

Image, Authenticity and the Cult of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, 1897-1959

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List of Abbreviations

References to *Histoire d'une âme* give the manuscript, leaf number and recto or verso, followed by the page number of the definitive English translation (Thérèse of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux* (Washington, 1996), trans. John Clarke OCD, 3rd edition), e.g. HA, Ms. A, 71r°, p. 152.

ACL	Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux
CAC	<i>Histoire d'une «Petite âme» qui a traversé une fournaise</i> (Cahier autobiographique de Céline)
HA	<i>Histoire d'une âme</i>
Ms. A	Manuscript A of <i>Histoire d'une âme</i> , dedicated to Mère Agnès, 1895
Ms. B	Manuscript B of <i>Histoire d'une âme</i> , dedicated to Sœur Marie du Sacré-Cœur, 1896
Ms. C	Manuscript C of <i>Histoire d'une âme</i> , dedicated to Mère Marie de Gonzague, 1897
OCL	Office Central de Lisieux
RTAG	Recueil Travaux Artistiques Geneviève

Cast of Characters Cited in Correspondence

References to correspondence use the initials of the correspondents (if they are referred to more than once in the thesis) followed by the date of the letter, e.g. MA/FTh 16/05/1926. Where the correspondence is taken from the original archival source, this is followed by the archive catalogue number and ACL or, where it is taken from typed copies held at the Archives or letters that are not accessioned into the catalogue, just ACL.

A	Léon-Adolphe Amette, Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, 1898-1906
AC	Abbé André Combes, theologian and author
AP	Arnold Pataky, university professor in Budapest
B	Fr. Brocardus, Provincial of the Hungarian Carmelites
BF	Boumard fils, publisher
C	Céline Martin (Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte-Face), nun, artist and sister of Thérèse
CdeL	Carmel de Lisieux (no particular member of the community specified)
D	Canon Théophile Dubosq, Promoter of the Faith of the cause
DB	Raymond de Bercegol, Director of the Office Central de Lisieux, 1917-44
FR	Franz Reimeringer, Theresian devotee
FTh	Sœur Françoise-Thérèse (Léonie Martin)
H	Paul Herembrood, founder of the Diorama Sainte-Thérèse
IG	Isidore Guérin, uncle of the Martin sisters
ISC	Mère Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur (Yvonne Daurelle), sub-prioress of the Carmel of Lisieux
J	Charles Jouvenot, artist
K	Korda, devotional products manufacturer
L	Thomas Lemonnier, Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, 1906-27
MA	Mère Agnès (Pauline Martin), sister of Thérèse and prioress of the Carmel of Lisieux, 1902-08 and 1909-51
MB	Père Marie-Bernard (Louis Richomme), Trappist monk and sculptor
ML	Maître Leger, solicitor in Brussels
MMA	Mère Marie-Ange de l'Enfant-Jésus (Jeanne Mélanie Burban), prioress of the Carmel of Lisieux, 1908-09
MSC	Sœur Marie du Sacré-Cœur (Marie Martin), nun and sister of Thérèse
MSE	Sœur Marie du Sainte Esprit (Marie Elisabeth Marthe Madeleine de Couffon de Kerdellec'h), nun and artist
OCL	Office Central de Lisieux, commercial arm of the Carmel of Lisieux
PHJ	Provincial of Hungarian Jesuits
PR	Palais du Rosaire, Lourdes, devotional products manufacturer
R	Ferdinand Roybet, artist
T	Mgr. Roger de Teil, Vice-Postulator of the cause
Th	Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus (Thérèse Martin) – Saint Thérèse of Lisieux
VS	Verlag der Schulbrüder, Office Central de Lisieux's agent in Germany
WF	Weisz Frigyes, Office Central de Lisieux's agent in Hungary

Sophia Lucia Deboick, *Image, Authenticity and the Cult of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, 1897-1959*,
PhD, University of Liverpool, January 2011

Abstract

This thesis examines the representations of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux produced by the Carmel of Lisieux in the years between the saint's death in 1897, and that of her sister Céline Martin (Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte-Face) in 1959. It examines the construction of an iconographical foundation for the saint's cult, the commercial distribution of this iconography, the debate about its authenticity that emerged in the 1920s, and the efforts by the originators of the image to maintain legal control of it. It explores the process of cultural legitimation of these images by the Carmel of Lisieux and, through these, of the cult itself, through a variety of methods, from the articulation of ideas of spiritual and artistic authority, to presence in the mass market, to apologetic, and the use of legislation.

The thesis begins by examining the work of the Carmel of Lisieux to visually reshape Thérèse Martin and recast her as a saint through their posthumous representations of her, giving her a new face to fit the existing devotional landscape. Particular emphasis is placed on Céline Martin, as the director of the visual elements of the cult and author of the canonical images of Saint Thérèse, and her personal conceptions of the authentic holy image. The dissemination of the Carmel's representations of the saint through a programme of popular publications and consumer products is then examined, exploring how the saint was promoted to the Catholic faithful in the religious marketplace, and how the market was used to establish Céline's images in the economy of popular devotion, giving Thérèse a foothold as a saint who could be believed in.

The thesis then turns to the reaction to the Carmel's visual recasting of Saint Thérèse, examining a group of popular biographies of the saint that appeared in the early twentieth century. Here a body of literature is identified where anxieties over the authentic representation of holy figures are played out, and the emergence of a new paradigm for the representation of the saint is traced. The Carmel is shown to have responded to this with a series of apologetics, where they again articulated the alleged authenticity of their images. Finally, the series of legal cases launched by the convent against producers of unauthorised images of the saint is examined. Here it is shown that the Carmel sought to define Céline Martin as the sole authentic Theresian iconographer through recourse to ideas of religious and artistic authority, using the law of the secular state to make claims to religious authenticity.

The first substantial piece of research placing Saint Thérèse in the context of the history of modern French popular religious culture, this thesis provides an insight into the creation of a commercial, devotional cult at the beginning of the twentieth century and the nature of Catholic visual culture in France in the years between the Dreyfus Affair and the Second Vatican Council. In examining the production and dissemination of a cult's images, the intellectual and legal controversies that followed, and the use of these processes by the originators of the image to legitimate their representations, it also sheds light on prevalent ideas of religious and artistic authenticity in France in the early twentieth century and the search for the 'true' face of the saint during that period.

Introduction

Sœurs de la Sainte: The Image and the Posthumous Life of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

Lisieux, in the Calvados *département* of Basse-Normandie, is at first sight an unremarkable town, the loss of almost all its distinctively Norman half-timbered architecture during the heavy bombing of 1944 having destroyed much of its character. However, the natural beauty of the surrounding valleys and farmland remains in this particularly verdant region, and it is not entirely bereft of the visual signs of its history. The town's impressive religious heritage, in particular, is still strongly in evidence. The gothic cathedral of Saint Pierre, as well as the adjacent seventeenth-century bishop's palace, are reminders of Lisieux's former status as a bishopric, and it has the dubious fame of having had Pierre Cauchon, the supreme judge at the trial of Joan of Arc, as bishop between 1432 and 1442, and he lies buried in the cathedral. But this rich religious heritage has been overshadowed by more recent events in the town. These are boldly represented by the neo-Byzantine basilica, built between 1929 and 1954, which stands on a high elevation on the south-east side of Lisieux, dominating the town. The basilica is dedicated to Saint Thérèse of Lisieux (Thérèse Martin, later Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus), a nun who died in the town's Carmelite convent at the end of the nineteenth century, aged just twenty-four, and who was canonised in 1925. In the years since that canonisation, Lisieux has become the second largest pilgrimage site in France, second only to Lourdes.

The images of Thérèse that can be found at Lisieux indicate the core concerns of this thesis. At the real spiritual centre of the pilgrimage site, the place known as the *chapelle de la Châsse* at the convent where Thérèse lived for the last nine years of her life, the relics of the saint may be found. Most of these relics are kept in a casket in the vault directly beneath the shrine, but others, including Thérèse's ribcage, are inside the marble effigy of the saint (referred to simply as the *gisant*), life-size, dressed in full Carmelite habit and crowned with roses, which lies in a golden case behind a grating (see figure 8). Eerily convincing, this most lifelike of the many representations of the saint is an appropriate one for the place pilgrims go to be physically close to her, and it has a high spiritual charge. Conversely, in shop windows throughout the town, the standard image of Thérèse, holding her saint's attribute of a crucifix covered with roses (a representation known as 'Thérèse *aux roses*'), is used on souvenirs, from statues to ashtrays and snowglobes (see figure 1). Here the image is turned into a consumer commodity and is as far from the rarified presentation of the *gisant* as can be imagined. Despite their very different perceived

cultural value, both these representations point to the issues explored in this thesis – the representation of the saint, the retailing of the religious and concepts of the authentic image. This thesis examines the development of a Theresian iconography by the Carmel of Lisieux in the years after Thérèse’s death, its commercial promotion, popular reactions to it, and the attempts of its creators to maintain control of it. It explores the process of cultural legitimation of the images of the saint produced by the convent in the above contexts, revealing the notions of authenticity that underpinned the Carmel’s approach to the representation of Saint Thérèse, and that were played out in the subsequent debates and controversies surrounding their images. What emerges is the early history of the construction of the visual elements of a cult, highlighting the efforts of its creators to make these images successful. By focussing on the images, authored and disseminated by the Carmel of Lisieux, the rise of the cult from its grassroots can be examined, rather than giving a simply institutional account of Thérèse’s recognition by the Church.¹ By doing so, this thesis places Saint Thérèse in the wider context of the history of modern French religious culture, uncovering something of her significance to the devotional lives of millions.



Figure 1. ‘Thérèse aux roses’ on souvenirs in a shop window on avenue Sainte-Thérèse, Lisieux, 2009.
Source: taken by author.

¹ The steps of Thérèse’s official recognition by the Church are included in Appendix 1, alongside the other events of her posthumous life.

The *chapelle de la Châsse* is not only the location of the remains of Saint Thérèse, but also those of her three older sisters – the creators of the Theresian cult, and the main protagonists of this thesis. Marie (Sœur Marie du Sacré-Cœur, 1860-1940), Pauline (Mère Agnès de Jésus, 1861-1951) and Céline Martin (Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, 1869-1959), all also nuns of the Carmel of Lisieux, are commemorated by a large plaque on the outside wall of the chapel, which indicates that they are interred in the crypt, beneath Thérèse’s recumbent effigy (see figure 2). The placing of their remains in this position of subjugation has considerable symbolic power, since they are entirely overshadowed in the popular imagination by the stratospheric fame of their little sister. Although they have been the subject of some hagiographical biographies,² in the written history of Saint Thérèse they still remain the supporting cast to Thérèse’s *prima donna*. While at the time of a visit in May 2005, there was evidence that one pilgrim had stopped to think about these women who grew up with Thérèse and lived alongside her as nuns, leaving an offering wedged behind the plaque, the fact that this took the form of a postcard reproduction of a photograph of Thérèse as a child meant that, like the effigy itself, the dominance of Thérèse’s persona over that of her sisters was again asserted, the engaging and characterful photograph³ eclipsing the sisters’ presence, represented in contrast by characterless names carved in granite.

² See: Albert H. Dolan, *The Living Sisters of the Little Flower* (Chicago, 1926); Stéphane-Joseph Piat OFM, *Céline. Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face. Sœur et témoin de sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus* (Lisieux, 1961); *Idem.*, *Une Ame libre, Marie Martin, sœur aînée et marraine de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus* (Lisieux, 1967); Jean Vinatier, *Mère Agnès de Jésus. Pauline Martin, sœur aînée et “Petite Mère” de Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus* (Paris, 1993).

³ Photograph 2, Appendix 2.



Figure 2. The memorial to the sisters of Saint Thérèse, May 2005. Source: taken by author.

That the Martin sisters are such sidelined figures at the *chapelle de la Châsse* carries considerable irony, as without the sisters of the saint, no-one would visit the chapel to honour the relics of this woman who died there over a century ago, and her remains would lie forgotten in the cemetery of Lisieux where they were buried in 1897. These women were responsible for making this young nun, dead at just twenty-four, known beyond the walls of the convent in which she spent her whole adult life. Outliving Thérèse by between four and six decades, they dedicated their lives to developing devotion to her, positioning themselves as the executors of her legacy, and reshaping her into a saint for the twentieth century. Sisters in both blood and religion, they created the cult of Saint Thérèse in a remarkably centralised process, exercising a great deal of control over the character of the cult and involving themselves in the smallest details of its production and promotion. With the help of a small band of contributors both inside and outside the convent, they built up a brand in the saint and a commercial empire to go with it, creating original images of Thérèse, producing devotional books about her, and promoting these products in the religious goods market. They also positioned themselves as protectors of Thérèse's legacy, involving themselves in controversies over the representation of the saint, and taking legal action

to protect the images of her they had authored. The creativity, dedication and tenacious work of the Martin sisters saw the Carmel become the hub of an industry focussed on the exposure of Saint Thérèse's message and personality during the first decades of the twentieth century, seeing devotion to the saint disseminated across the world. In doing this, they raised their sister from a point of complete obscurity to the very pinnacle of saintly achievement, seeing her become Patroness of the Missions, co-Patroness of France and a Doctor of the Church. These women – bourgeois provincials of scant education – were the architects of a cult of unprecedented popularity, and their mark on history has been far more significant than that of the saint herself, who achieved little in life and was passively remoulded in death. The Martin sisters (figure 3) gave Thérèse a posthumous life – a second existence as a saint – and this unknown nun of Normandy became a prominent feature of the French popular religious landscape in the last century.



Figure 3. The Martin sisters and their cousin (also a nun of the Carmel of Lisieux), 1896. From left to right: Marie, Pauline, Céline, Marie Guérin (Sœur Marie de l'Eucharistie), and Thérèse. Source: OCL.

Thérèse Martin: A Very Brief Biography

While this thesis begins from the point of Thérèse's decease, and is not the story of Thérèse Martin but of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, the biography of the former must be briefly reprised before continuing. Marie-Françoise-Thérèse Martin (see figure 4) was born in January 1873 in Alençon, Normandy, the ninth child of Louis Martin, a jeweller, and Zélie Martin, owner of a lace-making business. Highly pious Catholics, both parents had been frustrated in their attempts to enter religious orders in their youth. Zélie's sister, Sœur Marie-Dosithée, was a Visitandine nun and was held up as a role model within the family. Four of the Martin children had died in infancy before Thérèse's birth, and she was brought up with four doting older sisters – Marie, Pauline, Léonie and Céline. After their mother's death from breast cancer when Thérèse was only four, the family moved to Lisieux, where Zélie's brother and his family lived, moving into a house they called *Les Buissonnets*. Louis retired and the family enjoyed a financially comfortable life, their Catholic devotion at the centre of their routine and the children displaying extreme piety. When Thérèse was nine Pauline, who had become her 'second mother' after Zélie's death, entered the Carmel of Lisieux. Aggrieved by this loss, Thérèse was afflicted by a hysterical illness, from which she was cured by a vision of the Virgin – a statue of Mary in the sick room seemed to smile upon her, from which moment she was restored to full health. Four years later Marie, the eldest Martin girl, also entered the Carmel. This, along with Thérèse's 'Christmas Conversion' after midnight mass on 24 December 1886, when she felt sudden spiritual confidence and maturity, meant that Thérèse's own destiny was certain. She went to great lengths to enter the Carmel earlier than the usual age, personally petitioning Pope Leo XIII during an audience with him on a pilgrimage to Rome, and wrangling with the Bishop of Bayeux over the issue. She finally joined her sisters behind the walls of the convent in April 1888, at the age of fifteen years and three months. She took the name of Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus, later adding to this, 'et de la Sainte Face' ('Sister Thérèse of the Infant Jesus and of the Holy Face'). The Martin faction within the convent grew after Louis' death with the entry of Céline, and Léonie's later profession as a Visitandine meant that all the Martin daughters dedicated their lives to God. During one of her terms as prioress of the Carmel, Pauline (Mère Agnès) ordered Thérèse to write down her recollections of their childhood, and under the later prioresship of Mère Marie de Gonzague she wrote two more manuscripts to add to the first, explaining her personal spirituality and reflecting

on her life as a nun. Thérèse also gained some authority in the convent, becoming assistant novice mistress and sacristan, and was considered by many of the community to be a model religious.



Figure 4. Thérèse Martin, April 1888 (aged fifteen). Source: OCL.

In April 1896 Thérèse suffered the first symptoms of tuberculosis. She carried on with her duties for over a year, despite her rapidly deteriorating health, and experienced a period of extreme religious doubt, which was not fully resolved by the time of her death. She finally entered the infirmary in July 1897, where she suffered for nearly three months, dying at the end of September, aged twenty-four. There is little remarkable in this brief biography, but although she died in obscurity, Thérèse has enjoyed a glittering career as a saint. Her autobiographical manuscripts, heavily edited and glossed by Mère Agnès, were published by the Carmel in 1898 as *Histoire d'une âme* ('Story of a Soul') and were an instant success, going on to be translated into over sixty languages and becoming a classic of Catholic spirituality. Romantic in tone and steeped in nineteenth-century French Catholic devotionism, the book was grist to the mill of traditionalist Catholics. Thérèse's spiritual doctrine of the 'little way' – small, everyday acts of self-sacrifice as a path to spiritual perfection – became an inspiration to millions through the book.

Apocryphally, it is said that Pope Pius X called her ‘the greatest saint of modern times’ over a decade before her actual canonisation, and she was proclaimed a saint less than twenty-eight years after her death due to huge popular pressure, the quickest canonisation since 1588 at the time.⁴ Shortly after her canonisation Pius XI referred to her rapid rise to fame as a ‘storm of glory’.⁵ She was made Patroness of the Missions, along with Saint Francis Xavier, in 1927, and in 1944, immediately after the liberation of France, Pius XII named her joint Patroness of her homeland, alongside Joan of Arc. In 1997 Thérèse reached the peak of her career as a saint when John Paul II named her a Doctor of the Church. Only the third woman to earn this title (thirty male saints currently hold it), she was placed alongside the legendary names of Teresa of Ávila and Catherine of Siena, and her status as one of the most popular saints of contemporary Catholicism was confirmed. Since 1995 her relics have been on an almost constant world tour, travelling across Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia, and in September 2009 she visited the United Kingdom for the first time, garnering a huge amount of media attention.⁶ The Pèlerinage Sainte Thérèse receives around 150 letters a day, some addressed to Thérèse herself as if she is still a living inhabitant of Lisieux, and this is testimony to the highly personal nature of devotion to her. Yet her significance is not purely religious, and on naming Thérèse a *Doctor Ecclesiae*, John Paul II emphasised that Thérèse is ‘known in every part of the world, even outside the Catholic Church’.⁷ Such is her success, it appears to be infectious, and in October 2008 Zélie and Louis Martin were jointly beatified, having already gained a strong foothold in contemporary Catholic devotional culture. Having been recast as a superstar-saint and French icon, Thérèse has come a long way from the provincial Carmelite that she once was.

