Qu'est-ce que tu veux? C'est l'heure?

- Je peux pas roupiller.

Ils parlaient bas.

- Moi, je me suis assoupi.

Riton tourna ses yeux vers le plafond et l'air indifférent, il dit:

- T'as le trac?

- Ah non.

- Un petit peu, quoi.

- Ça te fait rien à toi?

- Pourquoi que tu crois que je suis venu à la Milice. Donne que je tire.

Il aspira un peu de fumée qu'il rejeta et:

- Si t'as les miches qui jouent des castagnettes, demande à te faire remplacer, c'est pas les clients qui vont manquer.

- T'es malade.

- Gueule pas si fort, tordu. Va pieuter, t'as encore deux plombs .

A la première heure [...]

141 [...] c'est le Mal, Mal absolu.

(270) [...] c'est le Mal. C'est le Mal absolu.

144 [...] d'Erik endormi.

Quand il fit jour [...]

(276) [...] d'Erik endormi. Le premier mouvement du sergent fut de les réveiller. Non qu'il eût de haine contre les amours de cet ordre, mais afin d'accomplir, croyait-il, sincèrement, un acte vertueux, alors qu'en réalité s'il eût agi c'était sous la poussée du

besoin de manifester sa présence au centre d'un acte, ne fût-ce qu'en détruisant cet acte. Se donner de l'importance. Il était avec six hommes et un Français, perdu à tout jamais sur un îlot que la trahison minait, que les fusils surveillaient. Il ne dit rien et rentra se coucher. Non parce qu'il n'avait plus d'autorité, mais parce que le comportement moral de ces hommes si près de la mort, isolés et perdus certainement, n'avait plus aucun rapport avec leur comportement vital. Spontanément il comprit que toute intervention le mettrait en posture de coupable, car il était en face de deux hommes dont l'activité de soldat ne consistait plus qu'à mourir. Ils seraient morts demain. Leurs gestes de ce soir devenaient sacrés, ne relevaient que d'eux seuls. Ce monde moral qu'ils venaient d'ériger et de cohabiter ne dépendait que de leurs deux volontés. Homme de troupe le sergent eût pu le réveiller, rire avec eux ou les engueuler, mais garder la moindre de ses phrases prendrait un sens ridicule de sanction. Il rentra se coucher et crut lui-même n'agir ainsi - ou se défendre d'agir - que par le choix d'une indulgence sans égale, l'indulgence d'un chef qui connaît les hommes et les excuse. En lui-même, il murmura:

- La plus vile conquête de l'homme, l'homme.

Quand il fit jour [...]

145 [...] sont les plus sales; ce sont les hommes.

(277) [...] sont les plus sales; à la vérité ce sont les hommes.

145 [...] avec du chocolat. Riton mordit [...]

(278) [...] avec du chocolat. Comme il était le plus jeune, il se permettait de faire le fou. Riton mordit [...]

146 [...] ses rapports avec Riton. Cet orgueil [...]

(278) [...] ses rapports avec Riton. De la même façon son goût de la dénonciation - vite camouflé par le rire - avait percé lors du commandement donné à son groupe de sept hommes. Cet orgueil [...]

152 ... *Il fit chanter la Marseillaise...*

(289) ... 'Il fit chanter la Marseillaise' ...

153 ... *Aux échos du vallon...*

(289) ... 'aux échos du vallon...' ...

154 [...] le déserteur?

Jamais [...]

(292) [...] le déserteur? Jamais [...]

154 [...] ma nausée. J'aimais Erik.

(292) [...] ma nausée. Si je couche sur le dos pour l'enculer, un gosse rétif à l'amour, ses pieds sur mes épaules, la douleur quand je le perfore lui fait, dans un sursaut pressant, coller sa bouche à la mienne. Il cherche le réconfort d'un baiser. Il caresse ma tête, mes cheveux, tandis que je force et que j'entre plus profondément. Il veut oublier sa douleur, il se passionne, il se branle d'une main et peu à peu, jusqu'à ce qu'il jouisse, l'amour entre en lui par la brèche qu'a causée la douleur. J'aimais Erik.

154 Une énorme tendresse [...]

(293) Une *énorme* tendresse [...]

158 [...] si les deux mâles debout se fussent regardés, la qualité n'eût pas [...]  
 (299) [...] Si les deux mâles debout se fussent regardés, l'un le baisant en passant sa queue entre les jambes de l'autre, la qualité n'eût pas [...]

158 [...] ses adolescents transfigurés. Mais [...]  
 (299) [...] ses adolescents transfigurés. La beauté du moment endolorit Erik qui débanda légèrement. Riton le sentit et fit doucement mouvoir ses fesses. Erik le serra plus fort dans ses bras. Mais [...]

159 [...] les cuisses du même. Les deux bras [...]  
 (300) [...] les cuisses du même et réussit à le baiser ainsi. Les deux bras [...]

159 [...] demi-nu:  
 - Tu peux y aller.  
 (300) [...] demi-nu:  
 - Baise-moi, tu peux y aller.