⁴ See Kenneth L. Woodward, *Making Saints. Inside the Vatican: Who Become Saints, Who Do Not, and Why* (London, 1991), p. 107. She was later outdone by Josemaría Escrivá, founder of Opus Dei, who beat her record by over four months when he was canonised in 2002.

⁵ Address of Pius XI to the pilgrims of Bayeux and Lisieux, 18 May 1925 (the day after Thérèse’s canonisation), reproduced in Fr. J. Linus Ryan O. Carm (ed.), *80th Anniversary of the Canonisation of St. Thérèse* (Dublin, 2005), pp. 12-3.

⁶ For an itinerary of the relics tour until 2001 see Don Mullan, *A Gift of Roses: Memories of the Visit to Ireland of the Relics of Saint Thérèse* (Dublin, 2001), Appendix 1, pp. 251-3. See also *The Relics of St. Thérèse of Lisieux: England and Wales 2009 Souvenir* (Buxton, 2009).

⁷ Pope John Paul II, ‘Apostolic Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, *Divini Amoris Scientia*’, *Vatican, The Holy See* <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19101997_divini-amoris_en.html> [accessed 13 July 2005], section 3.

Pauline and the Text, Céline and the Image

While all three Martin sisters were involved in making this transformation happen, it was Céline Martin (Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face) (see figure 5), creator of both the *gisant* figure and the standard ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ representation mentioned above, who was responsible for the iconography this thesis focuses on. Nearly four years Thérèse’s senior and the last surviving member of the Martin family after Mère Agnès’ death in 1951, Céline was an artist of meagre training and limited talent, but in her role as director of the Carmel’s iconographical project she was key to the cult, remoulding Thérèse’s visual representation over a period of sixty years. Céline’s role in the cult has long been neglected, with Mère Agnès commonly being seen as the dominant force in the creation of the cult (see ‘Pauline the Architect, Céline the Artist’, chapter 1). Prioress for three years during Thérèse’s time in the convent, and named prioress for life by Pope Pius XI in 1923, Mère Agnès held this office for a total of forty-eight of the sixty-two years this thesis covers. Her role as head of the community for such a long period has resulted in an understandable focus on her over her other sisters, and over Céline in particular (Marie Martin was the least involved of the sisters in the work on the cult). Mère Agnès’ position as executor of Thérèse’s literary legacy, a body of work that is now the focus of serious academic attention, has also resulted in a great deal of interest in her, her editing of *Histoire d’une âme* and apparent ‘engineering’ of a corpus of texts for her being the focus of this interest.⁸ But while there has been research into the writings of Thérèse and how these were edited and promoted by Mère Agnès, the images have never been subject to a sustained academic examination. The controversy over the history of Thérèse’s texts has overshadowed a parallel history of the creation of a coherent public visual representation for Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, perhaps betraying a privileging of the text above the image as a proper object of study.

In sixty years of work on the cult, Céline produced twenty-six original portraits of Thérèse (see Appendix 2), but commissioned many more from artists outside the convent. A keen amateur photographer, Céline took her 13x18 box camera with her when she entered the Carmel in 1894,⁹ and she would later also retouch and rework the photographs she had captured of Thérèse inside the cloister. Through a combination of these approaches, Céline developed a homogenous iconography for Thérèse in the first decades of the twentieth century. Her classic

⁸ See, for example, Jean-François Six, *Lumière de la nuit. Les dix-huit derniers mois de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1995) and Claude Langlois, *Les dernières paroles de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 2000).

⁹ See Piat, *Céline*, p. 69.

portrait ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ (see figure 2.24), completed in 1912, became the best-known representation of Thérèse, and the crucifix and roses that featured in the image became her iconographical attributes – a visual shorthand for the saint and her cult. A unique iconography, which was at the same time typical, Céline’s prototype images, disseminated on a massive scale, dominated Thérèse’s visual representation across the last century, becoming an integral part of French popular religious culture. The focus of this thesis is what Alain Cavalier, director of a Cannes Jury Prize-winning film about Thérèse, has called ‘the virgin of the stained glass window, sweet, crowned with roses – the Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus that has been portrayed after her death’.¹⁰ We will call this the ‘Celinian’ Thérèse, as we will discover that this image was wholly of Céline’s creation. Paul Claudel, the Catholic poet and dramatist, recognised the value of Céline’s artworks as early as 1935, stating that ‘Céline’s portraits merit our respect. They will always belong to the religious folklore of mankind and will continue to arouse interest in future ages’.¹¹ Here the role of the images in the ‘religious folklore’ of modern France is examined for the first time, placing the Theresian iconography that Céline created in the context of popular devotion and commercial religion in France at the beginning of the last century.

¹⁰ Jean-Luc Douin, ‘La caméra explore Thérèse’, *Notre Histoire*, 27 (October, 1986), p. 51. Translation and all following translations from French-language sources, author’s own.

¹¹ Paul Claudel, *Positions et propositions* (Paris, 1935), p. 203.

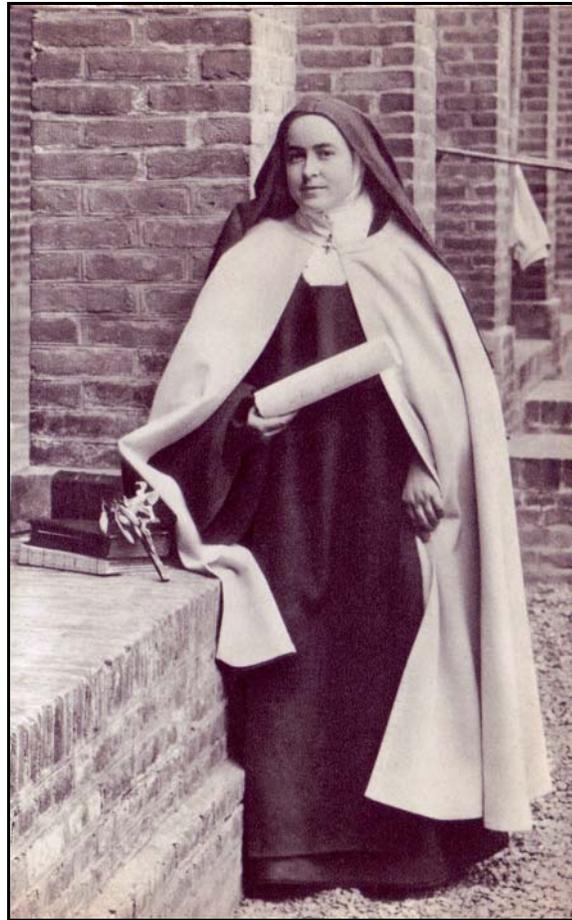


Figure 5. Céline Martin (Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face), 1896. Source: ACL.

The Thesis

This thesis begins by exploring the existing literature on Thérèse, outlining the lack of research that has been carried out on the saint, as opposed to the historical personality, and pointing to the range of literatures that the thesis makes use of, including a small but intriguing body of work on the representation of Saint Thérèse. In chapter 2 the history of the creation of the original Theresian iconography is outlined in detail for the first time and a whole cast of hidden characters begins to be revealed: the artists, clerics and enterprising devotees of the saint who populate this history. Using Céline's personal papers, held at the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux, her concepts of the authentic image of the holy person and of the role of the artist are explored, and it is shown how she used these to counter challenges to the perceived authenticity of her images. She is shown to have visually reshaped Thérèse to fit the existing landscape of popular Catholic culture, giving her sister new face that fitted the devotional fashions of the times, but that

was also heavily influenced by ideas of the genuine religious image in the Christian tradition. In chapter 3, the thesis moves on to examine the life this ‘new face’ had in the world of commercial religion in early twentieth-century France, making use of the collection of monthly commercial catalogues issued by the Carmel and held by the Archives. Here it is argued that the images of Thérèse were given credibility through their large presence in the mass market, and that the constant repetition of a handful of images in the Carmel’s popular publications and devotional products made them appear foundational. It is shown that the Carmel extended the reshaping of Thérèse’s image that Céline had begun by reacting quickly to events such as the First World War, changing the prospective saint’s representation in their commercial offerings to reflect the times. In outlining the establishment of a popular religious brand here, the key role of particular businessmen and publishers outside the convent, as well as particular members of the community within it, is revealed for the first time. In chapter 4 the thesis turns to the reaction to Céline’s images in the wider world, specifically amongst the biographers of the saint. Here we find the Carmel seeking a legitimisation of the Theresian iconography through apologetic, engaging in a debate that raged from the 1920s on the issue of Thérèse’s popular representation. Anxieties about authentic religious practice are found here, and the Carmel is shown to have directly faced their critics, using a variety of rhetorical tools to mark themselves out as the originators and guardians of the only genuine representations of the saint. Changing fashions in devotional culture and opposing concepts of religious and artistic authenticity current in France in the early twentieth century are revealed here, and this rich debate, often referred to but never the subject of sustained study, is examined for the first time. Finally, in chapter 5, a parallel controversy to that of chapter 4 is examined – the legal cases the Carmel launched against the producers of unauthorised images of the saint. Here Céline’s ideas of artistic and spiritual authenticity were played out in public once again, and the law is demonstrated to have been an effective instrument for the establishment of cultural authority, even when the legal cases were not won. The Carmel is shown to have used the legal action as an occasion for self-fashioning, exploiting the codified and absolute concepts of authentic artistic production enshrined in the copyright law of the secular state to their own, often religious, ends. The proliferation of the image also, paradoxically, allowed Céline to be more powerfully figured as the ultimate Theresian iconographer. These legal cases are a previously wholly unexamined episode in the history of the cult, and the archival sources on it are used here for the first time.

Authenticity and the Search for the 'True Face'

The *gisant* with which this introduction began reveals something of the driving force behind the history this thesis tells – the search for the authentic representation of the holy person. This effigy, which resembles nothing so much as a waxwork in its attempt to be convincingly mimetic of its prototype, is a representation of the saint that tries to be as faithful as possible, the presence within it of the saint's relics also giving the representation something of the power of the saint herself. The *gisant* was Céline's work, but not directly. Commissioned by the Carmel in 1919, it was the work of the Trappist sculptor Père Marie-Bernard, who produced the maquette, and the sculptor Alliot, who produced the finished article (see chapter 2). It was a thoroughly collaborative work and was, characteristically, heavily directed by Céline. But it was in fact a representation for which she had directly provided the prototype. The effigy was a three-dimensional copy of a very large charcoal drawing of Thérèse lying on her deathbed that Céline had produced in 1905, known as 'Thérèse morte' (figure 7).¹² But even this was not the foundational image for the *gisant*, as the charcoal was itself a copy of a photograph Céline had taken of Thérèse lying dead in the infirmary on the day after her death (figure 6).¹³ Céline later commented on the very last photograph she took of Thérèse, three days after her death¹⁴ (see figure 4.12): 'this picture showed her features to be elongated and, curiously, her blond eyebrows were dark brown – almost black. She was still majestic but we could no longer recognise her.'¹⁵ There is sense of loss here – the picture did not evoke Thérèse's true spirit and thus could not keep her, in some sense, alive and present.¹⁶ Céline added of this photograph of Thérèse 'in order to make it presentable, some retouches had been necessary', and further 'At the insistence of the community... I painted a picture which all the Sisters who had been her contemporaries found to recapture perfectly Thérèse's facial expression immediately after death.'¹⁷ The *gisant*, as the final representation based on these photographs, does not only illustrate Céline's reuse and refashioning of images across a variety of media, characteristic of her approach to her artwork, but may also be seen as the final result of a laboured process of searching for the ideal, authentic representation of the subject. In Céline's case, this ideal representation was not only one that would show her

¹² See RTAG, p. 41-2 and Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Conseils et Souvenirs* (Lisieux, 1952), p. 202.

¹³ Photograph 46, Appendix 2.

¹⁴ Photograph 47, Appendix 2.

¹⁵ Sœur Geneviève, *Conseils et Souvenirs*, p. 202.

¹⁶ We are reminded of Roland Barthes' moving search for the quintessence of his recently deceased mother through photographs of her. See Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire: note sur la photographie* (Paris, 1980).

¹⁷ Sœur Geneviève, *Conseils et Souvenirs*, p. 202.

beloved sister as she had believed her to appear, but one which would transform the historical character into the accepted modes of representation of the saint. Richard D. E. Burton has written of the power of both the *gisant* and the photograph of Thérèse that was its root to make Thérèse Martin, an individual, appear in the sanitised, standardised mode of the saint. He writes of the first photograph:

This may not be the smiling Petite Fleur the world will revere, but she is already, within hours of her death, virtually a saint, abstracted from the flux and depredations of time, the ‘spiritualization’ begun by [tuberculosis] brought to perfection by the floral and cosmetic skills of her sisters and by the dematerializing agency of the camera lens.¹⁸

The *gisant*, over two decades later, ‘complet[ed] the Little Flower’s posthumous mineralization’, turning her into a ‘petrified, marmorealized woman’.¹⁹ In these representations we can trace the process of removing individuality and making Thérèse Martin a generalised icon through her visual representation, making her as static and objectified as the effigy itself. Céline’s pursuit of this objectification, and search for the ideal representation of her sister, is responsible for the history that this thesis explores.

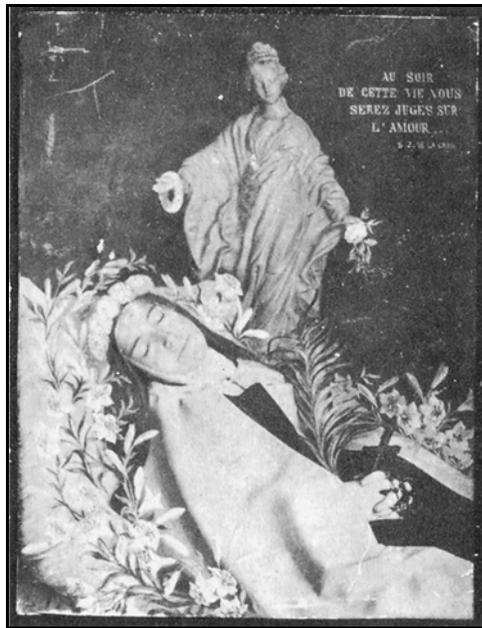


Figure 6. Thérèse lying dead in the choir, 3 October 1897. Source: OCL.

¹⁸ Richard D. E. Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood: Women, Catholicism, and the Culture of Suffering in France, 1840-1970* (Ithaca, 2004), pp. 199-200.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 200.



Figure 7. 'Thérèse morte', 1905. Source: ACL.



Figure 8. The effigy at the *chapelle de la Châsse*, Carmel of Lisieux, 2009. Source: taken by author.

Chapter 1

'I longed to be forgotten': Moving Towards a History of the Cult and Image of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

In this inquisitive age, when the Alps are crested, and seas fathomed, and mines ransacked, and sands sifted, and rocks cracked into specimens, and beasts caught and catalogued, as little is known by Englishmen of the religious sentiments, the religious usages, the religious motives, the religious ideas of two hundred millions of Christians poured to and fro, among them and around them, as if, I will not say, they were Tartars or Patagonians, but as if they inhabited the moon. Verily, were the Catholic Church on the moon, England would gaze on her with more patience, and delineate her with more accuracy, than England does now.

John Henry Newman, *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England* (1851).

Twenty years ago David Blackbourn identified the beginnings of a body of literature on Catholic popular piety in modern Europe, stating that there had been great progress from the days of the early eighties, when 'few outside the Catholic tradition were writing about popular cults and devotions, pilgrimages and apparitions'.¹ While historical scholarship in this area has now progressed further still, the excellent body of work on the Virgin Mary and her various miraculous appearances in nineteenth-century Europe perhaps being the best example,² research on Saint Thérèse of Lisieux is still at the embryonic stage Blackbourn described. Thérèse remains primarily the property of writers of the Catholic tradition, and the frequent appearance of 'OCD' (Order of Discalced Carmelites) in the references in this thesis indicates that most writing on her still comes from devotional writers in religious communities, rather than historians in universities. Popular biography and devotional books dominate the literature on the saint, and since she is principally known through her autobiography, there is great interest in Thérèse as a historical personality. This popular literature on Thérèse Martin is not without value. Many of the authors of these works are experts on the saint's life and have amassed an impressive body of research. These books are also indicative of the continued relevance Thérèse has for contemporary Catholic culture, and has value as a source that reveals the shaping of popular conceptions of the saint. Indeed, the telling of

¹ David Blackbourn, 'Review: The Catholic Church in Europe since the French Revolution', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 33, 4 (October, 1991), p. 788.

² See, for example: Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, 2000) [original publication 1976]; Thomas A. Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies in Nineteenth Century France* (New Brunswick, 1983); Michael P. Carroll, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary: Psychological Origins* (Oxford, 1986); Sandra L. Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary: Visions of Mary from La Salette to Medjugorje* (New York, 1992); David Blackbourn, *Marpingen. Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (Oxford, 1993); Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (London, 1999); Thérèse Taylor, *Bernadette of Lourdes: Her Life, Death and Visions* (London, 2003); Suzanne K. Kaufman, *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine* (Ithaca, 2005); Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (London, 2009).

her story has become standardised and riddled with the marks of hagiography through this literature, which rarely places in her wider historical context or considers the topic as part of the broader concerns of historians of modern French religion. Meanwhile, Thérèse's importance as the focus of a cult is yet to receive any serious attention at all. As will be shown in this chapter, only a small handful of studies focus on Thérèse of Lisieux, the saint, rather than Thérèse Martin, the native of Normandy, and the assessment of the cult in devotional works is informed by an idea of it having been divinely inspired, leaving little room for the consideration of more tangible factors. Religious historian Étienne Fouilloux remarked twenty years ago that 'It is a shame that the specialists, obsessed with her short earthly life and the vicissitudes of her work, had not yet taken the trouble to look into her posthumous destiny'.³ Two decades on, this work has still not been done. Fouilloux indicated the great importance of the cult to French religious history, suggesting that what has been the called '*les trois choses blanches*' – the Virgin Mary, the Host and the Pope – should have Saint Thérèse added as a forth defining symbol of Catholicism in modern France. Devotion to Saint Thérèse has been a highly significant phenomenon in the landscape of European popular religion in the last century and into the current one. It is high time that the focus turned to the cult and left the character herself behind.

The significance of the popular devotional phenomenon surrounding Saint Thérèse has in fact often been acknowledged by scholars of French religious culture, but while the brief mentions of the cult in works on popular religion in the twentieth century whet our appetite, when we turn to the references only *Histoire d'une âme* or a biography of the saint appears, for want of a study of the cult itself. For example, in her book on Lourdes, Ruth Harris points to Thérèse's importance for the wider popular devotional culture of twentieth-century France, calling her 'France's *princesse de Dieu*, the favourite of soldiers in the trenches and Edith Piaf's beloved intercessor', and even remarking on the fact that the Martin sisters 'actively constructed a religious image of their youngest sister' after her death.⁴ However, while Harris gives the impression that this is all well documented, she in fact gestures towards a body of literature that is simply not there. She references the section to two works by Jean-François Six and Jacques Maître,⁵ both biographical and wholly unconcerned with Thérèse's cult, while Richard D. E. Burton, although dedicating a

³ Étienne Fouilloux, 'Courants de pensée, piété, apostolat', in Jean-Marie Mayeur, Charles Pietri, André Vauchez and Marc Venard (eds), *Histoire du christianisme, 12: Guerres mondiales et totalitarismes (1914-1958)* (Paris, 1990), p. 198.

⁴ Harris, *Lourdes*, p. 161.

⁵ Jean-François Six, *La véritable enfance de Thérèse de Lisieux. Névrose et sainteté* (Paris, 1972), and Jacques Maître, '*L'Orpheline de la Bérésina*'. *Thérèse de Lisieux (1873 -1897). Essai de psychanalyse socio-historique* (Paris, 1995).

whole chapter to Thérèse in his study of suffering as a part of women's devotional culture in nineteenth- and twentieth-century France, turns to the same authors.⁶ While the cult of Saint Thérèse has begun to be written into the religious history of modern Europe through such references, this is backed up with only a tiny amount of research on her legacy. Thérèse once wrote of her feelings on entering the Carmel, expressing a characteristic wish for self-immolation: 'I desired that, like the Face of Jesus, "my face be truly hidden, that no one on earth would know me"... I longed to be forgotten.'⁷ While she is very much remembered in biography and devotional works, the saint that she became has indeed been all but forgotten by researchers, despite being the focus of one of the largest Catholic devotional cults of modern times. In focussing on the saint rather than her 'original', gathering together the few pieces of research on the cult and its images, and building on it through heavy use of archival sources, this thesis makes a contribution to achieving for Thérèse what has already been done for figures like Bernadette of Lourdes – moving beyond hagiography towards a fuller understanding of the cultural significance of her cult, examining the construction of a modern saint as a possible window onto the wider economy of religious culture in which she operated.

'Émigrés de l'intérieur': The Martin Family and French Religious History

The story of the cult of Saint Thérèse is of course situated in a wider political and religious history of modern France, but this context has all too often been left out of the existing accounts of the Martin family's lives, Thérèse's career as a nun and the brief extant assessments of her posthumous legacy.⁸ The enthusiasts of the saint have apparently been reluctant to relate the Martins to the history of French conservative Catholicism, with its associations with anti-Semitism and the extreme right, and the family have often been presented as if they existed in a historical and political vacuum, while Thérèse herself has always been suggested to have been wholly above the base struggles of politics. While Céline wrote of being rebuked by Thérèse for expressing a political opinion being reminded by her that, as a nun her 'only duty is to become united to God',⁹

⁶ Burton also uses Maître, *L'Orpheline de la Bérésina*, and Jean François Six, *Vie de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1975). See Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*, ch. 2 and pp. 258-64

⁷ HA, Ms. A, 71r^o, p. 152. Quoting Isaiah 53:3.

⁸ One exception is a recent article by Steffen Lösel, which gives a valuable account of Thérèse's political, social and cultural milieu. Steffen Lösel, 'Prayer, Pain, and Priestly Privilege: Claude Langlois's New Perspective on Thérèse of Lisieux', *The Journal of Religion*, 88, 3 (July, 2008), pp. 276-86. See also Barbara Corrado Pope, 'A Heroine without Heroics: The Little Flower of Jesus and Her Times', *Church History*, 57, 1 (March, 1988), pp. 46-60.

⁹ Sœur Geneviève, *Conseils et Souvenirs*, p. 73.

historian Raymond Jonas recently echoed this view by stating that ‘Thérèse focussed on individual acts of charity rather than on the high-stakes struggles of national politics.’¹⁰ But while Thérèse’s alleged passivity and lack of interest in the political made her ideal for canonisation, her sisters were far more tangible personalities, rooted in the controversies of their times. They lived to see the separation of Church and state that was the denouement of a battle that had been going on ever since the French Revolution, as well as the First World War, the rise of Action Française, Vichy and prelude to Vatican II. Since even the sisters have been subject to the rigours of hagiography, an uneasy and embarrassed silence remains on their politics and the political influences of their upbringing. Placing the story of Thérèse and the rise of her cult in its proper historical context reveals the political and devotional milieu in which the Martin sisters operated, and the changing landscape of Catholic devotion, ultimately helping to explain the influences on the cult they created.

The ‘Two Frances’ and the Development of the Catholic Fortress Mentality

The France of the Martin sisters’ upbringing is often described as being split in two, with left-wing, republican anti-clericals in bitter opposition to right-wing, monarchist Catholics. It may be suggested that there were two Frances: ‘the France of Notre-Dame, Chartres, and... La Salette’ and ‘the France of 1789 and the universalist republican tradition.’¹¹ The ideological war between these two factions shaped French religious life profoundly, and the Martin family were in fact directly touched by the series of political crises that fed Catholic discontentment and fuelled the polarisation of French society. The three eldest Martin sisters would have been able to remember the German soldiers billeted at their house in Alençon during the final stages of the Franco-Prussian War and Zélie Martin’s views of that conflict were typical of those of many Catholics – it was a punishment of their godless nation, which had been undergoing a seemingly relentless process of ‘*déchristianisation*’ ever since the Revolution.¹² The declaration of papal

¹⁰ Raymond Jonas, *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud and the Great War* (Berkeley, 2005), p. 156.

¹¹ Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*, p. 78. On this conflict see: Ralph Gibson, ‘Why Republicans and Catholics Couldn’t Stand Each Other in the Nineteenth Century’, in Nicholas Atkin and Frank Tallett (eds), *Religion, Society and Politics in France since 1789* (London, 1991), pp. 107-20; Adrien Dansette, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine, 2: Sous la IIIe République* (Paris, 1951); Gerard Cholvy and Yves-Marie Hilaire, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine, 2: 1880-1930* (Toulouse, 1985). Atkin and Tallett’s *Priests, Prelates and People: A History of European Catholicism since 1750* (London, 2003), ch. 4, provides a broader European perspective on this, while Kay Chadwick (ed.), *Catholicism, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century France* (Liverpool, 2000) adds an extra dimension by examining this conflict into the twentieth century.

¹² See Zélie Martin and Stéphane-Joseph Piat OFM (ed.), *Correspondance familiale, 1863-1877* (Lisieux, 1958), p. 110.

infallibility at the First Vatican Council of 1869-70, along with Pope Pius IX's self-imposed house arrest as the 'prisoner in the Vatican' following the seizure of the Papal States, had recently united European Catholics in a heightened ultramontanism, contributing to the estrangement of French Catholics from their national identity.¹³ The sense of being '*émigrés de l'intérieur*' was compounded with the founding of the anti-clerical Third Republic in 1870 and the establishment of the Paris Commune in March 1871, both suggesting the movement of the French nation away from political conservatism and religious faithfulness.¹⁴ The Jules Ferry laws of the early 1880s, which laicised education, were a further blow, and while the reactionary politician Georges Ernest Boulanger briefly provided a rallying point for monarchist, conservative Catholics, his success was short-lived. Embattled and paranoid in their position as citizens of an increasingly secularising state, a fortress mentality developed amongst many Catholics. The Martin family were among them, cutting themselves off from non-Catholic society, their faith dictating everything from the schools they sent their children to, to the newspapers they read and the social activities they took part in. The development their own 'Martin family romance',¹⁵ focussing on the four children who had died in infancy as the family's personal 'saints', shows how this insularity was lived out by the family. Ruth Harris has summed up the family's politics and suspicious attitude towards the outside world, stating that 'Of right-wing, legitimist convictions, the parents taught the children to accept without question the perceived conspiratorial links between Freemasonry, Jews and the devil'.¹⁶

The Dreyfus Affair and Léo Taxil's Hoax

In the month after Céline's entry into the Carmel of Lisieux, the event that marked the final end to the Martin family's existence outside the cloister, the Dreyfus Affair began, and it was still raging when Thérèse died in September 1897. The Affair ruptured French society more completely into two political factions, with the persecution of the Jewish army captain being stimulated by the Assumptionists and their mouthpiece, the French Catholic daily *La Croix*. The

¹³ Céline would later write that 'It was with sadness that we often heard at home of the misfortunes of the Church, of the imprisonment of the Roman Pontiff, of the rumblings of persecution in France and in the whole world'. Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Le père de Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, 1823-1894* (Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1953), p. 20.

¹⁴ Later, the Sacré-Cœur was built on the site of the Communards last stand, funded by subscriptions from Catholics all over France, in expiation for their country's perceived offences against God. See Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (Berkeley, 2000).

¹⁵ Corrado Pope, 'A Heroine without Heroics', p. 56.

¹⁶ Harris, *Lourdes*, p. 161.

sisters' maternal uncle, Isidore Guérin, a wealthy retired pharmacist, carried out promotional activities for *La Croix*, and is alleged to have been a 'disciple' of Edouard Drumont, founder of the Ligue antisémite de France and anti-Dreyfusard agitator.¹⁷ Isidore was an important outside contact in the early years of the cult and, despite the cloister, the sisters were well-aware of the dominant Catholic view of the Affair. Indeed, the ongoing war between Catholics and anti-clericals was not a distant conflict for those living behind the walls of the Carmel – in some cases it affected the community directly. In May 1895 the story of Diana Vaughan, a young American escapee from a Masonic, devil-worshipping cult, emerged in the Catholic press. *La Croix* leapt upon the story as proof of the evils of Freemasonry and published extracts of her book, *Mémoires d'un ex-palladiste*.¹⁸ Thérèse was much affected by the story and wrote a play inspired by it,¹⁹ as well as sending Diana a letter, enclosing a photograph of herself and Céline playing the roles of Joan of Arc and Saint Margaret in another play she had written, which had been performed inside the convent in early 1895 (see figure 2.11).²⁰ Diana was a mysterious figure, and was yet to be seen in public. All her affairs were handled by her agent, Léo Taxil, a former seminarian who had turned against the Church and written several blasphemous books, before converting back to Catholicism in 1885. On Easter Monday 1897, Taxil held a press conference, revealing that Diana did not exist and that the whole story had been an elaborate hoax, intended to expose the foolishness of Catholic France.²¹ As he made the announcement of his fraud, Taxil stood before a projection of the photograph of Thérèse and Céline that had been sent to 'Diana'. Thérèse was mortified by this sudden exposure to the world and Céline wrote to Isidore shortly afterwards that 'One sees so many contemptible things, so many defections in the world, that disgust fills one's soul.'²² For many Catholics, the affair did nothing more than prove the extent of the anti-clerical threat – the enemies of God were organised and committed to perpetrating evil deeds against the Catholic faith wherever they could.

¹⁷ See Six, *La véritable enfance*, pp. 160-7, and *Idem.*, 'Thérèse contre Lisieux', *Le Monde*, 25 December 1992.

¹⁸ See *La Croix*, 21 June 1895, pp. 2-3.

¹⁹ 'Le Triomphe de l'Humilité', in Thérèse of Lisieux, *Théâtre au Carmel. 'Récréations pieuses'* (Paris, 1985), pp. 379-95.

²⁰ Photograph 14, Appendix 2.

²¹ For details of the Diana Vaughan Affair see Eugen Weber, *Satan Franc-Maçon: La mystification de Léo Taxil* (Mesnil-sur-l'Estrée, 1964) and Atkin and Tallett, *Priests, Prelates and People*, p. 166. For Thérèse's connection to the hoax see Six, *Lumière de la nuit*, pp. 49-62.

²² Quoted in Six, *Lumière de la nuit*, pp. 40-1.

The Third Republic and the Persecution of Religious Communities

Pope Leo XIII's attempted *ralliement* of the 1890s, seeking to improve the relationship between French Catholics and the governing regime, was unlikely to succeed in light of the Third Republic's continued implementation of anti-clerical legislative measures, including the 1901 voluntary association law. This stipulated that religious communities must request authorisation to exist from the government,²³ and the Carmel was one of the communities that lived under sporadic threat of dissolution for decades afterwards. The convent was investigated under this law in 1901, 1903, 1908, 1910, 1914 and 1923.²⁴ Although the community survived the Municipal Council's inquiries, led by the radically left-wing government minister Henry Chéron, mayor of Lisieux between 1894 and 1936, many of the active religious communities in Lisieux were dissolved. The Carmel certainly felt that there was a very real threat to them – in her personal papers Céline mentions that some of the community's more precious belongings were sent to Belgium 'during the persecution',²⁵ and decades later she wrote in her memoirs that she had been 'enflamed with indignation against the communities who complied with the unjust laws ranged against them', saying that she 'would prefer to be cut into a thousand pieces than to hand over so much as a carrot!'²⁶ The strongly anti-clerical Emile Combes, who had succeeded to the French Premiership in 1902, prohibited religious congregations from teaching in 1904 – a further blow against religious organisations, which set the scene for the final separation of Church and state in 1905.

Action Française and the Carmel of Lisieux

The First World War was seen by many Catholics as another bout of divine punishment for irreligious France, and the resurgence in popularity of the right-wing, monarchist, anti-Semitic movement Action Française, originally founded in 1898, may be linked to this. The group's calls for the return of Catholicism as the state religion found sympathies with many Catholics, but the extremist nature of the movement led to it being condemned by Pius XI in 1926. The prohibition of Action Française was a setback for conservative Catholics, later compounded by the victory of

²³ See Patrick Cabanel and Jean-Dominique Durand (eds), *Le Grand exil des congrégations religieuses françaises, 1901-1914* (Paris, 2005).

²⁴ See Matthew James Dowling, 'The Evolution of a Modern Pilgrimage: Lisieux, 1897-1939', unpublished PhD thesis, Yale University, 1995, pp. 76-90.

²⁵ RTAG, p. 70, 41-2.

²⁶ Sœur Geneviève, *Conseils et Souvenirs*, p. 73.

the radical Popular Front in the 1936 elections, and it was around this time that the Carmel itself became involved with Action Française. The mother of one of the members of the community, Sœur Marie du Saint-Sacrement, was acquainted with Charles Maurras, the founder of Action Française, and Sœur Marie had offered up her sufferings to God for the reconciliation of the movement with the Church as she lay dying in July 1935. Mère Agnès contacted Maurras to tell him of Sœur Marie's sacrifice, and during his imprisonment from October 1936 to July 1937 for having made a death threat against Léon Blum, the leader of the Popular Front, she corresponded further with him.²⁷ Mère Agnès had long been in correspondence with the Popes, and took the opportunity on this occasion to also write to Pius XI to ask him to reconsider the matter of the excommunication of Action Française. Just a week after his release from prison, Maurras made a pilgrimage to Lisieux and met Mère Agnès, and she later reported on this meeting to the Pope in favorable tones. The day before Maurras' visit, the Papal Legate, Cardinal Pacelli, had also visited the Carmel, having conducted the inauguration and benediction of the Basilique Sainte-Thérèse. Céline later recounted her meeting with the Cardinal with pride, explaining how she took his photograph and told him she was sure he would be the next Pope,²⁸ while it has been alleged that Mère Agnès spoke with him directly about reinstating Action Française.²⁹ In March 1939 Pacelli became Pius XII and the very next month, in one of the first acts of his pontificate, he lifted the ban on the group. The degree of influence the Carmel had here can only be guessed at, but Pius XII was no less devoted to Saint Thérèse than his predecessor, who is popularly believed to have called her 'the star of my pontificate'. Mère Agnès remained a close friend and correspondent of Maurras until her death.

Pétain, Vichy and Beyond

The Second World War, and the establishment of the Vichy regime, saw the Carmel again express support for right-wing politics. While the Catholic sympathies of the Vichy regime, and Pius XII's attitude to that regime, have been the subject of much controversy, it is undeniable that many Catholics, both at the grassroots and members of the Church hierarchy in France, supported the rolling back of some of the anti-religious measures of the Third Republic under the regime.

²⁷ On the Carmel's involvement with Maurras see: Dansette, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine*, 2, pp. 607-9; Vinatier, *Mère Agnès de Jésus*, pp. 195-9; Aristide Cormier, *Mes entretiens de prêtre avec Charles Maurras, suivis de La vie intérieure de Charles Maurras* (Paris, 1955), pp. 130-62

²⁸ Piat, *Céline*, pp. 135-6. See the 38th edition of *Histoire d'une âme* (1940) for this photograph.

²⁹ René Laurentin and Jean-François Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux. Verse et Controverse* (Paris, 1973), pp. 102-3.

The Marin sisters appear to also have been supporters. In 1942 Mère Agnès commissioned a bronze relief of Saint Thérèse, showing the saint scattering roses on the coat of arms of Marshal Pétain. This gift to the leader of the government at Vichy, described in the entry in the convent's *chronique* that mentions the gift as 'the admirable old man',³⁰ seemed to confer Thérèse's divine approval on the regime. The Second World War was also to see the onset of the break-up of the French colonial empire, which had provided economic strength and national prestige, but had been of particular value to French Catholics as territory for missionary work. With the establishment of the Fourth Republic and the Fifth, which Céline Martin just lived to see instituted, anti-clericalism in the French government gradually declined as secularism became an accepted principle of western government. Pope Pius XII's death in 1958 marked the beginning of a period of change within the Catholic Church, and the Second Vatican Council of 1962-65 would see a greater reconciliation of the Church with the social and political realities of the modern world.

Popular Religious Culture, Devotional Consumerism and Images

These political battles are paralleled by a history of popular Catholic culture that is no less dramatic or contested. The unique social and political experience of French Catholics profoundly shaped the nature of popular piety in the late nineteenth century, and even before the 'terrible year' of 1870-71, a distinctive religious culture had begun to develop which was strongly sentimental, Eucharistic and Marian, and the Martin family subscribed to this culture with enthusiasm.³¹ Devotion to the Virgin Mary dominated the landscape of popular religion, and the Martins displayed a very strong attachment to the Virgin. When Zélie Martin was dying of cancer, she visited the shrine at Lourdes with her older daughters in the hope of a cure, while Thérèse's childhood vision of the Virgin is also indicative of the family's heavy investment in Marian devotion.³² The visions of the Virgin Mary experienced by Catherine Labouré at the motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity on *rue du Bac*, Paris (1830), by Mélanie Calvat and Maximin Giraud at La Salette (1846), and by Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes (1858), were foundational events in this newly-emerging religious culture, the latter being a corroboration of the hierarchy's approval

³⁰ Reproduced in Marie du Saint Esprit – circulaire inédite établie en 2007, ACL.

³¹ Ralph Gibson has asserted that the Martin family's piety was typical of the devotional culture of their times and has spoken of Thérèse as emblematic of the 'revolution... in the content of Catholicism in France in the nineteenth century.' Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789-1914* (London, 1989), p. 232, 245, 266-7, 272.