159 [...] d'amour voulut murmurer quelques [...]  
 (300) [...] d'amour voulut mettre sa langue sur la sienne, mais Erik redressa sa tête et sur l'arcade sourcilière il lui donna un grand coup de boule, en même temps qu'il passait ses bras sous son dos, le ramenant violemment à lui et que sa verge, plus dure que jamais, fonçait plus loin.  
 - Ah! chéri! qu'est-ce...  
 Riton voulut murmurer quelques [...]

159 - *Einmal...*  
 (301) - *Einmal...*

+160 [...] se busque un peu.

. . . . .  
 Quand la tombe [...]  
 (301-302) [...] se busque un peu.  
 Quand la tombe [...]

160 [...] fleurs à peine séchées?  
 Erik couvrit de baisers la tête en sueur. La verge perforant faisait si mal à l'enfant qu'il ne désira plus qu'un surcroît de douleur afin de se perdre en elle.  
 - *Ich...*  
 La bouche d'Erik [...]  
 (303) [...] ces fleurs à peine séchées?  
 Erik eut un tremblement et son grand corps doré s'affaissa sur le corps vaincu de Riton. Ils restèrent une seconde saisis par la stupeur, Erik ayant le ventre blessé par la verge de Riton qui ne débandait pas puisqu'il n'avait pas joui, mais bandait plus dur d'avoir été le témoin pieux de l'effondrement d'Erik dans la joie. Erik se décolla, il prit dans sa main et la garda la queue du même en s'allongeant à ses côtés.  
 - Rentre vite. Va t'auras chaud.  
 Puis ce ne fut plus qu'un râle de la gorge. L'Allemand le pénétrait.  
 - Mais enfonce!  
 Il couvrit de baisers la tête en sueur. La verge le perforant lui faisait si mal qu'il ne désira plus qu'un surcroît de douleur afin de se perdre en elle.



- Oh! qu'il me déchire tout! Mais tue-moi!

- *Ich...*

La bouche d'Erik [...]

161 Erik ne comprit pas.

Aucune tendresse [...]

(304-305) Erik ne comprit pas. En le branlant, il voulut faire jouir Riton qui repoussa doucement la main d'Erik et protégea sa queue avec une des siennes. Las et un peu triste Erik n'insista pas. Le jeu aurait pu consister à laisser Riton jouir après Erik, lors d'une autre étreinte. L'on s'étonne de la mésaventure des ménages où le mari et la femme n'arrivent pas ensemble à la jouissance. Le bonheur est plus grand quand le partenaire s'emploie avec art (ce qu'il ne peut faire s'il est attentif à son propre plaisir). L'esprit tendu par la jouissance on ne saurait bénéficier du bonheur de voir ou sentir l'autre jouir. L'égoïsme dirige la jouissance simultanée. Il était normal que de Riton, plus jeune que lui, Erik tirât son plaisir, et normal que Riton servît Erik, désirât qu'il jouisse plus que lui. Sa pudeur aussi l'empêchait et sa gentillesse, de lâcher son foutre sous la caresse d'Erik. D'ailleurs Riton connaissait déjà la saveur des couilles, d'une belle grosseur, toutes hérissées de poils durs et noirs, rêches, qui piquaient le palais, les lèvres et la langue. Leur enveloppe non plus n'était pas molle. Presque plus que la verge pourtant belle, elles étaient les organes vraiment de la virilité et l'intérieur en devait être précieux pour qu'on les gardât dans des coques épaisses, épineuses de châtaignes. Riton les gardait dans sa bouche. Il les y enfermait. Il eût accepté qu'on les lui cousît à l'intérieur, comme au prisonnier de ses propres testicules fait, dit-on - le guerrier marocain, comme on enferme celles d'un bouc sous la peau du ventre.

- Si je connaissais un chirurgien, pensa-t-il une fois, je me les ferais greffer. Après tout, lui c'est un Frisou. Y aurait pas trop de mal si on le châtrait.

Malgré leur amour, l'un et l'autre restaient allemand et français. Ses couilles dans la bouche goulue de Riton, Erik passait ses doigts dans les boucles folles.

- Il pourrait me mordre, pensa-t-il. Pour lui, je ne suis qu'un Boche, il pourrait me dévorer.

En effet, aucune tendresse [...]

162 Riton s'éveilla. Erik était triste.

(306) Riton s'éveilla. Il s'était à peine, à l'écart d'Erik qui se reculottait, caressé la queue et il avait joui. Erik était triste.

162 [...] du coup de feu. Pendant dix secondes il piétina [...]

(306) [...] du coup de feu. Pendant dix secondes une folie joyeuse fut maîtresse de Riton. Pendant dix secondes il piétina [...]

162 [...] cette tombe, puis elle se [...]

(307) [...] cette tombe merveilleuse de sa fillette, puis elle se [...]

## 5.5 APPENDIX E

*Journal du voleur*, excisions and variants

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Page references (prefixed by an 'F') to 'Collection Folio' reprint precede references to the subscribers' edition. The sign '+' denotes an addition to the subscribers' edition and '\*' indicates a variant or excision of particular interest.

The subscribers' edition does not carry Jean-Paul Sartre's preface.