³² See HA, Ms. A, 27r°- 31r°, pp. 60-7.

of Marian piety through the proclamation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in 1854. The apparitions to five peasant children at Pontmain, occurring just days before the armistice of the Franco-Prussian War, showed the symbiosis between Marian devotion and French national fortunes at the beginning of this period, while the later visions of Lúcia Santos and her cousins, Jacinta and Francisco Marto, at Fátima in Portugal in 1917, almost three years into the First World War, demonstrated how devotion to the Virgin in Europe was often bound up with cataclysmic events beyond the ‘long nineteenth century’.³³

The ‘Feminisation’ of Religion

The growth in devotion to the Virgin has often been seen as a sign of a wider ‘feminisation’ of popular Catholicism in the late nineteenth century. While this term risks being reductive about the nature of gender,³⁴ it is certainly true that there was a growth in devotion to female saints, seen in the revival of the cult of Saint Philomena in France for example,³⁵ as well as an explosion in the number of women entering the cloister³⁶ or becoming third order members of religious communities (Zélie Martin was herself a third order Franciscan). It was also women who tended to invest in the doctrine of ‘vicarious suffering’ – seeking bodily mortification for the redemption of France, and seeing ‘the suffering body of Christ, the martyred body of the King, the wounded French nation... the humiliated body of the Church and of its earthly Father, the Pope... [as] equivalents of each other’.³⁷ This doctrine of suffering and sacrifice was linked to Eucharistic piety, and Thérèse’s account of her first communion in *Histoire d’une âme* is revealing of the degree to which the Eucharist was associated with this ‘feminised’ Catholic culture, her description of it as ‘that first kiss of Jesus’ showing how Christ came to be viewed as lover, rather than lord.³⁸ This period also saw the crystallisation of several pre-existing devotions into new forms and new iconographical modes. The Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of

³³ On the interplay between popular religious devotions and national politics see also Lucy Riall ‘Martyr Cults in Nineteenth-Century Italy’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 82, 2 (June, 2010), pp. 255-87.

³⁴ For a critique of the term ‘feminisation’ and an analysis of its use in the existing literature see Caroline Ford, ‘Review: Religion and Popular Culture in Modern Europe’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 65, 1 (March, 1993), pp. 168-9.

³⁵ See Caroline Ford, ‘Female Martyrdom and the Politics of Sainthood in Nineteenth-Century France: The Cult of Sainte Philomène’, in Nicholas Atkin and Frank Tallett (eds), *Catholicism in Britain and France Since 1789* (London, 1996), pp. 115-34.

³⁶ See Claude Langlois, *Le Catholicisme au féminin. Les congrégations françaises à supérieure générale au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1984).

³⁷ Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*, pp. xvi-i.

³⁸ HA, Ms. A, 35r°, p.77.

Mary became central motifs of French popular religious culture, their romantic and sentimental visual representation, along with the androgynous portrayal of Jesus that typified the former devotion, being a key part of the alleged ‘feminisation’ of Catholic popular piety.

‘L’ “art” dit de Saint-Sulpice’ and Catholic Visual Culture

Religious images were an essential part of Catholic culture in France in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and an important aspect of the practice of popular devotions was engagement with their visual representation. A specific style of religious art was at issue here – the Saint-Sulpician style. Referring to the area around the church of Saint Sulpice in the sixth arrondissement of Paris, which had become a centre for the retailing of devotional products, Saint-Sulpician art has been identified as the dominant form of religious art in France between 1860 and 1930.³⁹ Mass produced by factories on the outskirts of Paris, manufacturers were able to react quickly to emerging new devotions, and Saint-Sulpician art was highly fashionable. Indeed, mass production defined the style, and its ephemeral nature (plaster statues instead of stone, postcards instead of framed prints) was as much an essential part of its character as its distinctively androgyne and romantic visual style. Becoming a byword for all that was to be despised about popular religious art, and seen as vulgar in both its commerciality and femininity, Saint-Sulpician art would be critiqued almost from its very inception (see chapter 4). Its popularity was certainly in decline before the Second World War, although it was not until 1952 that the Vatican expressed real disapproval of the style.⁴⁰ The Martin sisters had been brought up immersed in the Saint-Sulpician aesthetic, and championed it well after its popular decline. Enthusiastic consumers of mass-produced devotional ephemera even inside the cloister,⁴¹ the sisters had their favourite publishers of images and chose the items they bought according to these brands.⁴² Later, they would style their sister in the devotional style that they loved (see chapter 2). This is the political and cultural

³⁹ Claude Savart, ‘A la recherche de l’“art” dit de Saint-Sulpice’, *Revue d’histoire de la spiritualité*, 52 (1976), p. 276.

⁴⁰ See Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, ‘Instruction to Ordinaries on Sacred Art’, *The Furrow*, 3, 9 (September, 1952), pp. 473-7.

⁴¹ In a compendious publication, Pierre Descouvemont has reproduced much of the devotional ephemera that belonged to the Martin sisters, which is preserved in the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux. See Pierre Descouvemont and Helmuth Nils Loose, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux. La vie en images* (Paris, 1995).

⁴² *Ibid.* p. 10.

context against which this thesis may be read. We shall now turn to the existing literature on the saint and her legacy.⁴³

Thérèse: Her Historians, Biographers and Theologians

The first studies of Saint Thérèse were produced by the Carmel of Lisieux itself (the most significant of these are primary sources for this study and are examined in chapter 3), but in the twenties the Carmel began to work with authors in the outside world. Céline was always the principal contact for these collaborators,⁴⁴ giving them access to original documents, and heavily directing their work. The books produced by these authors were always apologist pieces, but they would influence Theresian historiography for decades. Mgr. August Pierre Laveille (1856-1928) published an official biography of Thérèse in 1925, which although packaged as an historical enquiry, was as much a standard hagiography as the productions of the Carmel itself.⁴⁵ In 1941 Père Stéphane-Joseph Piat (1899-1968), a Franciscan monk and ex-soldier, began to work with the convent.⁴⁶ Piat enjoyed a good working relationship with Céline, and he published a series of hagiographical books about Thérèse and her family, which critical commentators have called ‘true panegyrics’.⁴⁷ In the same decade, Abbé André Combes (1899-1969), a professor both at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, also began to work with the Carmel.⁴⁸ His critical approach to the Theresian corpus of works was groundbreaking, and he produced the first scholarly edition of Thérèse’s writings, publishing a

⁴³ The annual Carmelite bibliography published in *Carmelus* (1953–) provides a bibliography of works on Thérèse. Thomas Nevin’s annotated bibliography provides further information on secondary material on the saint, although the analysis is a highly personal one: Thomas R. Nevin, *Thérèse of Lisieux: God’s Gentle Warrior* (New York, 2006), pp. 371-90. Although it largely excludes popular and devotional literature, see also the very large bibliography in Loys de Saint-Chamas, *Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus, Dieu à l’œuvre* (Toulouse, 1998), pp. 501-616. A comprehensive, but now also very old bibliography is Rena Ercoli, ‘Bibliografia su Santa Teresa del Bambino Gesù’, *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum Discalceatorum* 19 (1947), pp. 271-348.

⁴⁴ See RTAG, pp. 99-100.

⁴⁵ August Pierre Laveille, *Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus (1873-1897). D’après les documents officiels du Carmel de Lisieux* (Lisieux, 1925). See also the other notable biographies of the mid-twenties, produced outside the convent: Baron J. Angot des Rotours, *La Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus (1873-1897)* (Paris, 1924); Gaëtan Bernoville, *Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus* (Paris, 1925); Henri Petitot OP, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux. Une Renaissance Spirituelle* (Paris, 1925).

⁴⁶ On Piat see Guy Gaucher, ‘Le Père Stéphane Piat (1899-1968)’, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, 866 (May, 2006), pp. 2-3, and Pierre Descouvemont, ‘Le Père Stéphane Piat: un franciscain à la découverte de Thérèse’, in Père Joseph Baudry OCD (ed.), *Thérèse et ses théologiens. Colloque sainte Thérèse, Institut Catholique de Toulouse - 17 au 19 Novembre 1997* (Versailles, 1998), pp. 161-80.

⁴⁷ Six’s remark: Laurentin and Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 66.

⁴⁸ See Claude Langlois, ‘L’abbé Combes, théologien et historien de Thérèse’, in Baudry, *Thérèse et ses théologiens*, pp. 133-60.

volume of her letters in 1948.⁴⁹ Whereas Piat had been a hagiographer, Combes ‘opened the way to scientific work’, although his access to the archives was not unrestricted.⁵⁰ This access was withdrawn altogether after Céline disapproved of some of his more probing attitudes.⁵¹ Père François de Sainte-Marie (1910-61) was the Carmel’s next chosen editor, and he oversaw the publication of the *Manuscrits autobiographiques* (1956) – Thérèse’s complete, unedited autobiographical manuscripts in facsimile, in three volumes.⁵² In 1961, the photographs of Thérèse were given the same treatment, and his *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* (1961) made all of the extant photographs of the saint available for the first time.

The Opening-up of the Field

The 1970s and 1980s marked an opening up of the field of Theresian studies, with a number of writers and researchers coming to dedicate themselves to study of the saint, and a more scholarly approach to her began to take hold. In the early 1970s, Carmelite priest and Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Bayeux and Lisieux Guy Gaucher (1930-) emerged as the leading figure in Theresian studies, producing many works on Thérèse’s life and spirituality,⁵³ as well as collaborating on the definitive, eight-volume edition of her writings, the *Nouvelle édition du centenaire*, published in 1992.⁵⁴ His 1982 biography, *Histoire d’une Vie*, has long been seen as the classic study of the saint, but this has recently been superseded by his new 690-page biography of

⁴⁹ André Combes (ed.), *Lettres de sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus* (Lisieux, 1948). See also *Idem.*, *Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus et la Souffrance* (Paris, 1948); *Idem.*, *Introduction à la spiritualité de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus* (Paris, 1948), 2nd edition [original publication 1946]; *Idem.*, *La Petite Sainte Thérèse de Maxence Van der Meersch devant la critique et devant les textes* (Paris, 1950).

⁵⁰ Laurentin and Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 129.

⁵¹ On Combes’ rupture with the Carmel, see Laurentin and Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, pp. 127-9 and Bernard Gouley, Rémi Mauger and Emmanuelle Chevalier, *Thérèse de Lisieux ou la grande saga d’une petite sœur (1897-1997)* (Paris, 1997), pp.197-203. Combes’ *Le problème de l’Histoire d’une âme et des œuvres complètes de sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1950) highlighted the continued lack of clarity on the content of Thérèse’s original writings.

⁵² On François de Sainte-Marie see the special issue: *Carmel*, 128: Le Père François de Sainte-Marie (June, 2008).

⁵³ Guy Gaucher, *La Passion de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1973); *Idem.*, *Histoire d’une Vie* (Paris, 1982); *Idem.*, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1992); *Idem.*, *Jean et Thérèse. L’influence de saint Jean de la Croix dans la vie et les écrits de sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1996); *Idem.*, *‘L’Histoire d’une âme’ de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 2000); *Idem.*, *‘Je voudrais parcourir la terre...’ Thérèse de Lisieux thaumaturge, docteur et missionnaire* (Paris, 2003).

⁵⁴ See also the single volume *Œuvres complètes* (Paris, 1992). Corresponding critical editions of Thérèse’s works in English have been produced by the Institute of Carmelite Studies, Washington. See Thérèse of Lisieux, *St. Thérèse of Lisieux: Her Last Conversations* (Washington, 1977), trans. John Clarke OCD; *Idem.*, *Letters of St. Thérèse of Lisieux: General Correspondence*, 2 vols (Washington, 1982/1988), trans. John Clarke OCD; *Idem.*, *Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux* (Washington, 1996), trans. John Clarke OCD, 3rd edition; *Idem.*, *The Poetry of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux* (Washington, 1996), trans. Donald Kinney OCD; *Idem.*, *The Prayers of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux* (Washington, 1997), trans. Aletheia Kane OCD; *Idem.*, *The Plays of St. Thérèse of Lisieux “Pious Recreations”* (Washington, 2008), trans. Susan Conroy and David J. Dwyer.

Thérèse, which is likely to be seen as definitive.⁵⁵ No less prolific is Pierre Descouvemont (1927-), a priest in the Cambrai diocese, who has produced everything from an in-depth guide to Thérèse's writings, to a guide book for tourists visiting 'Thérèse's Normandy',⁵⁶ as well as some important studies which look at Thérèse's representation (see 'Key Studies' below).⁵⁷ Gaucher and Descouvemont have to some extent taken up the mantle of the collaborators of the 1920s-1960s in producing the bulk of the studies on Thérèse, in close collaboration with the Carmel – but other writers have worked more independently.

Priest and professor of Theology René Laurentin (1917-) has written on the Marian visions of the nineteenth century and beyond, with a particular interest in Saint Bernadette and the more recent visions at Medjugorje. This has lent his work on Thérèse a wider perspective that is lacking in some other studies, and his *Thérèse de Lisieux. Mythes et Réalité* (1972) was a landmark reassessment of the saint and the writings on her. His conversations with Jean-François Six, published the following year, ranged widely over a raft of issues surrounding the saint, including the significance of Thérèse's cult. Priest Jean-François Six (1929-), Laurentin's sometime collaborator, is an extremely controversial figure in the field of Theresian studies. A friend of André Combes, Six took on something of his role as an enemy of the Carmel after Combes' death. His biographical studies, *La véritable enfance de Thérèse de Lisieux. Névrose et sainteté* (1972) and *Thérèse de Lisieux au Carmel* (1973)⁵⁸ took both a psychological and sociological approach to the saint and her family, and made a number of sensational allegations, depicting the Martin sisters' upbringing as one of repression, while Thérèse was shown as a victim of persecution inside the Carmel, even accusing Céline of neglecting her as she died.⁵⁹ Also a scholar of Thérèse's writings, Six produced a three volume edition, *Thérèse de Lisieux par elle-même* (1997), arranging her fragmentary writings chronologically. Most significantly for this study, Six was interested in the sisters' work on the cult (see 'Pauline the Architect, Céline the Artist' below), and has expressed a wish to write a 'posthumous life of Thérèse of Lisieux', but stated that 'this work has been judged too

⁵⁵ Guy Gaucher, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux (1873-1897)* (Paris, 2010).

⁵⁶ Pierre Descouvemont, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux, docteur de l'Église. Guide de lecture* (Paris, 1997); *Idem.*, *Sur les pas de Thérèse. Guide complet du Pèlerin* (Paris, 2001).

⁵⁷ Pierre Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l'âme. Un trappiste au service de Thérèse* (Wailly, 2000); *Idem.*, *La vie en images; Idem.*, *Thérèse et Lisieux* (Paris, 1991).

⁵⁸ These two books later appeared as an edited, one volume publication: Six, *Vie de Thérèse de Lisieux*.

⁵⁹ See Jean-François Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux au Carmel* (Paris, 1973), pp. 390-1.

revolutionary, and the archives have been closed to [me].⁶⁰ Six's work is wilfully sensationalist and compromised by his lack of access to the primary sources, but he is perhaps the most original figure of Theresian historiography.

Landmark Studies and the Rehabilitative Impulse

Two academics deserve special mention here for their landmark studies on Thérèse. Claude Langlois (1937-), Emeritus Director of Studies of the Section des Sciences religieuses at the École pratique des hautes études, had already written a study of nineteenth-century female religious communities when he produced his first study of Thérèse.⁶¹ His *Les dernières paroles de Thérèse de Lisieux* (2000) focussed on unearthing the process of the formation of this text, and his interest in the intricacies of Thérèse's writings continued with several works which have been described as providing 'a veritable archaeology of the Carmelite's texts.'⁶² Between 2002 and 2009 he produced studies of each of the three autobiographical manuscripts, as well as a work on Thérèse's stated desire to be a priest, placing this in the wider context of nineteenth-century female spirituality.⁶³ While the posthumous creation of Thérèse as saint relied heavily on the stories and imagery found in her writings (she could also be said to have written herself into the genre of the saint's Life), Langlois' work, which studies the writings on their own merits, is not relevant to this thesis. However, he has also produced an article on the photographs of Thérèse, which begins to consider the cult, and that is an important work for this study (see 'Key Studies' below).⁶⁴ Langlois is in any case the leading figure in Theresian studies within an academic context, and in the study of her writings in particular.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, Jacques Maître (1925-),

⁶⁰ Jean-François Six, 'Thérèse, histoire d'une femme', *Notre Histoire*, 27 (October, 1986), p. 47. See also Laurentin and Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 145.

⁶¹ Langlois, *Le Catholicisme au féminin*.

⁶² 'L'Autobiographie de Thérèse de Lisieux, par Claude Langlois', *Éditions du Cerf* <http://www.editionsducerf.fr/html/fiche/fichelivre.asp?n_liv_cerf=8305> [accessed 4 October 2010].

⁶³ Langlois, *Les dernières paroles*; *Idem.*, *Le Poème de septembre. Lecture du manuscrit B de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 2002); *Idem.*, *Le Désir de sacerdoce chez Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 2002); *Idem.*, *Lettres à ma Mère bien aimée – Juin 1897. Lecture du manuscrit C de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 2007); *Idem.*, *L'Autobiographie de Thérèse de Lisieux: Édition critique du manuscrit A (1895)* (Paris, 2009).

⁶⁴ Claude Langlois, 'Photographier des Saintes: De Bernadette Soubirous à Thérèse de Lisieux', in Michèle Ménard and Annie Duprat (eds), *Histoire, Images, Imaginaires: Actes du Colloque International des 21-22-23 mars 1996, l'Université du Maine* (Le Mans, 1998), pp. 261-72.

⁶⁵ This is an area of growing interest, as is demonstrated by the appearance of a 962-page index of all of Thérèse's writings, and the publication of all her extant writings, even down to her school exercise books. See Jacques Lonchamp, Sœur Geneviève de Clairefontaine and Sœur Cécile du Carmel de Lisieux, *Les Mots de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face* (Paris, 1996) and Thérèse of Lisieux, *Les Cahiers d'école de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 2008).

sociologist and Director of the Sociology of Religions at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, has produced a study of Thérèse that shares something of Jean-François Six's psychological approach. His *L'Orpheline de la Bérésina. Thérèse de Lisieux (1873 -1897). Essai de psychanalyse socio-historique* (1995) may be problematic for its posthumous psychoanalysis of the saint, but it is a complex and fascinating study which stands apart from others in its originality. It is apparent then that the two leading Theresian scholars are concerned only with Thérèse's writings and personality – the posthumous life is not yet a fully established part of the academic study of the saint.

The remaining studies to be mentioned here fall into two disparate genres, but with a binding thread. Both theological studies and a particular strain of secular, popular books on the saint are strongly rehabilitative in their tone, but in very different ways. Theologians have been recasting Thérèse as a theological genius since the 1950s,⁶⁶ with eminent Jesuit theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988) publishing his now classic *Thérèse von Lisieux: Geschichte einer Sendung* (1950) in that decade.⁶⁷ Bernard Bro (1925-), Dominican, broadcaster and former director of Éditions du Cerf, the publishing house that dominates the market for books on Thérèse, produced another significant theological work with his *La Gloire et le Mendiant* (1974), and more recently *Thérèse of Lisieux: Sa famille, son Dieu, son message* (1996). He is joined by Carmelite fathers Conrad de Meester (1936-) and Jean Clapier (1959-) as someone in religious orders who has completed significant theological study of the saint.⁶⁸ To these should be added Mary Frohlich and Joann Wolski Conn, both sisters of lay religious congregations and theologians currently working in Catholic universities.⁶⁹ While Thérèse's theological significance is not relevant to this thesis, it is

⁶⁶ For a survey of the theological material on the saint, see Baudry, *Thérèse et ses théologiens*.