F9 Le vêtement des forçats [...]

11 **L**E vêtement des forçats [...]

F9 [...] *il existe donc un étroit rapport* [...]

11 [...] *il existe un étroit rapport* [...]

+F9 [second footnote] 2. Je parle de l'idéal forçat, de l'homme chez qui se rencontrent toutes les *qualités* de puni.

+F12 [footnote] 1. Son abolition me prive à ce point qu'en moi-même et pour moi seul, secrètement, je recompose un bagne, plus méchant que celui de la Guyane. J'ajoute que des centrales on peut dire 'à l'ombre'. Le bagne est au soleil. C'est dans une lumière cruelle que tout se passe, et je ne puis m'empêcher de la choisir comme signe de la lucidité.

F13-14 [...] j'ai bandé pour le crime.

[one third of page 14 left blank]Je nomme violence [...]

15-17 [...] j'ai bandé pour le crime

[page 16 and one third of page 17 left blank]**J**E nomme violence [...]

F16 [...] selon des méthodes brutales.

19 [...] selon des méthodes viriles.

F16 Sans qu'ils le veulent les gestes de ces gosses [...]

19 Sans qu'ils le veulent les gestes de ces gens [...]

F17 [...] les tragédies.

Une telle définition [...]

20 [...] les tragédies. Une telle définition [...]

F19 [...] surtout la calle Médiolda [...]

22 [...] surtout la calle Médiolda [...]

F22-23Le tube de vaseline, dont la destination vous est [23] assez connu, aura fait surgir [...]

26Le tube de vaseline, dont la destination était de graisser ma queue ou celle de mes

amants, aura fait surgir [...]

F23 [...] comme mon mouchoir taché en était la preuve.

26 [...] comme mon mouchoir taché d'un sperme essuyé en était la preuve.

F24 [...] je voudrais que baignait leurs muscles dans cette délicate transparence sans quoi leurs plus chers attributs sont moins beaux.

27 [...] je voudrais que baignait leurs muscles dans cette délicates transparence sans qui la verge des plus beaux est moins belle...

F25 '[...] Jean ne sait pas se tenir.'

28 '[...] Il ne sait pas se tenir.'

F26 [...] et si par malheur il avait un sexe magnifique?

29 [...] et si par malheur il devait avoir un sexe magnifique?

F29 [...] le malade se gratte: il bande. Dans un érotisme solitaire [...]

32-33 [...] le malade se gratte: il bande. [33] La masturbation se fait nombreuse. Dans un érotisme solitaire [...]

F32 [...] et je suis de la tribu) - la prudence, la voix [...]

35 [...] et je suis de la tribu. L'acte parfait: par inadvertance mettant la main dans la poche d'un beau nègre ensommeillé je sentirais sous mes doigts la queue bander et je retirerais ma main fermée sur une pièce d'or découverte et dérobée au fond de la poche.) - la prudence, la voix [...]

+F34 En effet, si mon esprit supportait, désirait même l'humilité, jeune et violente mon corps refusait l'humiliation.

37 En effet, si mon esprit supportait, désirait même l'humilité, jeune et violente mon corps la refusait.

F35 Je fis ce qu'il exigeait, dans la guérite. Peut-être, sans oser me le dire, voulut-il se laver à la borne-fontaine [...]

38 Je fis ce qu'il exigeait, dans la guérite. Après qu'il eut joui, peut-être, sans oser me le dire, voulut-il se laver à une petite fontaine [...]

+F40 [...] mais j'aimais la poussière, la crasse, la précipitation des voyous. Terrassé par ma colère ou mon désir, en me penchant sur lui, de Java je vois le profil écrasé dans l'oreiller. La douleur, la crispation de ses traits mais aussi leur radieuse angoisse, je les ai souvent épiées sur la petite gueule dépeignée des gamins accroupis.

43 [...] mais j'aimais la poussière, la crasse, la précipitation des voyous. Si j'encule ...,<sup>1</sup> en me penchant plus près, je vois son visage de profil écrasé dans l'oreiller, la douleur, la crispation de ses traits mais aussi leur radieuse angoisse, je les ai souvent épiées sur la petite gueule dépeignée des gamins accroupis.

[Footnote reads:] <sup>1</sup> Le héros, d'abord nommé de son nom véritable, étant mon amant actuel (1948) la prudence me conseille de laisser un blanc à la place de ce nom.

F42 J'apprenais ainsi les précautions que prennent ici certains joueurs dans les grandes occasions afin d'être plus calmes. Nous [...]

45 J'apprenais ainsi que certains joueurs dans les grandes occasions se branlent ici afin

d'être plus calmes, plus sûrs d'eux-mêmes. Nous [...]

F44 [...] au-dessus d'un poignet sectionné, légèrement amenuisé [...]

47 [...] au-dessus d'un poignet coupé, légèrement amenuisé [...]

F44 [...] pâle cicatrice rose.

\*

Stilitano sourit [...]

47 [...] pâle cicatrice rose.

Sous un ciel tragique, les plus beaux paysages du monde je les aurai parcourus quand Stilitano la nuit prenait ma main. De quelle sorte était ce fluide qui de lui passait en moi, me donnait une décharge? J'ai marché au bord de rivages dangereux, débouché sur des plaines lugubres, entendu la mer. A peine l'avais-je touché, l'escalier changeait: il était le maître du monde. Le souvenir de ces brefs instants me permettrait de vous décrire des promenades, des fuites haletantes, des poursuites dans les contrées du monde où je n'irai jamais.

**STILITANO** sourit [...]

F46 [...] ou de perdre pied.

Sous un ciel tragique, les plus beaux paysages du monde je les aurai parcourus quand Stilitano la nuit prenait ma main. De quelle sorte était ce fluide qui de lui passait en moi, me donnait une décharge? J'ai marché au bord de rivages dangereux, débouché sur des plaines lugubres, entendu la mer. A peine l'avais-je touché, l'escalier changeait: il était le maître du monde. Le souvenir de ces brefs instants me permettrait de vous décrire des promenades, des fuites haletantes, des poursuites dans les contrées du monde où je n'irai jamais.

Mon ravisseur m'emportait.

49 [...] ou de perdre pied. Mon ravisseur m'emportait.

F46 [...] de la confiance. L'odeur de Stilitano, l'odeur de ses aisselles, l'odeur de sa bouche, quand mon odorat s'en souvient [...]

49 [...] de la confiance. Après avoir fait l'amour je conserve longtemps dans les narines l'odeur animale de mon amant. Des particules ont dû rester accrochées aux poils qui en tapissent l'intérieur, et c'est un peu de son corps que je retrouve et que je recrée en moi-même quand je renifle. L'odeur de Stilitano, l'odeur de ses aisselles, l'odeur de sa bouche, de son sexe jamais lavé, quand mon odorat s'en souvient [...]

F48 [...] sont des Intouchables.) Stilitano était heureux [...]

\*51 [...] sont des Intouchables.) Ne pouvant la voir j'inventais la plus grosse et la plus belle verge du monde. Je lui voulais des qualités: lourde, nerveuse et forte, grave, avec un penchant pour l'orgueil et cependant sereine, sculpté dans le chêne, sous le doigt j'en éprouvais les nervures pleines, les palpitations, la chaleur, le rose, et quelquefois la pulsation précipitée du sperme. Elle occupait moins mes nuits que mes jours. Derrière la braguette de Stilitano elle était la Pierre Noire sacrée à qui Héliogabale offre ses richesses impériales. Stilitano était heureux [...]

5.5 *Journal du voleur*, excisions and variants

F48 Nous vécûmes ainsi quelques jours.

Un soir que [...]

51 Nous vécûmes ainsi quelques jours. Un soir que [...]

F48 Je saurai donc quelques renseignements sur mon origine [...]

52 Je saurai donc quelque chose de mon origine [...]

F52 J'osai dire d'un ton ssec [...]

55 J'osai dire d'un ton sec [...]

F55 [...] l'idée m'en vint comme [...]

58 [...] l'idée m'en viendra comme [...]

F57 [...] décrocher la grappe de raisin.

A l'intérieur [...]

60 [...] décrocher la grappe de raisin. A l'intérieur [...]

+F57-58 [...] une grappe de son véritable trésor, la branche où, comiquement, s'accrochaient trop de fruits.

[58] La Criolla n'était pas [...]

61 [...] une grappe de ses véritables couilles.

La Criolla n'était pas [...]

F58 [...] je restai là.

61 [...] je restais là.

F60-61 [...] à votre bonheur.

[61] Cependant Stilitano [...]

64 [...] à votre bonheur.

J'aggravais cette aventure immonde par une attitude de l'esprit qui devenait une véritable disposition. Par jeu Stilitano me dit un jour:

- Il faudra bien que je te plante ma bite

- Ça me ferait mal, dis-je en riant

- Penses-tu. J'y mettrai les formes

Aux chaussures on met des 'formes'. Je feignis, en moi-même, de croire qu'il mettrait sous forme sa queue afin qu'elle grossisse encore jusqu'à devenir un organe monstrueux innommable, cultivé spécialement pour ma répugnance, non mon plaisir. J'acceptai cette feinte explication sans dégoût.

Cependant Stilitano [...]

F63 [...] que je connusse avec lui [...]

67 [...] que je connusse avec Stilitano [...]

F63-64 [...] avec Guy.

*(Quand nous fûmes [...] terrible de l'autre.)*

Avec Stilitano [...]

67-68 [...] avec Guy.

*(Quand nous fûmes [...] terrible de l'autre.)*

Avec Stilitano [...]

F64 [...] *une volonté de meurtre qui s'exercerait contre moi.*

67 [...] *une volonté de meurtre qui s'exercerait sur moi.*

F69 Dans les pissotières, où n'entrait jamais Stilitano, le manège des pédés me renseignait: ils accomplissaient leur danse, le remarquable mouvement d'un serpent qui ondule, se balance à droite et à gauche, un peu en arrière. J'emmenais le plus cossu d'apparence.