⁶⁷ Available in English translation as Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Thérèse of Lisieux: The Story of a Mission* (London, 1953), trans. Donald Nicholl. See also *Idem.*, *Schwestern in Geist: Thérèse von Lisieux und Elisabeth von Dijon* (Einsiedeln, 1970), available in English translation as *Idem.*, *Two Sisters in the Spirit: Thérèse of Lisieux and Elizabeth of the Trinity* (San Francisco, 1992), trans. Donald Nichols, Anne Englund Nash and Dennis Martin.

⁶⁸ Conrad de Meester OCD, *Dynamique de la confiance: genèse et structure de la "voie d'enfance spirituelle" chez Ste. Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1969); *Idem.*, *Les Mains vides. Le message de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1972). Jean Clapier, 'Aimer jusqu'à mourir d'amour'. *Thérèse de Lisieux et le mystère pascal* (Paris, 2003).

⁶⁹ Mary Frohlich, 'Thérèse of Lisieux: Doctor for the Third Millennium?', *New Theology Review*, 12, 2 (May, 1999), pp. 27-38; *Idem.*, 'Desolation and Doctrine in Thérèse of Lisieux', *Theological Studies*, 61, 2 (June 2000), pp. 261- 80; *Idem.*, "'Your Face Is My Only Homeland': A Psychological Perspective on Thérèse of Lisieux and Devotion to the Holy Face," in David M. Hammond (ed.), *Theology and Lived Christianity* (Mystic, 2000), pp. 177-205; *Idem.*, 'Thérèse of Lisieux and Jeanne d'Arc: History, Memory, and Interiority in the Experience of Vocation', *Spiritus*, 6, 2 (Fall, 2006), pp. 173-94; *Idem.*, *St. Thérèse of Lisieux: Essential Writings* (New York, 2003). Joann Wolski Conn, 'Thérèse of Lisieux from a Feminist Perspective', *Spiritual Life*, 28, 4 (Winter, 1982), pp. 233-9; *Idem.*, 'Conversion as Self-Transcendence Exemplified in the Life of St. Thérèse of Lisieux', *Spirituality Today*, 34, 4 (Winter, 1982), pp. 303-

important to note that some of the best-known Theresian scholars are theologians. The modern popular biographies of Thérèse are the almost polar opposite of these theological works. Written by those outside the Catholic faith, anti-hagiographical, and professing a desire to find a relevance in Thérèse for a new age, these books are often informed by feminist, or proto-feminist approaches. The first of these works was *The Eagle and the Dove. A Study in Contrasts: St. Teresa of Avila, St. Thérèse of Lisieux* (1943) by Vita Sackville-West (1892-1962), which acknowledged the attraction of the Spanish noblewoman over this French, bourgeois girl, but saw relevance in Thérèse's message for a world experiencing a devastating war. *Das verborgene Antlitz* (1944), the classic study by Ida Friederike Görres (1901-71),⁷⁰ as well as social reformer Dorothy Day's 1960 study of the saint, were also in this mould, and both of these studies are examined as primary sources in chapter 4.⁷¹ Monica Furlong (1930-2003), the journalist, mystic and campaigner for reform in the Church of England, produced a biography in 1987 which sought to rehabilitate Thérèse from accusations of passivity.⁷² Furlong's approach was also informed by psychology, and this was picked up by Kathryn Harrison (1961-) in her book of 2003, where she used Freudian theories to explain Thérèse's inner life, producing a widely-read popular biography.⁷³

Pauline the Architect, Céline the Artist

The Martin sisters' involvement in building the cult of Saint Thérèse has been a familiar issue in the secondary literature since as early as the mid-1920s. Between the twenties and the fifties many polemical biographies of Thérèse appeared which attacked the sisters' 'reshaping' of the saint, and the story of their behind-the-scenes work became a well-known one through these 'ouvrages de controverse' (these are explored as primary sources in chapter 4).⁷⁴ The issue of Mère Agnès' editing of the autobiography caused controversy for the first fifty years of the Theresian cult, with whole passages being lost, other statements having their meanings completely subverted and the more candid snapshots of conventual life being erased. Etienne Robo's book, *Two Portraits*

11; *Idem.*, 'Thérèse of Lisieux: Far from Spiritual Childhood', *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, 6, 1 (Spring, 2006), pp. 68-89.

⁷⁰ Available in English translation as: Ida Friederike Görres, *The Hidden Face: A Study of St. Thérèse of Lisieux* (San Francisco, 2003) 8th edition [original publication 1959], trans. Richard and Clara Winston.

⁷¹ Dorothy Day, *Thérèse* (Springfield, Illinois, 1991) [original publication 1960].

⁷² Monica Furlong, *Thérèse of Lisieux* (New York, 1987).

⁷³ Kathryn Harrison, *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux* (London, 2003).

⁷⁴ See, for example: Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1926); Maurice Privat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1932); Henri Ghéon, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1934); Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, *La Petite Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1937); Pierre Mabille, *Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1996), 3rd edition [original publication 1937]; Maxence Van der Meersch, *La Petite sainte Thérèse* (Paris, 1947).

of *St Teresa of Lisieux* (1955) made the story popularly known in the English-speaking world, although like all the works of this genre, it sensationalised the issue and was based on poor quality secondary sources. When the role of the sisters in the creation of the cult has been discussed in more recent studies, it is usually only briefly gestured to, and the discussion is rarely based on any original research. Mère Agnès is usually simply assumed to have been responsible for everything due to her position of authority both in the family, as Thérèse's 'second mother', and in the convent, as prioress. For example, Claude Langlois sees her as the undisputed director of the cult, responsible not only for Thérèse's autobiography, which she commissioned and edited, but also ascribing the authorship of the photographs of Thérèse to her, since it was she who permitted Céline to bring her camera into the convent. He asserts:

Céline entered the Carmel in August 1894 with her camera and Thérèse began writing her autobiography (manuscript A) in 1895: therefore the two initiatives were the work of her older sister, becoming prioress – the same who, after the death of Thérèse, and for close to a half century, orchestrated the Theresian success (publication of *Histoire d'une âme*, the dissemination of images, the beatification and canonisation of Thérèse, the construction of the Basilica of Lisieux).⁷⁵

In the most sustained study of the cult, Bernard Gouley's *Thérèse de Lisieux ou la grande saga d'une petite sœur (1897-1997)* (1997) (see 'Key Studies' below), Mère Agnès is shown at the helm of the cult throughout her life, with the emphasis placed on the 'crucial role that Pauline played in the earthly life of her sister, and in her posthumous adventure', calling her the 'linchpin' of the cult.⁷⁶ It is certainly true that Mère Agnès was vitally important for the cult, but Céline's role, while less public-facing, was of at least equal value, and is still severely misunderstood. Such is the lack of appreciation of Céline's role that in a recent English-language study we even hear of 'Pauline's rosewtery image-making',⁷⁷ not Céline's, despite the fact that she was responsible for all the images of Thérèse issued by the Carmel.

Six, Langlois and Mère Agnès

There are just two scholars who have looked in-depth at the work of sisters, and although both are preoccupied with Mère Agnès' role, they make very different assessments of it. In his most recent work, *Lumière de la Nuit. Les dix-huit derniers mois de Thérèse de Lisieux* (1995) Jean

⁷⁵ Langlois, 'Photographier des Saintes', p. 267.

⁷⁶ Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 120, 186.

⁷⁷ Nevin, *Thérèse of Lisieux*, p. 372.

François-Six sought to highlight the degree to which Mère Agnès reshaped Thérèse textually, claiming that she ‘stag[ed] Thérèse’s spirituality’ through her heavy editing of the autobiography and wholesale fabrication of the *derniers entretiens* (Thérèse’s statements from her death bed).⁷⁸ Six has played a large part in keeping the sole focus on Mère Agnès, with his presence in the popular media also ensuring that she has dominated the public conception of the cult’s success.⁷⁹ His work provides an important counterpoint to this thesis’ examination of the creation of a new face for the saint, but his view of the sisters’ work as fundamentally negative, rather than culturally productive, is one that is rejected here. Five years later, Claude Langlois rehabilitated the *derniers entretiens* from Six’s dismissal of them in his *Les dernières paroles de Thérèse de Lisieux* (2000), where he disavowed any interest in taking sides with the ‘pro- or anti-agnèsiens’,⁸⁰ but took a great interest in Mère Agnès’ role as editor of Thérèse’s writings. Ultimately, he exonerated her of fabricating the text in the way Six asserted. While Mère Agnès, so heavily associated with Thérèse’s textual legacy, is subject to such in-depth analysis, the published sources that focus on Céline’s work are meagre. The only existing biography of her, by Stéphane-Joseph Piat, is limited as a hagiographical portrait of a woman the author was personally close to,⁸¹ while her published memoirs, *Conseils et Souvenirs* (1952) are focussed on her spiritual interactions with Thérèse, not her posthumous relationship with her.

The ‘thèse de la manipulation’

The idea of the sisters as enthusiastic promoters of the cult, spending their lives safeguarding their sister’s public image, is often dismissed as nothing more than a conspiracy theory in the secondary literature, the first public outing of the notion in the sensationalist books of the 1920s lending it little credibility. For example, Antoinette Guise, who has produced both an MA and PhD thesis on aspects of Thérèse’s posthumous life,⁸² has dismissed the investigation of

⁷⁸ Six, *Lumière de la nuit*, p. 8.

⁷⁹ See Michel Cool, ‘Sainte Thérèse trahie par sa sœur’, *L’Express*, 26 December 1996 and Six, ‘Thérèse contre Lisieux’.

⁸⁰ Langlois, *Les dernières paroles*, p. 9.

⁸¹ Piat, *Céline*.

⁸² Antoinette Guise, ‘Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus entre 1898 et 1926. Genèse d’un culte’, unpublished MA thesis, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sorbonne, Paris, 2000 and *Idem.*, ‘Thérèse de Lisieux et ses miracles. Recompositions du surnaturel (1898-1928)’, unpublished PhD thesis, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sorbonne, Paris, 2006.

the sisters' work on Thérèse's image by Marion Lavabre (see 'Key Studies' below),⁸³ using the sisters' own original arguments about the inadequacy of the photographic process at the end of the nineteenth century and the need for both retouching and original portraits to obtain a good likeness of her (see chapter 2).⁸⁴ Guise bemoans the fact that, despite the publication of all the existing photographs of the saint in *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* 'this thesis of manipulation valiantly endures'.⁸⁵ The alleged problems of photography in the late nineteenth century, and our possession of all the original photographs does not discredit study of the work the sisters did on Thérèse's image after her death, a rich story which uncovers the roots of an international cult, and which is rather more complex than either the detractors or supporters of the Martin sisters have admitted. By turning to the Archives, this thesis demonstrates that the sisters' work on the cult should be taken seriously, and that their actions should not be seen as inherently problematic. The sisters have long suffered for being seen only as nuns – spiritual athletes of a non-earthly milieu – and not as people with desires and ambitions. Here, both the dominant, hagiographical view of the Martin sisters, and the opposing idea of their actions being deleterious to devotion to Thérèse, is rejected. While their involvement in the negatively-viewed world of the cheap paperback, the postcard and the advertising flyer has been a source of embarrassment to some, here the creativity of their work is embraced, allowing the full relevance of the cult's images and commercial promotion to be understood.

The Creation of the Cult and the History of Theresian Iconography: Key Studies

The handful of studies which look at the cult of Saint Thérèse in general, or examine the more specific issue of her posthumous visual representation by the Carmel of Lisieux, are very diverse in nature and do not form a coherent body of scholarship. There is just a scattered handful of pieces of research, making no reference to each other, that engage with the cult of Thérèse as a facet of the history of modern French religious culture. The writers of these come from a range of disciplines and backgrounds, from priests to photographers, theologians to historians. Maurice Privat provided the first assessment of the cult as early as 1932, although this was in a sensationalist, polemical work, whose value as a secondary source is severely compromised (see

⁸³ Marion Lavabre, 'Sainte comme une image: Thérèse de Lisieux à travers ses représentations', *Terrain*, 24: La fabrication des saints (March, 1995), pp. 83-90.

⁸⁴ Guise, 'Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse', pp. 17-20.

⁸⁵ Guise, 'Thérèse de Lisieux et ses miracles', p. 9, n. 12.

chapter 4).⁸⁶ Only one book-length publication has appeared on the growth of the worldwide cult of Saint Thérèse. *Thérèse de Lisieux ou la grande saga d'une petite sœur (1897-1997)* appeared in 1997 and was produced to accompany the documentary *Thérèse superstar*, originally broadcast on France 3 in the same year, the hundredth anniversary of Thérèse's death and the year of her naming as a Doctor of the Church. The book makes some important observations about the early shaping of Theresian myth and the sisters' marketing of the saint, as well as providing a useful chronological account of the development of the cult. It remarks on Céline creating an image for Thérèse that 'corresponded with the idea that [she] had of the saint' and examines the retouching work she did on photographs.⁸⁷ The authors of this work are not historians (Bernard Gouley and Rémi Mauger are journalists and Emmanuelle Chevalier is a documentary maker), and the study is wholly unreferenced, limiting its usefulness. Its narrative is also principally hung off an account of the processes of beatification and canonisation, making for a falsely institutional account of the cult's progression. This thesis breaks away from this approach to look more closely at the activities of the Carmel, examining the hidden history of the cult's rise outside of the Holy See's institutional regulation.

Disparate elements of the cult have been examined by some academic researchers, principally in unpublished PhD theses, although the French tradition for regional historical studies has produced at least one study of Thérèse's cult in a particular locality.⁸⁸ Matthew James Dowling has examined the growth of the pilgrimage to Lisieux up until 1939, providing something of a parallel to studies of the growth of the Lourdes pilgrimage,⁸⁹ while Antoinette Guise's two theses on the saint, both completed under the supervision of Claude Langlois, examined the place of the miracles of Saint Thérèse in the life of the cult.⁹⁰ In their consideration of Thérèse's place in the landscape of popular devotion, the large amount of original archival research they have done, as well as their brief consideration of the promotion of the cult by the Carmel, this thesis is indebted to the work of both these scholars, who have raised important questions and made significant moves towards building a body of work on Thérèse's posthumous life. Since their work is yet to be published, the wider impact of this has been limited, however. Alana Harris, Darby Fellow in

⁸⁶ Privat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*.

⁸⁷ Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 207.

⁸⁸ Marcel Launay, 'Origines et développement du culte de Thérèse de Lisieux dans l'Ouest de la France: l'exemple nantais (1897-1947)', *Bulletin de la Société archéologique et historique de Nantes*, 132 (1997), pp. 239-53.

⁸⁹ Dowling 'The Evolution of a Modern Pilgrimage'.

⁹⁰ Guise, 'Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse'; *Idem.*, 'Thérèse de Lisieux et ses miracles'.

History at the University of Oxford, has looked at devotion to Thérèse in an English context in her PhD thesis, providing some important insights into the changing way Thérèse was viewed in the mid- to late twentieth century, while a forthcoming article considers devotion to her in Britain today, in light of the recent visit of the saint's relics to the UK.⁹¹ To these studies may be added the 2005 article “Je veux lutter comme un guerrier vaillant”, Thérèse of Lisieux in the Trenches of the Great War’, by Thomas Nevin, author of the most recent major biography of the saint in English.⁹² Nevin, professor at a Jesuit university, gives some idea of the relevance of Thérèse for popular devotional culture in the trenches in this article, but it is lacking in original research, and dismisses Céline’s work as ‘standard and mawkish iconographies’.⁹³ In the late eighties, in an article that has become a staple of Theresian studies, scholar of women’s studies Barbara Corrado Pope offered an assessment of Thérèse’s posthumous success and sought to place her in her proper historical context.⁹⁴ In the absence of more substantial studies, both these articles are important first steps in the published history of the cult of Thérèse. However, interest in Thérèse’s posthumous life is growing. In September 2010 a colloquium was held in Bayeux and Lisieux on the process of beatification of Saint Thérèse, but we still await a scholarly monograph on the cult in twentieth-century France and, indeed, the rest of the Catholic world.⁹⁵

The Saint and Her Image

The studies that touch on the cult are joined by a small amount of work dealing directly with Thérèse’s representation. Four articles, two by academic historians, one by a Carmelite father and one by an anthropologist and photographer, form the heart of the secondary literature here. Their engagement with the manipulation of Thérèse’s image by the Carmel and

⁹¹ See Alana Harris, ‘Transformations in English Catholic Spirituality and Popular Religion, 1945-1980’, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 2008 (to be published as *Faith in the Family: Transformations in English Catholic Spirituality and Popular Religion, 1945-82* (Manchester, 2012)). See also *Idem.*, ‘Bone Idol? British Catholics and Devotion to St. Thérèse of Lisieux’, in Nancy Christie, Michael Gauveau and Stephen Heathorn (eds), *The Sixties and Beyond: Dechristianization as History in North America and Western Europe, 1945-2000* (Toronto, 2011) (forthcoming). I am grateful to Dr Harris for allowing me to see a copy of this chapter in advance of its publication.

⁹² Tom Nevin, “Je veux lutter comme un guerrier vaillant”, Thérèse of Lisieux in the Trenches of the Great War’, in Françoise Le Jeune (ed.), *Paroles de Femmes dans la Guerre (1914-1918)* (Nantes, 2005), pp. 141-51. *Idem.*, *Thérèse of Lisieux*.

⁹³ Nevin, ‘Je veux lutter’, p. 144.

⁹⁴ Corrado Pope, ‘A Heroine without Heroics’. See also Laura J. May, ‘Gender, Sanctity and Sainthood: Official and Alternative Saints as Female Exemplars in Roman Catholicism, 1939-1978’, unpublished MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1992.