73 Dans les pissotières, où n'entrait jamais Stilitano, le manège de pédés me renseignait: ils accomplissaient leur danse le remarquable mouvement d'un serpent qui double, dressé sur sa queue, ondule, se balance à droite et à gauche, un peu en arrière, pour jeter un coup d'oeil furtif sur ma bite hors de ma braguette. J'emmenais le plus cossu d'apparence.

F69 [...] cils immenses et recourbés.

73 [...] ses cils immenses.

F71 Nous passions, calle Carmen, et la nuit [...]

74 Nous passions Calle Carmen, et la nuit [...]

F72 Celles, que l'une d'entre elles [...]

76 **CELLES**, que l'une d'entre elles [...]

F74 [...] baudruches obscènes.

78 [...] baudruche en forme de bites.

\*F75 (*Longtemps après que je [...] épinglée à la hauteur équivalente.*

- *Pour remplacer sa fleur perdue, me dit-il.*

Dans la chambre de Pedro [...]

78 (*Longtemps après que je [...] épinglée à la hauteur du con.*

- *Pour remplacer sa fleur perdue, me dit-il.)*

Dans la chambre de Pedro [...]

F77 [...] seul au milieu de l'Océan<sup>1</sup>.

[footnote added] 1. En relisant ce texte, je m'aperçois avoir placé à Barcelone une scène de ma vie qui se situe à Cadix. C'est la phrase "seul au milieu de l'Océan", qui me le rappelle. En l'écrivant je commis donc l'erreur de la placer à Barcelone, mais dans sa description devait se glisser un détail qui me permet de la replacer dans son lieu véritable.

81 [...] seul au milieu de l'Océan.

F81 La Cour Maritime, en m'opposant à elle [...]

85 La cour maritime, en m'opposant à elle [...]

F82 [...] m'accrocher à la branche terrible et forte d'un nègre.

85 [...] m'accrocher à la queue terrible et forte d'un nègre.

F83 J'étais sec, jaune, triste.

86 J'étais sec, jeune, triste.

F85 (*A la colonie pénitentiaire de Belle-Isle [...] de mon enfance à Mettray.*)

88-89 (A la colonie pénitentiaire de Belle-Isle [...] de mon enfance à Mettray.)

F88 [...] connaître Gibraltar. La nuit du rocher parcouru, peuplé de soldats [...]

92 [...] connaître Gibraltar. La nuit la masse érotique du rocher parcourue, peuplée de soldats [...]

F89 [...] ramasser les reliefs des soldats anglais.

92 [...] ramasser les restes des soldats anglais.

F93 [...] où à l'horizon apparaissait la ville célèbre.

96 [...] où quelquefois apparaissait la ville célèbre.

F99 [...] plus enfoui dans un passé [...]

103 [...] plus enfouis dans un passé [...]

F101 [...] devant la nature

Quelques pages [...]

104 [...] devant la nature. Quelques pages [...]

F101 [...] fait divers [...]

105 [...] fait-divers [...]

F103 A Anvers je retrouverai Stilitano.

107 A Anvers je retrouve Stilitano.

F109 [...] te rendre visite en cellule!

113 [...] te rendre visite en cellule et qu'ils t'enculent!

F110 Le pays, a-t-on dit de la France, en était infesté [...]

114 Le pays, dit-on, en était infesté [...]

F111 [...] les hors-la-loi et [...]

144 [...] les hors la lois et [...]

F112 Ce sont toutefois ces tuelles [...]

116 Toutefois c'est ces tuelles [...]

F116 [...] trouver un mec.

119 [...] trouver un mec, il avait encore envie de se faire enculer.

F117 De Java, Stilitano avait la démarche en bloc [...]

121 De Java, Stilitano avait encore la démarche en bloc [...]

F118 Il râle

Sur lui [...]

121-122 Il râle:

- Je vais l'enculer.

Quand pour la première fois je l'enculai ce bel athlète de vingt-deux ans il feignit de

dormir. Son visage écrasant l'oreiller blanc il se laissa mettre mais quand il fut pénétré il ne put se retenir de geindre, délicatement, comme on soupire.

Profondément enfilé par ma queue, il devient autre chose que soi-même, autre chose qu'un ami. C'est une étrange partie de moi qui conserve encore un peu [122] de vie propre. Nous ne formons qu'un seul corps mais il est à deux têtes et chacune d'elles s'exerce à éprouver sa propre volupté. A l'instant qu'elle jouit, cette excroissance de mon corps qui était mon ami devient sans tendresse, s'assombrit. Dans l'obscurité je devine sa dureté et qu'un voile d'ombre s'étend sur son visage crispé par la souffrance et le plaisir. Je sais qu'il sait ce plaisir le tenir de moi, l'attendre de ma main qui le branle mais je sens qu'il n'est plus attentif qu'à sa venue. Si nous sommes reliés par ma queue toutes nos relations amicales sont coupées. Nos bouches qui pourraient les rétablir peut-être ne peuvent se joindre. Il ne cherche qu'à s'empaler d'avantage. Je ne puis le voir car il a murmuré: 'Eteins la lumière', mais je sens qu'il est devenu autre, étrange, lointain. C'est quand il jouit par moi que je le sens me haïr.

Au début, quand, nu dans le lit, je le retournais - 'je me retourne comme une crêpe' disent d'eux-mêmes avec un cynisme amusé les voyous dont je parle - et que je m'apprêtais à l'enfiler, il me faisait peur car il frémissait. Je flattais doucement sa croupe, comme celle d'un cheval afin qu'il ne remue, ne se révolte quand je vais l'opérer. Aujourd'hui son frémissement me bouleverse encore: il est le signe du plaisir que ses narines viennent de humer. Je m'accroche à lui, à sa branche, que je desserre un peu afin de distinguer sous mes doigts la pulsation délicate du foutre qui s'écoule et va pénétrer le matelas.

Sur lui

F119 [...] sa honte.

Après avoir connu Erik [...]

123-124 [...] sa honte.

Ça te plaît de te baiser.

- Des fois. J'aime quand tu vas jouir. Ça me repose, de me sentir vaincu.

[124] Après avoir connu Erik [...]

\*F119 Le soir il s'offre pile aux uns, aux autres face.

L'assassinat [...]

124 Le soir il offre sa bite à qui la veut sucer, ou ses miches pour qu'on l'emmanche.

L'assassinat [...]

F124 [...] Pilorge, Weidmann, Serge de Lenz [...]

129 [...] Pilorge, Weidman, Serge de Lenz [...]

F129 [...] montrant leurs dents blanches.

134 [...] montrant leurs dents admirables.

F129 [...] le cul!

- Je baise le mur!

Quelques minutes [...]

134 [...] le cul!



- J'encule le mur!  
Quelques minutes [...]

131- No lo so, répondis-je.  
136- No lo sa, répondis-je.

F132 [...] un malabar me demande d'être mon épouse [sic] (je découvre que son désir c'est mon tremblement) [...]

137 [...] un malabar me demande de l'enfiler (je découvre que son désir c'est son tremblement) [...]

+F138 [...] bourgeois berlinois recéler [...]  
143 [...] bourgeois recéler [...]

F139 [...] pas de mal, je ne dérange rien. Le scandale est impossible. Je vole à vide. Il me semblait [...]

143 [...] pas de mal. Je ne dérange rien. Le scandale est impossible. Je vole à vide. J'éprouvais une sorte de malaise après que j'avais volé. Il me semblait [...]

F140 [in footnote] une moto, j'étais ému. J'ai revu [...]  
144 [in footnote] une moto, j'ai bandé. J'ai revu [...]

F145 [...] ma force de cette puissance élémentaire [...]  
149 [...] ma force de la puissance élémentaire [...]

F150 [...] une voix d'azur. On suppose qu'elle avait [...]  
154 [...] une voix d'azur.  
On suppose qu'elle avait [...]

+F152-153 [...] ne répliquât.  
Une main dans la poche, d'autres fois, il se caressait en buvant, debout au comptoir. D'autres fois encore il vantait la grosseur et la beauté - la force aussi et même l'intelligence - de son sexe en effet [153] massif. Ne sachant [...]  
157 [...] ne répliquât.

- Ma bite, disait-il, elle vaut son pesant d'or.  
- Pas lourd, dit un navigateur.  
- Plus que la chope que tu tiens dans la main!  
- Ça m'étonnerait.  
- Tu veux peser?  
- OK.

Les paris étaient vite engagés mais déjà bandant plus dur Armand déboutonné posait sa queue sur la main à plat du navigateur.

- Chope, dit-il.  
Une main dans la poche, d'autres fois, il se caressait en buvant, debout au comptoir. D'autres fois il se vantait de soulever un costaud à bout de bite. Ne sachant [...]

F156 Elle la chérira...

Robert marchait à côté de moi.

La nuit, enroulé [...]

161 Elle la chérira...

Lucien marchait à côté de moi. D'êtres vivants je ne possédai jamais que de belles queues, leur racine enfouie dans la mousse noire. J'en chéris plusieurs et je les voulus dans tout l'éclat de leur force. Ces plantes étaient mon orgueil. Ma ferveur obtenait d'elles que leur porteur lui-même s'étonnât de leur inhabituelle beauté. Néanmoins, elles restaient, par une base mystérieuse et solide accrochées au mâle dont elles étaient la branche maîtresse: il les possédait plus que moi-même. Elles étaient à lui. Quelques mouches bourdonnaient autour de Lucien. Mentalement ma main fit le geste de les chasser. Cette plante allait m'appartenir.

- Pour obtenir une telle réussite (la fleur qui la couronne est un bloc de chardon), d'où l'a-t-on repiquée? On dut la choisir dans un plant d'enfants ... Je vais la chérir...

Non plus seulement sa queue mais Lucien en entier était à moi. Avant lui, Robert. La nuit, enroulé [...]

F156 Il vint dormir. Le deuxième soir, comme il était en retard [...]

161 Il vint dormir le deuxième soir, comme il était en retard [...]

F161 Je rejoignis mon espagne [sic] et mes loques [...]

166 Je rejoignis l'Espagne et mes loques [...]

F162 La vie dont j'ai parlé [...]

167 **L**A vie dont j'ai parlé [...]