⁹⁵ ‘De Bayeux à Lisieux: Thérèse au tribunal 1910. Colloque d’Histoire pour le centenaire du procès de béatification de Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus’, 3-5 September 2010, Bayeux and Lisieux (organised by the Sanctuaire Sainte-Thérèse de Lisieux).

problematization of her representation, including their consideration of how concepts of authentic representation are at stake in the history of the visual depiction of the saint, make them important precursors to this thesis. They make the first moves towards a history of Thérèse's representation, but there are inevitably huge gaps in this tiny body of literature. Claude Langlois' 1998 article 'Photographier des Saintes: De Bernadette Soubirous à Thérèse de Lisieux' compares the photographs of the two saints, asking some pertinent questions about what makes an authentic image, and recognising the tension in the claim of photography to be the ultimate medium of accurate representation. He discusses the manipulation of both saints' representation, remarking briefly on Céline's artistic endeavours. Seven years later, Australian academic Thérèse Taylor undertook much the same project in an article published in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, apparently without knowledge of Langlois' earlier effort.⁹⁶ However, her comments on the early creation of a popular image for Thérèse here, as well as in her book-length study of Bernadette of Lourdes, are useful contributions.⁹⁷ In 1995 Marion Lavabre, a photographer and anthropologist, looked at the manipulation of Thérèse's image by her sisters, both in the figurative sense and in terms of the retouching, cropping and sanitising of photographs of her for dissemination. Her position on this, that it is the study of the sisters' representation of Thérèse, rather than the unearthing of any 'true' image, that is valuable – is an important step away from a dialogue of praise and blame that surrounds the sisters' work, even today, towards recognising the cultural historical interest of the story. An even earlier article, 'La rose effeuillée. Notes sur l'iconographie de Thérèse de Lisieux', supplements these three, discussing Céline's work, the controversy over the retouching of photographs and the Carmel's explanations of their activities, but also providing 106 representations of the saint in a range of media, from all over the world.⁹⁸ This gives some idea of the rich history that is still to be written about Theresian iconography after the period of the Carmel's control of it – almost forty years after this article was published, that work has only just begun to be done.⁹⁹ Written by a Carmelite father, this article is preoccupied with showing the

⁹⁶ Thérèse Taylor, 'Images of Sanctity: Photography of Saint Bernadette of Lourdes and Saint Thérèse of Lisieux', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 27, 3 (September, 2005), pp. 269-92.

⁹⁷ Taylor, *Bernadette of Lourdes*.

⁹⁸ Jean de la Croix OCD, 'La rose effeuillée. Notes sur l'iconographie de Thérèse de Lisieux', *Carmelus*, 20 (1973), pp. 212-45.

⁹⁹ Sophia Lucia Deboick, "My mission is about to begin": Myth, Image and the Posthumous Life of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux', unpublished MA thesis, Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2005 examined representations of Thérèse in a range of media in French and British popular culture. See also Mary Bryden, 'Saints and Stereotypes: The Case of Thérèse of Lisieux', *Literature and Theology*, 13, 1 (March, 1999), pp. 1-16, examining the way the Church has depicted Thérèse, her own self-presentation and the representations of her that have appeared in the dramatic arts.

relevance of roses and the Holy Face in Thérèse's own writings, but it did benefit from access to the relevant archival sources at the Carmel of Lisieux. In contrast, Langlois, Taylor and Lavabre's articles relied on secondary sources, principally François de Sainte-Marie's *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* (1961).

'Visage' and Descouvemont's Studies

Although *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* was the first time all the photographs of Thérèse had been made available, and thus could be expected to have been the start of research into Thérèse's representation and the sisters' work on it, François de Sainte-Marie's commentary in the first of the two volumes remains the best source on the early history of Thérèse's representation, not only cataloguing the original photographs of Thérèse, but discussing their retouching, the creation of Céline's portraits of her sister and the involvement of the men of the Church. This has been an essential reference work for this thesis, although all its archival references have been returned to. A handful of works by some of the leading Theresian writers also shed light on images of the saint. Pierre Descouvemont has written a painstakingly researched study of Père Marie-Bernard, the sculptor Céline collaborated with at the height of the cult and maintained a correspondence with for over forty years.¹⁰⁰ His book *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux. La vie en images* (1995) has also been invaluable here. Although essentially a coffee table book, this work evokes the visual milieu of Thérèse and her sisters, examining the way that a range of specific devotions were visually articulated in their lives. In the last section Céline's work and that of the artists she collaborated with is discussed, her retouching work is examined and the popular publications are mentioned. This is merely an indication of the potential of this material, however, and the commentary on the images reproduced here is very brief. This book complements Descouvemont's less-useful visual biography of Thérèse, *Thérèse et Lisieux* (1991), which nevertheless provides some insights into the devotional culture the sisters were exposed to. Descouvemont's *Le pèlerinage de Lisieux hier et aujourd'hui* (1989) also contains a good account of the rise of the cult as a supplement to the pilgrimage guide that makes up the rest of the book. This is a significant contribution to the study of the posthumous life of the saint, also containing a section entitled 'Why have we hidden Thérèse's face?' which briefly examines the concealment of the original photographs of the saint,

For a consideration of Thérèse's posthumous representation in media as diverse as film, stained glass and opera, see Nicholas Madden, 'Images in Art', *The Way Supplement*, 89: Contemporary Carmelite Women (1997), pp. 126-35.

¹⁰⁰ Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l'âme*.

although in an apologist tone.¹⁰¹ The fragmentary nature of the existing work on images of Thérèse can clearly be seen, and they are certainly yet to be placed in the context of modern French popular Catholicism. This study hopes to begin to remedy this.

The Church and Its Cults: Histories of Modern Catholicism

There has been more written about modern Catholicism in a French context than for any other country, its status as the *fille aînée de l'Église* ('eldest daughter of the Church') meaning that its modern history has been perhaps more significant to the world-wide Catholic Church than any other European country. In the fifties and sixties major conspectuses of French religious history appeared, which are still classics of the field and have not been superseded. Adrien Dansette's two volume *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine* (1948-1951) and Henri Daniel-Rops' three volume *L'Église des Révolutions* (1960-65) had strongly institutional emphases, concerned largely with the 'official' history of the French Catholic hierarchy.¹⁰² These have since been built upon by a new generation of historians of French religion who, influenced by the Annales School's study of *mentalités*, as well as the growing interest amongst Anglo-American historians in 'history from below' during the 1960s and 70s, have moved the focus to popular devotion. The influence of the 'new cultural history', with its turn away from seeing culture simply as an expression or result of social or economic structures, but as something that creates and gives meaning to them, has also seen a rehabilitation of religion, often seen as an instrument of oppression, as a potentially subversive force that is more multivalent and malleable than previously understood.¹⁰³ Gérard Cholvy and Yves-Marie Hilaire's three volume *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine* (1985-88) was a key work here. While arguing against any artificial separation of 'high' and 'low' religious culture, Cholvy and Hilaire have examined the tenacity of popular religion, challenging the 'secularisation thesis', uncovering the changing nature of popular piety and articulating a view of the 'feminisation' of nineteenth-century piety.¹⁰⁴ This study remains the benchmark of modern French religious history, with Cholvy and Hilaire's more recent studies making for a very complete survey of religion in France in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both

¹⁰¹ Pierre Descouvemont, *Le pèlerinage de Lisieux hier et aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1989), pp. 227-32.

¹⁰² Each made brief mention of Saint Thérèse: Dansette, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine*, 2, pp. 558-9; Henri Daniel-Rops, *L'Église des Révolutions*, 2: *Un combat pour Dieu* (Paris, 1963), pp. 867-77.

¹⁰³ On this see Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, 1989).

¹⁰⁴ They mention Thérèse here briefly: Cholvy, and Hilaire, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine*, 2, pp. 150-1.

chronologically and thematically,¹⁰⁵ which are well-supplemented by several notable general surveys in English.¹⁰⁶

Consolidating the Turn to Popular Religion

The appearance of Ralph Gibson's *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789-1914* (1989) confirmed the general turn away from the rarefied, institutional focus of the historiography on European religion towards the popular and the devotional, and signalled the important place of sociological approaches to the latter concerns. Indeed, up until the 1980s the study of popular religion had mainly been confined to medieval and early modern contexts and to Protestantism, and was principally carried out by those working in other fields, such as anthropology and religious studies.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, the usual assessment of religion in general histories of modern Europe was one of progressive dechristianisation (informed by Max Weber's view of a progressive 'disenchantment of the world')¹⁰⁸ and of religion as an obscurantist force, trying in vain to survive the onslaughts of modernity. More recently, such a view has been directly challenged by studies that have problematised the idea of a steady onward decline of religion by defining religious adherence and religious practice much more broadly and looking at unconventional forms of religiosity. Callum Brown's reassessment of secularisation in a British context, rejecting the idea of a steady decline from the Industrial Revolution onwards, instead identifying a sudden drop-off in the 1960s, has reframed the debate for the whole of Europe,¹⁰⁹ while Michael Saler and Jay Winter have identified resurgences in religious sentiment, both in terms of the persistence of 'enchantment' (a general anti-scientific interest in wonders, marvels and spirituality) and the

¹⁰⁵ Gérard Cholvy, *Christianisme et société en France au XIXe siècle, 1790-1914* (Paris, 2001); *Idem.*, *Etre chrétien en France au XIXe siècle, 1790-1914* (Paris, 1997); *Idem.*, *La religion en France de la fin du XVIIIe à nos jours* (Paris, 1991). *Idem.* and Yves-Marie Hilaire, *Le fait religieux aujourd'hui en France: les trente dernières années (1974-2004)* (Paris, 2004); *Idem.* (eds), *La France religieuse: 1945-1975. Reconstruction et crises* (Toulouse, 2002).

¹⁰⁶ See Atkin and Tallett, *Religion, Society and Politics*; *Idem.*, *Catholicism in Britain and France*; *Idem.*, *Priests, Prelates and People*. See p. 171, 183-4 of the latter volume for their brief assessment of Thérèse's success. See also Chadwick, *Catholicism, Politics and Society*; *Idem.*, 'Catholicism', in Christopher John Murray (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Modern French Thought* (New York, 2004), pp. 124-8; *Idem.*, and Paul Cooke (eds), *Religion in Modern and Contemporary France* (Portsmouth, 1998).

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, 1987); *Idem.*, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982); Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789-1970* (Oxford, 1981); Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture. Anthropological Perspectives* (Oxford, 1978).

¹⁰⁸ Max Weber, 'Science as a Vocation', in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York, 1946), p. 155.

¹⁰⁹ Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (London, 2001); *Idem.*, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Harlow, 2006).

emergence of new popular cults, such as spiritualism.¹¹⁰ Indeed, the turn towards study of popular religion has meant an undoing of the secularisation thesis, with the exposure of the vibrancy and popularity of diverse cults and devotions in several monographs revealing a more complex picture of modern religious practice, and giving the lie to the idea of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a secular age.

Pilgrimages, Cults and the Cultural History of Popular Catholicism

Popular cults and pilgrimage have proved the most fertile terrain for scholars of popular Catholicism in recent decades. Material on the Virgin Mary and associated pilgrimage and visionary phenomena is at the heart of this body of work, with the fact that the Virgin has been such a malleable and enduring figure, often reflecting the concerns of the societies that have venerated her, making her a particularly rich topic of study.¹¹¹ Marina Warner's seminal study of the Virgin was a very early foray into the study of popular cults, appearing in 1976, although her reading of the figure of the Virgin as an instrument of female oppression limited the study's ability to encompass the multivalent nature of Mary.¹¹² Offering a feminist analysis of the Virgin's changing representation, the ripeness of this figure for such an approach resulted in further early study of her cult, with Barbara Corrado Pope's 1987 article on Mariolatry in the nineteenth century still being relevant as a succinct summary of popular devotion in France in that century.¹¹³ Closely aligned with the study of Mary as a cultural personality is research on the pilgrimages she has spawned, and early studies of Catholic pilgrimages came from anthropological perspectives, Victor and Edith Turner's *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978) being seminal in this regard, while Philippe Boutry and Michel Cinquin's study of the pilgrimages to Ars and Paray-le-Monial was a significant early contribution in French.¹¹⁴ In the early 1980s Thomas Kselman built on such studies to produce a more sophisticated, historical analysis of such popular devotional

¹¹⁰ Michael Saler, "'Clap if you believe in Sherlock Holmes": Mass Culture and the Re-enchantment of Modernity, c. 1890-c. 1940', *The Historical Journal*, 46, 3 (2003), pp. 599-622; *Idem.*, 'Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review', *The American Historical Review*, 111, 3 (June, 2006), pp. 692-716; Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995). See also Eugen Weber, 'Religion and Superstition in Nineteenth-Century France', *The Historical Journal*, 31, 2 (June, 1988), pp. 399-423.

¹¹¹ See n. 2 for this literature.

¹¹² Here, Warner called the Thérèse of the pre-1959 cult 'sweet, indeed glutinous' with 'her naive and simple mixture of excessive egoism and emotional self-sacrifice.' Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, p. 312.

¹¹³ Barbara Corrado Pope, 'Immaculate and Powerful: The Marian Revival in the Nineteenth Century', in Clarissa W. Atkinson, Constance H. Buchanan and Margaret R. Miles (eds), *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality* (London, 1987), pp. 173-200.

¹¹⁴ Philippe Boutry and Michel Cinquin, *Deux Pèlerines au XIXe siècle: Ars et Paray-le-Monial* (Paris, 1980).

phenomena. His *Miracles and Prophecies in Nineteenth Century France* (1983) was ground breaking in its description of an osmotic relationship between the institutional Church and popular religion, rather than a strict division between the two. It also provided a rebuttal to the secularisation thesis by suggesting that attendance at Mass was not the true marker of religious adherence, and revealing such sobering facts as that during the first decade of the twentieth century, more people in France went on pilgrimage to Lourdes than participated in strike action. David Blackbourn's *Marpingen. Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (1993), pointed to the suite of issues that were at stake for historians of popular religion in modern Europe: pilgrimage; modernity; commercialised religion; conflicts between Church and state; urbanisation; miracles and medicine.

Recent Studies of Popular Catholicism

It is the above issues that still hold the attention of the leading historians of modern Catholicism today. Ruth Harris' *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (1999) has become the definitive study of the evolution of the Lourdes pilgrimage, paying particularly attention to its use of modern technologies, its implications for the history of medicine and of psychoanalysis, and the relationship the pilgrimage had with the ecclesiastical authorities, as well as the civil state. The political context of such popular devotions has been a preoccupation in Raymond Jonas' recent studies of popular cults. Both his *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (2000) and *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud and the Great War* (2005) provide accounts of the rise of new devotional cults in modern France, underscoring the role of the image in the dominant devotional culture, and the importance of the interactions between grass-roots constituencies and the Church hierarchy.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, Richard D. E. Burton has explored a less concrete devotion – the culture of suffering amongst modern French Catholic women, suggesting the opportunities for other studies of such devotional tropes rather than devotional cults.¹¹⁶ Similarly, Caroline Ford's book *Divided Houses: Religion and Gender in Modern France* (2005) examined women's religious practice in the round through the lens of a series of microhistories. Meanwhile, in other geographical settings, the implications of other sociological contexts for popular religion have come to the fore in the work of Robert Orsi, his examination of lived religion in Italian Harlem making immigrant communities the focus of attention, and his edited volume, *Gods of the City*,

¹¹⁵ In the latter work Jonas compares the passive Thérèse to the rather more vigorous Claire, suggesting that the latter was too difficult a figure to be officially recognised by the Church. Jonas, *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud*, pp. 155-6.

¹¹⁶ Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*.

focussing on popular piety in the urban environment.¹¹⁷ Orsi's studies are rare in their twentieth-century focus, and it should be noted that study of European Catholicism and popular devotion has remained largely confined to the nineteenth century. The present study brings the chronological focus forward to the early twentieth century, which is still something of a historiographical wilderness. After the period of greatest controversy in the relationship between Church and state in France, but before the great changes of Vatican II, it offers few obvious footholds to the historian.¹¹⁸ This thesis builds profitably on the existing body of work, with its nineteenth-century focus, to make inroads into this period of French religious history.

Saints, Stars and the Uses of Hagiography

The literature on sainthood as a specific aspect of the religious worlds of modern Europe is an important context for this thesis, which hopes to make a contribution to this body of work in elucidating some aspects of the cult of Saint Thérèse. The best work in this area has been done in ancient and medieval contexts, and sociological approaches have informed the seminal studies of sainthood in the last thirty years. As Nancy Caciola explains, 'This trend in scholarship imagines the saint as a hazy mirror of her surrounding society', the saint being invested with a range of social ideals by their devotees, and thus providing a reflection of the societies that venerate them.¹¹⁹ Peter Brown has shown how 'the supernatural becomes the depository of the objectified values of the group',¹²⁰ and his *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (1981) made a similar point to David Blackbourn's *Marpingen* in opposing a 'two-tier' model of religious scholarship, where popular and elite piety is seen to be in opposition – the saint can be a mirror that is reflective of all levels of society. André Vauchez's *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (1987) played a key role in shaping the scholarship that followed by using hagiographical works as sources for the social history of western Christianity.¹²¹ Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell had already

¹¹⁷ Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950* (New Haven, 2002); *Idem.*, *Gods of the City: Religion and the American Urban Landscape* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1999). See also *Idem.*, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, 2005). On Orsi's work, see Suzanne K. Kaufman, 'Navigating Place and Community in the History of Popular Religion', *Journal of Urban History*, 27, 2 (January, 2001), p. 226, 231-5.

¹¹⁸ The First World War has become one focus of interest in this period for religious historians, however. See, for example, Annette Becker, *La Guerre et la foi. De la mort à la mémoire (1914-1930)* (Paris, 1994).

¹¹⁹ Nancy Caciola, 'Through a Glass, Darkly: Recent Work on Sanctity and Society. A Review Article', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 38, 2 (April, 1996), p. 301.

¹²⁰ Peter Brown, 'Society and the Supernatural: A Medieval Change', *Daedalus*, 104, 2 (Spring, 1975), p. 140.

¹²¹ Originally published as André Vauchez, *La Sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Age d'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques* (Rome, 1981).

taken a sociological approach to saints in their *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christianity, 1000-1700* (1982) and Stephen Wilson's edited volume *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History* (1985) added to this literature further. In that volume, Pierre Delooz's 'Towards a sociological study of canonized sainthood in the Catholic Church' suggested the possibilities for understanding societies through the saints they recognise and the criteria for sainthood that they apply.¹²² Wilson's own essay in the volume, 'Cults of saints in the churches of central Paris' revealed the incredible prevalence of Saint Thérèse in this context in the late 1970s, but was frustratingly light on cultural analysis.¹²³ Meanwhile, Kenneth L. Woodward's *Making Saints. Inside the Vatican: Who Become Saints, Who Do Not, and Why* (1991) has set the benchmark for the study of sainthood in an institutional context.

The Cultural History of the Saint

The sociological approach of the above works is important to note, but it is not the approach taken by this study, which does not assess Saint Thérèse's wider socio-religious impact, but her cultural creation and operation. The best studies of the cultural resonance of the saint have mostly appeared in a medieval context. Indeed, work on sainthood in the middle ages is undoubtedly further advanced than in a modern context, but the attention paid to the evolution of the saint's Life and the production of their posthumous representations in the work of contemporary medievalists can serve as an important model for modernists. Such work often makes heavy use of visual sources, advancing an in-depth analysis of images and using theoretical approaches largely unfamiliar to modern history. Marina Warner's *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (1981)¹²⁴ is a significant work in this regard, examining both Joan's 'living' roles (Maid of France, Prophet, Heretic, Ideal Androgyne, Knight) and her posthumous guises (Amazon, Personification of Virtue, Child of Nature, Saint, Patriot). Exploring the cultural meaning of these guises for the societies that have venerated Joan, Warner points out that 'Joan of Arc was an individual in history and real time, but she is also the protagonist of a famous story in the timeless dimension of myth, and the way that story has come to be told tells yet another story, one about

¹²² Pierre Delooz, 'Towards a sociological study of canonized sainthood in the Catholic Church', in Stephen Wilson (ed.), *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 189-216.