F163 [...] comme un jeune veau qui tète sa mère.

168 [...] comme un jeune veau qui tette sa mère.

F164 [...] dans l'eau claire, des insectes gris [...]

169 [...] dans l'eau claire un monde, des insectes gris [...]

F167-168 Je m'émer-[168]veillais de croire siéger [...]

172 Je m'émerveillais de savoir siéger [...]

F169 [...] (je n'écris pas le rejoindre).

J'avais sous les yeux [...]

174 [...] (je n'écris pas le rejoindre). J'avais sous les yeux [...]

F169 [...] Velpeau Weidmann blessé [...]

174 [...] Velpeau Weidman blessé [...]

F170 Il ne trahit jamais. Je lui demandai s'il accepterait de mener avec moi la vie [...]

175 Il ne trahit jamais. Quand à Lucien je demandai s'il accepterait de mener avec moi la vie [...]

F171 [...] des crimes. Les lustres sont entassés dans son appartement. Des amis qui avaient [...]

176 [...] des crimes, les lustres sont entassés dans son appartement. Ses amis avaient [...]

5.5 *Journal du voleur*, excisions and variantsF172-173 (*Une grande partie [...] de le récrire.*)177-178 (*Une grande partie [...] de le récrire.*)

F181 Puis-je faire [...]

185 **P**UIS-JE faire [...]

F183 [...] qui retiennent captif celui [...]

187 [...] qui retiennent captifs celui [...]

F184 J'ai dit assez ce qu'il devenait. Passèrent des touristes [...]

188 J'ai dit assez ce qu'il devenait quand passèrent des touristes [...]

F185 [...] nets, presque techniques.

185 [...] nets, rigoureux, presque techniques.

F189-190 [...] *Pour obtenir [...] création est possible.*193-194 [...] *Pour obtenir [...] création est possible.*

F190 [...] le Moyen-Age, les époques [...]

193-194 [...] le moyen âge, [194] les époques [...]

F190 [...] des débauches d'énergie. (Ému [...])

194 [...] des débauches d'énergie. Je songeais à sa queue. Parfois je l'imaginai noire, vivante, détachée de lui et se tenant droite, rigide, comme une sangsue, comme elle gonflée de sang. (Emu [...])

F192 [...] tous les hors-la-loi.

196 [...] tous les hors la loi.

F196

ROMANCE  
DE LA LÉGION AZUL*Nous sommes bons catholiques,*

[...]

*Il neige dans les Castilles.*

200

*Romance de la légion Azul*

Nous sommes bons catholiques,

[...]

Il neige dans les Castilles.

F200-201 Quand nous fûmes arrivés dans un coin des docks l'homme me demanda de l'aimer.

- D'accord

Je m'arrangeai pour qu'il descendît son pantalon jusqu'aux talons afin qu'il s'y empêtrât s'il voulait courir.

- Écarte...

[201] Avec ses deux mains [...]

204 Quand nous fûmes arrivés dans un coin des docks l'homme me demanda que je le

baise.

- D'accord. Déculotte-toi.

Je m'arrangeai pour qu'il descendît son pantalon jusqu'aux talons afin qu'il s'y empêtre s'il voulait courir.

- Écarte tes miches.

Avec les deux mains [...]

F202- Espèce de vieux salaud, tu croyais que j'allais...

206- Espèce de vieux salaud, tu croyais que j'allais t'emmancher!

F203- Laisse-moi au moins...

206- Laisse-moi au moins te sucer un peu.

F206 Avec sa femme, Stilitano se conduisait d'une façon brutale [...]

210 Avec sa femme Stilitano se conduisait de la même façon brutale [...]

F207 [...] faites par des petits malades.

211 [...] faites par des petites malades.

F209 J'osai m'asseoir au bord du lit, et poser ma main sur les draps. Il avait [...]

213 J'osai m'asseoir au bord du lit, et poser ma main sur les draps jusqu'à l'endroit où j'estimais qu'était sa queue. Il avait [...]

F210 Un très léger roidissement m'enseigna [...]

213 Un très léger roidissement à ma braguette m'enseigna [...]

F217 [...] portent l'insigne. Sa virilité [...]

220 [...] portent l'insigne, et j'eusse alors connu le même tremblement qu'en ouvrant sa braguette. Sa virilité [...]

F217 [...] je lui touchai maladroitement [...]

221 [...] je lui touchais maladroitement [...]

F217 Il rit.

Je le revis souvent.

221 Il rit car il bandait ferme.

Je le revis souvent.

F225 [...] il ne m'en fit connaître aucun. Jamais je ne me [...]

228-229 [...] il ne m'en fit connaître aucun. S'il m'accorda [229] la grâce de lui sucer quelquefois la queue je lui en conservai une profonde gratitude qui de moi faisait son esclave mais jamais je ne me [...]

F227 [...] le transformer.

(*Le gosse [...] son rôle.*)

Maintenant aidé par lui [...]

230-231 [...] le transformer. (*Le gosse [...] son rôle.*)

[231] Maintenant aidé par lui [...]

F235 Or, mon abjection était mon désespoir

238 Or, mon abjection était son désespoir.

+F241 [...] sous un faste criminel de ma honte.