¹²³ Stephen Wilson, 'Cults of saints in the churches of central Paris', in Wilson, *Saints and Their Cults*, pp. 233-60.

¹²⁴ Here, Warner mentions the representation of Thérèse as child-like and a model of simplicity. Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (London, 2000) [original publication 1981], pp. 266-7.

our concept of the heroic, the good and the pure.’¹²⁵ This framing of the mythical dimension of the saint, and interest in their symbolic function, has been instructive for this thesis. Pamela Sheingorn and Kathleen M. Ashley did something similar in their 1990 edited volume on Saint Anne’s place in medieval culture, highlighting the diversity of cultural roles the saint played simultaneously for different social groups.¹²⁶ These explorations of the cultural history of medieval sainthood have been more formative for this thesis than some of the recent studies of modern sainthood, which have often been characterised by a distinct eccentricity and narrow focus on psychological and medical tropes in hagiography. Rudolph Bell’s *Holy Anorexia* (1985), an ahistorical attempt to make links between modern medical views of eating disorders and the ascetic practices of medieval Italian holy women, is such a study. Cristina Mazzoni’s, *Saint Hysteria: Neurosis, Mysticism, and Gender in European Culture* (1996), examining the turn-of-the-century link between medical definitions of hysteria and mysticism, but referring to figures as chronologically diverse as Angela of Foligno and Simone Weil makes similar mistakes. The relevance of such studies to Thérèse is that she has often been viewed through such lenses in popular biography, with ideas of hysteria, sexual repression and mental health disorders never far away,¹²⁷ and indeed study of female saints in general has often been clouded by such preoccupations. Bell and Mazzoni’s volume on Italian mystic Gemma Galgani falls into this very trap where Thérèse is concerned, outlining the many superficial similarities between the two saints, but ignoring that the sober Carmelite of Normandy had very little in common with the visionary and stigmatic of Tuscany.¹²⁸

The Modern Saint

Studies of saints in a modern context are still less concerned with the significance of the saint as a cultural agent than as a historical personality. Thérèse Taylor’s *Bernadette of Lourdes: Her Life, Death and Visions* (2003), for example, is principally an insightful biography, and only briefly assesses her posthumous cult, discussing the 1953 Hollywood film *Song of Bernadette* and the saint’s representation in popular biography. One of the best recent studies of a saint’s cult, which is

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹²⁶ Pamela Sheingorn and Kathleen M Ashley (eds), *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society* (Athens, 1990).

¹²⁷ See for example, Harrison, *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*. Mazzoni’s more recent book examines the relationship of holy women with food, dedicating a chapter to Thérèse. See Cristina Mazzoni, *The Women in God’s Kitchen: Cooking, Eating, and Spiritual Writing* (New York, 2005), ch. 12.

¹²⁸ Rudolph M. Bell and Cristina Mazzoni, *The Voices of Gemma Galgani: The Life and Afterlife of a Modern Saint* (Chicago, 2003), pp. 220-1, 262. On Gemma’s lack of posthumous success in comparison with Thérèse, see p. xiii.

wholly focused on the posthumous life, is Robert A. Orsi's *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes* (1996). Looking at the renewal and dissemination of the cult of Saint Jude in twentieth-century America, Orsi explores issues that are central to this thesis – the creation of an iconography for the saint and the promotion of the cult using this iconography and a variety of commercial devotional ephemera. The book highlights the issues of image, material culture and consumerism in the cult of the modern saint, with careful attention paid to what Jude's image connoted, 'his eyes "loving and tender" and his hands "strong but gentle"'.¹²⁹ Here, the relationship between the image and the devotional products it appeared on is interrogated, with Orsi showing that 'The point of many of the practices associated with the material world of the devotion – the statues of various sizes sold by the Shrine, its holy cards, medals, stationery and greeting cards, dashboard medallions, and so on – [was] to focus Jude's caring and protective gaze'.¹³⁰ The carefully crafted nature of Saint Jude's representation and the harnessing of new technologies by the cult's promoters that Orsi describes has distinct parallels with Thérèse's case, and the centre of his interest is the cultural history of the cult and its life as the focus of grassroots religiosity. Orsi's study takes place in an American context and spans the changes of Vatican II, unlike the present study. It is also principally a study of reception amongst specific communities, with a large oral history element, but the complete focus on a cult and its genesis, away from any consideration of the saint as a historical entity, as well as the examination of the cult as part of an emerging consumer culture, has been formative for this thesis.

Secular Saints and Stars

Orsi has also made a connection that has been formative for this thesis, saying that 'The American Jude obviously resembled other Depression-era popular heroes, real and imaginary... Jude came suddenly on the scene... just when he was most needed – like... Superman [or] the Lone Ranger'.¹³¹ This issue of popular cultural peers and the secular saint is one that should be considered here. Approaches to such modern non-religious icons can be enlightening for the study of modern sainthood, where the literature is still limited, serving as a way of thinking about fame and the dissemination of 'cults' in the twentieth century, and shedding light on the re-use and re-

¹²⁹ Robert A. Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes* (New Haven, 1996), p. 7.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 97. For Orsi on religious iconography, see *Idem.*, 'The Many Names of the Mother of God', in Melissa R. Katz (ed.), *Divine Mirrors: The Virgin Mary in the Visual Arts* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 3-18.

¹³¹ Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude*, p. 101.

imagining of historical personalities as they become subject to the changing nature of the cultural worlds they belong to. Lucy Riall's study of the making of the cult of Garibaldi, a collaborative effort involving writers, artists, actors and publishers, has clear parallels for the history of the rise of the cult of Saint Thérèse.¹³² Richard Dyer's work on Hollywood stars provides some insights for understanding images of Thérèse and her public persona,¹³³ showing that 'Star images have histories, and histories that outlive the star's own lifetime'¹³⁴ – pointing to the existence of a public image that becomes malleable in popular culture, and is reshaped and owned by many different constituencies. With much in common with Roland Barthes' short essay 'Le visage de Garbo',¹³⁵ here we have a sophisticated reading of the making of the famous face and what it can connote when it takes on a cultural resonance that is created by its very familiarity and ubiquity. Greil Marcus' *Dead Elvis: A Chronicle of a Cultural Obsession* (1991) is similarly interested in the posthumous life of its subject, taking a collage approach, assembling and analysing diverse cultural references to Elvis Presley. The cult of Cassie Bernall, a victim of the Columbine shootings who allegedly refused to renounce her faith when confronted by her killers, is also relevant here, shedding light on popular understandings of the relationship between youth, femininity, conversion, religiosity and martyrdom.¹³⁶ Such a case provides a way of thinking about Thérèse by taking a step back from the Catholic context and looking at the wider cultural place of the tropes that feature in her story.¹³⁷ Thérèse has been likened to some of the great secular 'heroes' of modern times, and a number of book length comparative studies have appeared, devoted entirely to placing Thérèse alongside other legendary figures, both real and fictional, including Friedrich

¹³² Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven, 2007).

¹³³ Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London, 1979); *Idem.*, 'Entertainment and Utopia', in Bill Nichols, (ed.), *Movies and Methods: An Anthology* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 220-32; *Idem.*, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (Basingstoke, 1986); *Idem.*, *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representations* (London, 1993).

¹³⁴ Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies*, p. 3.

¹³⁵ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris, 1957), pp. 70-1.

¹³⁶ See: Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory. Early Christian Culture Making* (New York, 2004), ch. 6; Kristi L. Gerding, 'The conversion of Cassie Bernall: the power of narratives in transforming a school girl into a saint', unpublished MA thesis, Central Michigan University, 2001; Misty Bernall, *She Said Yes: The Unlikely Martyrdom of Cassie Bernall* (New York, 1999).

¹³⁷ See Richard North, 'Courage, martyrdom, sanctity, youth – and renunciation of a profligate past', *The Independent*, 18 October 1997 <<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/courage-martyrdom-sanctity-youth--and-renunciation-of-a-profligate-past-1236544.html>> [accessed 3 January 2011]. Here, North draws parallels between Thérèse, on the occasion of her being named a Doctor of the Church, and other 'stars', including James Dean, Jimi Hendrix, Princess Diana and Horatio Nelson, identifying the common characteristics shared by both Catholic and 'secular' saints.

Nietzsche, Edith Piaf, Blaise Pascal, Madame Bovary and Emmanuel Levinas.¹³⁸ The comparisons with Piaf and Nietzsche highlight that Thérèse is not unique in having had her legacy shaped by a sibling – Nietzsche’s sister, Elisabeth, took over the editing and publication of his works after his death, and Piaf’s half-sister Simone Berteaut published a biography of the singer six years after her death, which recast her character and rewrote her life story.¹³⁹ This varied body of literature can suggest the importance of Thérèse’s status as a general icon of the twentieth century, as well as a saint in the rigidly-defined sense. Indeed, the topic of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux deals in issues of historical memory, cultural identity, and ‘Frenchness’, her status as co-Patroness of France, alongside Joan of Arc, making her particularly culturally loaded, and classic studies of collective memory, French national memory, semiotics and cultural histories of France have also informed this thesis.¹⁴⁰ These provide important context for a cult that has had a crucial place in French visual culture and which was forged in the crucible of the formative events of modern French history.

Religion, Commerciality, Mass Culture and ‘Bad Taste’: New Approaches

A major preoccupation of current work on popular religion is the exploration of the intersection of the religious and the commercial, where images, material culture, mass production and ideas of ‘kitsch’ and bad taste are all at stake. Influenced by Émile Durkheim’s delineation of the sacred and profane as polar opposites in his work *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (1912), along with the negative views of mass culture espoused by Theodor Adorno and Max

¹³⁸ Noëlle Hausman, *Nietzsche, Thérèse de Lisieux, deux poétiques de la modernité* (Paris, 1984); Jacqueline Cartier and Hugues Vassal, *Edith et Thérèse: La sainte et la pécheresse* (Paris, 1999); Claude Tricot and Raymond Zambelli, *Pascal et Thérèse* (Paris, 1999); Micheline Hermine, *Destins de femmes, désir d’absolu. Essai sur Madame Bovary et Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1997); Ann W. Astell, ‘Facing Each Other: Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and Emmanuel Levinas’, *Spiritus* 4 (2004), pp. 24-43.

¹³⁹ See Carol Diethel, *Nietzsche’s Sister and the Will to Power: A Biography of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche* (Urbana, 2003), and Simone Berteaut, *Piaf* (Paris, 1969).

¹⁴⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago, 1992), trans. Lewis A. Coser; Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 3 vols (New York, 1996-98), trans. Arthur Goldhammer, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman; Barthes, *Mythologies*; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, 1984), trans. Richard Nice; Theodore Zeldin, *France, 1848-1945*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1973-77); Eugen Weber, *Peasants Into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1880-1914* (London, 1977); Graham Robb, *The Discovery of France* (London, 2007); Alain Corbin, *Le miasme et la jonquille: l’odorat et l’imaginaire social, 18e-19e siècles* (Paris, 1982); *Idem.*, *Les cloches de la terre: paysage sonore et culture sensible dans les campagnes au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1994). See also Hue-Tam Ho Tai, ‘Remembered Realms: Pierre Nora and French National Memory’, *The American Historical Review*, 106, 3 (June, 2001), pp. 906-22, and Alon Confino, ‘Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method’, *The American Historical Review*, 102, 5 (December, 1997), pp. 1386-403.

Horkheimer in the 1940s,¹⁴¹ scholars doing otherwise innovative work on popular religion have often not been fully alive to the significance of the commercial, seeing it as superficial or inauthentic, particularly where matters of aesthetic taste have been involved. For example, the otherwise pioneering Ralph Gibson dismissed the inherently commercial genre of Saint-Sulpician art as characterised by ‘statues, often painted in crude colours, with saccharine and mindless expressions’.¹⁴² The influence of Walter Benjamin and his seminal essay on the copy, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, with its famous assertion that ‘that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art’¹⁴³ can also be detected in such cynical assessments of commercial religion. Clement Greenberg’s famous reading of kitsch – commercial art with a strong association with popular religious culture in a modern French Catholic context – as ‘vicarious experience and faked sensations’, is also important here.¹⁴⁴ For Greenberg, kitsch is fundamentally inauthentic and derivative, the polar opposite of ‘true culture’, represented for him by avant-garde art, and, as in Adorno’s assessment, kitsch is a form of mass culture that is ultimately oppressive, undermining and homogenising. Indeed, Robert C. Solomon has suggested that for many commentators ‘kitsch is *dangerous*’.¹⁴⁵ But commercial religion is now being rehabilitated as a subject worthy of study. Colleen McDannell’s *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (1995) is a landmark study for research on commercial religion and religious material culture. Here she argues that ‘If we immediately assume that whenever money is exchanged religion is debased, then we will miss the subtle ways that people create and maintain spiritual ideals *through* the exchange of goods and the construction of spaces’, stating that material religious practices ‘have been ignored because scholars deem these practices less spiritual or authentic.’¹⁴⁶ McDannell’s exploration of religious art and devotional ephemera remains the best

¹⁴¹ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, ‘The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception’, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London, 1997), pp. 120-67, trans. John Cumming. See also Theodor W. Adorno, and J. M. Bernstein (ed.), *The Culture Industry: Selected essays on mass culture* (London, 1991); Theodor W. Adorno and Stephen Crook (ed.), *The Stars Down to Earth and other essays on the irrational in culture* (London, 1994).

¹⁴² Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism*, p. 154.

¹⁴³ Walter Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, in Hannah Arendt (ed.) *Illuminations* (London, 1999), trans. Harry Zorn, p. 215.

¹⁴⁴ Clement Greenberg, ‘Avant-Garde and Kitsch’, in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (eds), *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford, 1992), p. 534.

¹⁴⁵ See Robert C. Solomon, ‘On Kitsch and Sentimentality’, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 49, 1 (Winter, 1991), p. 3. See also J. M. Cameron, ‘Christian Kitsch’, *New York Review of Books*, 29 May 1986, p. 56.

¹⁴⁶ Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven, 1995), p. 6, 8. In an American context, two works appeared before McDannell’s which took such a view (although the latter more than the former): Malise Ruthven, *The Divine Supermarket: Travels in Search of the Soul of America* (London, 1989); R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (Oxford, 1994). For a more recent, cynical

extant examination of commerciality and material religion. Here the role of the visual elements of religion, from church interiors to holy cards and cheap prints, is elucidated and McDannell confronts the issue of kitsch head-on, rejecting Greenberg's assessment of it wholly. Frequently seen as associated with low brow, feminine culture, McDannell's confrontation of these attitudes in regard to commercial religion was an important turning point for the literature on the art and material culture of popular religion, and she provides important insights into the nature and uses of religious ephemera and images.

The Devotional Market

The most recent reassessment of commercial religion, heavily influenced by McDannell's work, is Suzanne Kaufman's 2005 work *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine*.¹⁴⁷ Picking up on Ruth Harris' incomplete assessment of the commercialisation of the Lourdes shrine, this study of the intersection of commercialism and pilgrimage explores the manifestation of concerns about the proper relationship between religion and commercial enterprise at the shrine, and argues that the meeting of traditional pilgrimage practices and new forms of mass culture there saw the birth of 'distinctly modern forms of popular religiosity' and 'fresh expressions of popular faith'.¹⁴⁸ Kaufman asserts that popular religious devotions were enriched by their contact with the commercial and should be recognised as valid cultural forms, which were used, and may be read, in many different ways. Kaufman argues here that commercialised religion has been a fundamental feature of modernity itself, outlining a 'discourse of religious debasement', where 'Catholic critics condemned the shrine's commercialism for debasing religious worship, while anticlerical republicans attacked the marketing of the pilgrimage for corrupting the health of the secular republic.'¹⁴⁹ Her work takes an important step forward in seeing commercial religion as positively productive and siting the commercial at the heart of modern spiritual practices. This thesis builds on Kaufman's work, not only by addressing the 'discourse of religious debasement' around a popular Catholic cult in chapter 4 in a twentieth-century, rather than a nineteenth-century context, but also by focussing explicitly on the role of the image in a fully commercialised

assessment of religion and commerciality, see Jeremy Carrette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (London, 2005).

¹⁴⁷ See also Suzanne K. Kaufman, 'Selling Lourdes: Pilgrimage, Tourism, and the Mass-Marketing of the Sacred in Nineteenth-Century France', in Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough (eds), *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe and North America* (Ann Arbor, 2001), pp. 63-88.

¹⁴⁸ Kaufman, *Consuming Visions*, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

cult. While Kaufmann was concerned with the pilgrimage as experience, and only the supplementary role of its commercial accoutrements, this thesis focuses on the quickly communicated, mass produced image as the lifeblood of the twentieth-century cult of Saint Thérèse. Kaufman's theorisation of ideas of authentic religious practice have been formative for this thesis and it owes much to her innovative research. Kaufman's work is well-complemented by Lisa Tiersten's examination of taste, consumerism, and the French bourgeoisie up to 1914 in her *Marianne in the Market: Envisioning Consumer Society in Fin-de-Siècle France* (2001). Examining many concerns that run in parallel to those of Kaufman, but in a secular context, it has provided a wider context for the commercial activities of the Carmel of Lisieux. In placing the cult of Saint Thérèse in the framework of this body of literature on commercial religion, we may begin to see its relevance as an industry, shaped by the market as much as by devotional impulses. In examining the Theresian industry, we uncover a history that goes far beyond the potentially narrow limits of the rise of a cult within the Church, opening the field of vision out to encompass mass consumerism, popular visual culture and, ultimately, collective identity.

Picturing the Holy: Studies of Religious Images

The negative connotations of kitsch, particularly in a religious context, remain and this may be partly responsible for the fact that devotional art deemed to be 'kitsch' has been largely ignored by academics since the publication of McDannell's book, which indicated so many possibilities for further study. Saint-Sulpician art is of course the major concern when we consider religious culture and kitsch in a modern European context (McDannell in fact offers a useful, if brief assessment of this),¹⁵⁰ but this area remains severely understudied. Religious historian Claude Savart's article 'A la recherche de l'"art" dit de Saint-Sulpice', dating from 1976, remains the only concentrated study of this phenomenon in popular religious culture. This was in any case limited, since Savart focussed on church art, surveying the statues present in twenty churches of the Haute-Marne between 1860 and 1930. Saint-Sulpician statuary has received some limited attention from other scholars,¹⁵¹ and elsewhere a handful of studies of the images used on religious ephemera, specifically holy cards, has appeared. Catherine Rosenbaum-Dondaine's *L'Image de Piété en France, 1814-1914* (1984), a catalogue for a Paris exhibition, and Alain Vircondelet's, *Le Monde Merveilleux de Images Pieuses* (1988), a popular picture book, both indicate that the study of such devotional

¹⁵⁰ McDannell, *Material Christianity*, ch. 6.