244 [...] sous le faste de ma honte.

F242 [...] les beaux criminels, si je n'avais pas connu leur nature?

245 [...] les beaux criminels, si je n'ai pas connu leur nature?

F245 [...] sur la porte: Genet. Genet on savait pas qui c'est.

248 [...] sur la port: Genêt. Genêt on savait pas qui c'est.

F247 [...] cours Belsunce, devant [...]

251 [...] cours Belzunce, devant [...]

\*\*F249 Pour eux plus que les tribunaux.

253 Pour eux y a plus que les tribunaux.

F254 [...] avec la Cour d'assises [...]

258 [...] avec la cour d'assises [...]

F257 ([...] dans mon deuil.)

- Pourquoi t'avais honte?

Guy s'étira un peu, puis il sourit.

- C'était trop moche [...]

260 ([...] dans mon deuil.)

Guy s'étira un peu, puis il sourit.

- Pourquoi t'avais honte?

- C'était trop moche [...]

F262 Il releva la tête, sa bouche resta entrouverte. Le ton l'avait surpris.

265 Il releva la tête, sa bouche resta entr'ouverte. Le ton l'avait surpris.

F266 [...] de hors-la-loi dans [...]

270 [...] de hors la loi dans [...]

F267 Doucement le grand nègre s'allongea sur mon dos. Le nègre plus immense que la nuit.

270 Doucement le grand nègre s'allongea sur mon dos. Doucement, mais avec une sûre précision, sa verge me pénétra. Elle ne tremblera pas. Elle n'aura pas les soubresauts précipités de la mienne. Cette présence en moi me comblant au point que j'oublierai de jouir. Le nègre plus immense que la nuit.

F269- Peur de quoi?

- Si le type a le temps de me peloter je suis foutu. Je suis pas sûr de pas me laisser faire.

- Eh bien, tu te laisses faire.

- Penses-tu. Bien excité, oui. Mais ça y faut pas. Mais le dis pas à Stil.

272-273- Peur de quoi?

[273]- Tu comprends je vais te dire, moi je bande pour un rien. Si le type a le temps de

me peloter je suis foutu. Je suis pas sûr de pas me laisser faire.

- Eh bien, tu te laisses faire.

- Penses-tu. Bien excité je serais capable de me laisser enculer. Et ça y faut pas. Mais ne le dis pas à Stil.

F271 [...] il bandait encore. Pendant qu'il se vêtait [...]

275 [...] il bandait encore. Sa verge enfin s'amollit, retomba peu à peu sans qu'il cessât de sourire. Pendant qu'il se vêtait [...]

F271- Salaud. Toi tu t'imagines que tu vas baiser mon frère?

275- Salaud. Toi tu t'imagines que tu vas enculer mon frère?

+F285 [...] dans nos amours.

*(un texte - réconciliation avec Java - est supprimé par les soins de l'auteur commandé par sa tendresse pour le héros.)*

Dans chaque ville [...]

288-289 [...] dans nos amours.

[289] Après notre dispute, où je l'insultai avec une cruauté prouvant ma tendresse - je lui reprochai d'être lâche et de se laisser enfler par faiblesse, pour trop peu d'argent (il m'assura un jour avoir protégé son cul avec ses doigts écartés. "Le vieux, il croyait me baiser, mais penses-tu, il n'enculait que ma main. Moi je faisais semblant de dormir. C'est dans mes doigts qu'il a défoutraillé." Nous étions dans cette chambre, nous cognant au linge étendu, encore humide. Tout à coup je pris sa tête dans mes mains, et lui souris. L'espoir revint en lui, remonta de son cœur à sa bouche qui sourit. Ses yeux se mouillèrent. Dans ma braguette ma queue fut présente. Présidant cette réconciliation intime du sang joyeux la gonflait. Elle voulait être de la fête. Tendrement je posai sur la bosse qu'elle formait la main docile de Java. Il baissa la tête, gentiment.

Dans chaque ville [...]

F288 [...] s'il courbait, brutal, la tête d'un môme [...]

292 [...] s'il courbait, brutal, jusqu'à sa verge, la tête d'un môme [...]

F301 [...] comme les prémisses d'un théorème.

305 [...] comme les prémices d'un théorème.

F301- Ah!

Nous passions à cet moment [...]

305 - Ah!

Je me sentis bander. Nous passions à cet moment [...]

F302 Ma main qui pendait devant moi d'elle même alla vers son corps: il s'émouvait. Stilitano souriait [...]

305 Ma main qui pendait devant moi d'elle même alla vers sa braguette: elle était dure. Stilitano souriait [...]

F303 [...] j'aime les hors-la-loi sans autre [...]

307 [...] j'aime les hors la loi sans autre [...]

F304 Sous mes doigts à peine l'effleurant je le sentis bander.

- Elle te plaît?

308 Sous mes doigts à peine l'effleurant je sentis sa verge.

- Elle te plaît?

F304 [...] d'Armand, couché avec Robert, je souffrais [...]

308 [...] d'Armand baisant Robert. Je souffrais [...]

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