¹⁵¹ See Wilson, 'Cults of saints in the churches of central Paris'.

ephemera is still not wholly incorporated into the academic landscape. The incredible collection of devotional items from nineteenth- and twentieth-century convents at Dijon's Musée d'Art Sacré also gives a privileged insight into the visual devotional culture of French religious in this period.¹⁵² Despite the lack of a monograph on Saint-Sulpician art, historians such as Robert Orsi and Raymond Jonas have begun to incorporate serious study of Saint-Sulpician devotional art into their work, and it also seems to be the case that as the kitsch value of this style becomes fashionable in certain areas of contemporary popular culture, it is becoming a more popular topic of study.

Art History and Sacred Images

This thesis draws on a range of art historical perspectives to elucidate the history of the Celinian image, with a particular focus on concepts of the 'authentic' image, portraiture and methodologies of 'reading' images. David Morgan's work is of particular note here, and he has explored the role of religious images in identity making and 'the visual formation and practice of religious belief.'¹⁵³ Much like Suzanne Kaufman on commercial religion, Morgan made a plea in his 1998 book, *Visual Piety*, for more attention to be paid to religious images, a topic that has not received sufficient attention because 'the images simply have not been thought worthy of serious consideration', with 'taste exert[ing] a very restricting force on what many historians of art have considered worthy of attention.'¹⁵⁴ Although principally interested in studying the reception of images, and in examining them in an American Protestant context, Morgan attempts to offer a general theory of religious visual culture here. In his book *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (2005), Morgan is in particular seeking a theory of perception, the sacred gaze being 'a term that designates the particular configuration of ideas, attitudes, and customs that informs a religious act of seeing as it occurs within a given cultural and historical setting.'¹⁵⁵ Here Morgan was building on a growing interest in response amongst art historians, with David Freedberg's, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (1989) having asserted that images do not just have a 'magical' power in 'primitive' cultures, but that images in the history of western art also have a power derived from the idea that the image is, in some way, the very subject it depicts. The problem of the copy and the rigours of authentic representation are at

¹⁵² See Jean Marilier, *Dijon: Musée d'Art Sacré* (Dijon, 1987).

¹⁵³ David Morgan, *Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Popular Religious Images* (Berkeley, 1998), p. 1. See also *Idem.*, *Protestants and Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production* (New York, 1999).

¹⁵⁴ Morgan, *Visual Piety*, p. xii, xv.

¹⁵⁵ David Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley, 2005), p. 3.

issue here, as is the idea of the religious icon – at one with its prototype and in possession of the prototype’s power. This was an issue picked up by Hans Belting in his *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art* (1994), perhaps the definitive study of early Christian icons. Gilbert Dagron has also provided important art historical perspectives on the artist in the Christian tradition and the relationship between prototype and representation, which have informed chapter 2 of this thesis.¹⁵⁶ But Céline was also influenced by more recent ideas of the role of the artist and the production of the authentic portrait, and here the volume of essays edited by Joanna Woodall, *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* (1997), has provided many useful perspectives, also utilised in chapter 2.

From the Medieval Image to Photography

As in the case of the published work on saints, the best material on religious images remains that in a medieval context. The examination of the function of images and careful attention paid to medium and varieties of interaction with the image in studies such as Richard Marks’ *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (2004) provides a useful framework for thinking about the relationship that images of Thérèse had to the wider world of religious devotion.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, studies of other genres of religious art in other periods, such as the catalogue accompanying a recent National Gallery exhibition of Spanish seventeenth-century life-size religious effigies, raises questions about realism, the icon and the representation of the sacred person, as well as medium, the relationship between form and function, artistic expression, devotional uses and religious symbolism.¹⁵⁸ Investigations of the representation of other religious figures and female icons have also been informative, showing the degree to which Thérèse has been reshaped to incorporate modes of representation and visual signifiers with a long tradition.¹⁵⁹ Since this thesis encompasses photography as well as painting, drawing and sculpture, conceptualisations of photographic representation have also been examined. Barthes’ *La chambre claire* (1980) offers a framework for ‘reading’ photographs, as well as reflecting on the tensions

¹⁵⁶ Gilbert Dagron *Décrire et peindre: Essai sur le portrait iconique* (Paris, 2007). *Idem.*, ‘Holy Images and Likeness’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 45 (1991), pp. 23-33.

¹⁵⁷ See also Richard Deacon and Phillip Lindley, *Image and Idol: Medieval Sculpture* (London, 2001).

¹⁵⁸ Xavier Bray, Alfonso Rodríguez G. de Ceballos, Daphne Barbour and Judy Ozone, *The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture 1600-1700* (London, 2009).

¹⁵⁹ See, for example, Margaretta Salinger, ‘Representations of Saint Teresa’, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New Series, 8, 3 (November, 1949), pp. 97-108; Martin Warner, ‘The Image of Mary’, *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 4, 3 (October, 2004), pp. 207-19; Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (London, 1985).

surrounding the authenticity of the photograph. Writing in the late seventies, Susan Sontag argued that the photograph had become so culturally ubiquitous that it has lost its claim to be fully representative of the truth and ‘photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are’, also being ‘reduced, blown up, cropped, retouched, doctored, tricked out.’¹⁶⁰ Sontag provides a theorisation of the authenticity of photography which is usefully applied to Céline’s case, stating that ‘photographs make a claim to be true that paintings can never make. A fake painting (one whose attribution is false) falsifies the history of art. A fake photograph (one which has been retouched or tampered with, or whose caption is false) falsifies reality.’¹⁶¹ Since Sontag was writing, several studies have appeared which interrogate the claimed documentary value of the photograph or which give accounts of the changing cultural conception of photography.¹⁶² These provide a historical context to Céline’s work on her photographs, as well as to the reactions of outside constituencies.

The Concept of the Authentic

Ideas of authenticity surface frequently in this thesis. Informing the approach to the authentic here is a few specific approaches taken by scholars who have contributed to the sparsely-populated field of the study of the cultural conception of the authentic. Miles Orvell’s work *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940* (1989) has provided a historical framework for the changing workings of the authentic in the period this thesis covers. Although its focus is American, Orvell suggests that the changes he sketches out could equally apply to Europe too.¹⁶³ Here Orvell shows ‘that a major shift occurred within the arts and material culture from the late nineteenth century to the twentieth century, a shift from a culture in which the arts of imitation and illusion were valorized to a culture in which the notion of authenticity became of primary value.’¹⁶⁴ The understanding of the real in late nineteenth-century bourgeois culture, where the reproduction and the copy were unselfconsciously prized, was later attacked by

¹⁶⁰ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (Harmondsworth, 1979), pp. 6-7, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹⁶² See John Falconer and Louise Hide, *Points of View: Capturing the 19th Century in Photographs* (London, 2009); John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Basingstoke, 1988); Peter Hamilton and Roger Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned: The Creation of Identity in Nineteenth Century Photography* (Aldershot, 2001); Ann Thomas (ed.), *Beauty of Another Order: Photography in Science* (New Haven, 1997).

¹⁶³ Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill, 1989), pp. xxv-xxvi. For an examination of the operation of authenticity in a variety of geographical contexts, see Rune Graulund (ed.), *Desperately Seeking Authenticity: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (Copenhagen, 2010).

¹⁶⁴ Orvell, *The Real Thing*, p. xv. See also Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (Harmondsworth, 1971).

modernists. However, Orvell shows that modernist architects, designers, photographers, and writers no less hankered after ‘the real thing’ than their Victorian forebears, but substituted a culture of imitation for one of ‘authenticity’ – a search not for realism, but for reality itself. Umberto Eco’s essay ‘Travels in Hyperreality’, an examination of re-creations of the real in contemporary commercial culture has clearly been influential here.¹⁶⁵ Orvell stresses that ‘nothing so neat took place’ as the entire replacement of one culture for another, and in fact asserts that American mass culture remained interested in the illusory and the reproduced across the twentieth century. Even with the emergence of postmodernism, which went ‘beyond *worrying* about imitation and authenticity’,¹⁶⁶ Orvell asserts that ‘the pursuit of authenticity... would in other ways become democratized in the counterculture strain of popular culture that begins in the 1960s – in a taste for crafts, house plants, natural foods... and the other means whereby the factitiousness of the industrial world is at least partially mitigated.’¹⁶⁷ In showing how ‘so much of our aesthetic and material culture has been conditioned by the tension between imitation and authenticity’¹⁶⁸ Orvell provides a sense of the wider context in which the Carmel’s struggles with the authentic occurred.

The ‘Real’ in Modern France

Moving away from Orvell’s general assessment of the authentic, this thesis has turned to a small body of work on the notion of the real in nineteenth- and twentieth-century France. In her study of mass culture in *fin de siècle* Paris, Vanessa Schwartz has shown how a great cultural weight became attached to the presentation of the ‘real thing’, showing how panoramas, early cinema, and even the Paris morgues framed themselves as loci for genuine experiences and authentic representations.¹⁶⁹ This ‘study of the visuality of urban culture in late nineteenth-century Paris’¹⁷⁰ has shown how, in urban centres at least, the search for the real was a formative cultural impulse in France as the twentieth century approached. Schwartz also underscores the role of the print media in making the visual a key cultural mode of communication, and shows that ‘a culture that

¹⁶⁵ Umberto Eco, ‘Travels in Hyperreality’, in *Travels in Hyperreality. Essays* (San Diego, 1986), pp. 3-58, trans. William Weaver.

¹⁶⁶ Orvell, *The Real Thing*, p. xxiv.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

¹⁶⁹ Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley, 1998). See also *Idem.*, ‘Museums and Mass Spectacle: The Musée Grévin as a Monument to Modern Life’, *French Historical Studies*, 19, 1 (Spring, 1995), pp. 7-26.

¹⁷⁰ Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities*, p. 3.

became “more literate” also became more visual as word and image generated the spectacular realities described here’,¹⁷¹ underscoring the importance of intertextuality, from word, to image, to space, to three-dimensional representation – a significant relationship in the case of the cult of Saint Thérèse. Schwartz is also interested in ‘reconfigurations of public space and... the new publics that appeared freely to inhabit the glitzy, sparkling and seductive spaces of consumption.’¹⁷² Suzanne Kaufman has begun to show the relevance of public space in the context of pilgrimage and popular religious practices in late nineteenth-century France, and to show that this search for the real through the ‘spaces of consumption’ was not just a secular impulse. The commercially-run dioramas and panoramas of Lourdes ‘By claiming that visitors could “authentically” experience re-created moments from the Lourdes sacred past’, show that in religious contexts as well as secular ones ‘extraordinary value [was put] on viewing spectacles that recreated reality’ in France in this period.¹⁷³

The Copy and Copyright

The impact of the copy on authenticity is also at stake in this thesis, and it looks to a body of literature on copying and repetition, covering forms of visual culture from photographs to waxworks, and which is particularly important to the exploration of copyright infringement of artistic works in chapter 5. The tensions in the relationship between the original and the copy are well-explored in the edited volume *Retaining the Original: Multiple Originals, Copies, and Reproductions* (1989), looking at the issues of the pirated image, the copy, mirroring and repetition and the post-modernist interest in appropriation and ‘quotation’ of the established culture. Meanwhile, Hillel Schwartz has provided thought-provoking, although unfocussed, analysis of ‘how it has come to be that the most perplexing moral dilemmas of this era are dilemmas posed by our skill at the creation of likenesses of ourselves, our world, our times.’¹⁷⁴ Many of his examples, like ‘the executors of the Warhol estate announcing in 1988 that they will prosecute anyone stealing Andy’s images, when it was Andy who pioneered the transfer of others’ photographs to his silkscreen canvasses, Andy who “infringed the copyrights of everything and everybody”’,¹⁷⁵ highlight the changing nature of the perceived impact of the copy on authenticity and how

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁷³ Kaufman, ‘Selling Lourdes’, pp. 69-70, and *Consuming Visions*, p. 215, n. 57.

¹⁷⁴ Hillel Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles* (New York, 1996), p. 11.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 246. See also Chris Rodley (dir.), *Warhol: Denied* (BBC 1, UK, 24 January 2006).

different perceptions of this can exist simultaneously. Meanwhile, some examinations of specific ‘copies’, like Brigitte and Gilles Delluc’s study of Lascaux II, an exact copy of the caves containing the famous Paleolithic paintings, provides further perspectives on the cultural weight of the copy.¹⁷⁶ This thesis also makes a contribution to the emerging field of copyright history ‘the history of legal, particularly proprietary, mechanisms for the regulation of the reproduction and distribution of cultural products’,¹⁷⁷ chapter 5 being a case study of the operation of European copyright law in the early twentieth century.¹⁷⁸

Conclusion: Towards a History of the Theresian Iconography

Although writing as a Catholic in Protestant England in an age of continued anti-Catholic prejudice, Cardinal Newman’s statement that ‘were the Catholic Church on the moon, England would gaze on her with more patience, and delineate her with more accuracy, than England does now’¹⁷⁹ could well be applied to the hidden history of popular Catholicism in the last century, and particularly commercial religion and the iconography of cults, substituting ‘the historian’ for ‘England’. It certainly applies to the cult of Saint Thérèse, which, as we have seen remains very little-researched. In 1973, Jean-François Six asserted that ‘A history of the life of Thérèse from her death to that of her last sister must be written.’¹⁸⁰ Although this thesis takes that period (the era of the Carmel’s control over Thérèse’s representation, before its democratisation after Céline’s death) as its focus, it does not pretend to be the study Six envisaged. Indeed, in the absence of a monograph on the cult, and with abundant material for such a study still waiting to be explored at the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux, the scholar is spoilt for choice as to which aspects of the cult to research. This thesis examines a small, but significant part of the posthumous life Six wished to write about, beginning to write the history of the iconography of Saint Thérèse – the most immediate aspect of the cult for the popular religious landscape of twentieth-century France,

¹⁷⁶ Brigitte and Gilles Delluc, ‘Lascaux II: a faithful copy’, *Antiquity*, 58 (November, 1984), pp. 194-6.

¹⁷⁷ Martin Kretschmer, ‘Introduction. The History of Copyright History: Notes from an Emerging Discipline’, in Ronan Deazley, Martin Kretschmer and Lionel Bentley (eds), *Privilege and Property. Essays on the History of Copyright* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 1.

¹⁷⁸ See Laurent Pfister, ‘L’auteur, propriétaire de son œuvre? La formation du droit d’auteur du XVI^e siècle à la loi de 1957’, unpublished PhD thesis, Université Robert Schuman, Strasbourg, 1999; Deazley et al., *Privilege and Property; Primary Sources on Copyright (1450-1900)* <<http://www.copyrighthistory.org>>; Sam Ricketson and Jane C. Ginsburg, *International Copyright and Neighbouring Rights: The Berne Convention and Beyond* (Oxford, 2006), 2nd edition; Paul Goldstein, *Copyright’s Highway: From Gutenberg to the Celestial Jukebox* (New York, 1994).

¹⁷⁹ John Henry Newman, *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England Addressed to the Brothers of the Oratory in the Summer of 1851* (London, 1908), p. 44.

¹⁸⁰ Laurentin and Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, pp. 145-6.

which can begin to reveal something about the wider relevance of Saint Thérèse for devotional culture in that time and place.

As a whole, this thesis examines the making of the prototype images of Saint Thérèse, their dissemination, the reaction to them and the counter-reaction, exploring how the Carmel undertook a process of cultural legitimation in each context. Chapter 2 examines Céline Martin's artworks and their production, situating the images in the wider histories of Christian iconography and popular devotional art discussed above. Chapter 3 looks at the promotion of this iconography in the Catholic world through a large commercial enterprise, examining the material culture of the cult and taking this commercial activity seriously, an approach inspired by the work of both Kaufman and McDannell. Chapter 4 examines the succession of biographies of Thérèse which commented on her popular image and the sisters' part in shaping it, exploring the cultural concepts of the authentic that arose and making a contribution to the small body of literature on the authentic examined above. Chapter 5 looks at the Carmel's attempts to control the image of Thérèse beyond the walls of the convent by launching a series of legal cases against makers of rival representations of the saint, exploring the cultural meaning of the copy and both legal and religious concepts of the authentic image. What emerges is the history of the legitimation of the visual representation of a new saint, and the building of a new cult through its images, situating this cult in the history of modern French Catholic culture. In examining the image, its commercial circulation and the range of responses and reactions to it, this thesis hopes to elucidate the most neglected aspects of the already much-neglected cult of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux.

Chapter 2

‘You are the reality while I am only your shadow’: Céline Martin’s Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image

The thing itself has been essentially objectified and made viable before the established authorities began to argue about it. Even before Zanuck acquired her, Saint Bernadette was regarded by her latter-day hagiographer as brilliant propaganda for all interested parties. That is what became of the emotions of the character.

Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception* (1947).

The history of Theresian iconography begins at the Carmel of Lisieux in early 1899. Thérèse had been dead for over eighteen months and the first edition of *Histoire d'une âme* had just gone out of print. While the initial run of two thousand copies had sold much faster than anyone expected, the presentation of the book had not been very successful. The frontispiece had been hastily arranged, with the photograph known as ‘Thérèse *au chapelet*’¹ being used and mistakenly printed back to front (see figure 3.9).² Something more polished was required for the planned second edition, and shortly after Easter 1899 Céline began work on a portrait of her sister. This was the beginning of sixty years of work on Thérèse’s image, and her portraits of the saint were to become the principal commodity of a cult without modern precedent. Making heavy use of the archival sources held at the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux, this chapter is divided into three parts, examining: the creation of Céline’s images; her attempted legitimation of them by inserting them into the wider context of religious art in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France; and the challenges to the perceived authenticity of her images. First the chapter outlines the history of the production of the images of Thérèse – those that would dominate the cult for over half a century – examining a cast of collaborators who, until now, have been hidden figures in the history of the cult. Céline’s understanding of artistic and spiritual authenticity as instruments of cultural authority is then explored, and it is demonstrated that she appealed both to contemporary ideas of artistic genius, as well as traditional Christian concepts of the authentic religious image, to present her work as ‘genuine’. It is argued here that Céline’s images enacted the reshaping of her sister as an archetype, closely modelling her representations of Thérèse on the

¹ Photograph 37, Appendix 2.

² See the frontispiece, Carmel of Lisieux, *Sœur Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face, religieuse carmélite, morte en odeur de sainteté au carmel de Lisieux à l’âge de 24 ans le 30 septembre 1897, Histoire d’une âme écrite par elle-même* (Bar-le-Duc, 1898).

Saint-Sulpician images of her milieu, and inserting her cult into dominant devotional fashions. The chapter then goes on to examine the challenges to the authenticity of Céline's images, arguing that the retouching and 'faking' of photographs and use of outside collaborators, along with the censure of some of her images by certain clerics, intensified the need to legitimate her work. Here, the images of Saint Thérèse are historicised, placed within a larger history of popular religious culture in the first half of the twentieth century, and origins of the iconography of Saint Thérèse are revealed.

Céline Martin/ Madame X/ Sœur Geneviève: Céline's Choice of Her Life's Path

As director of the iconographical project, and the architect of the visual elements of the cult, Céline's personality was formative on the essential character of her images of Thérèse, and it is appropriate to give a brief account of her life before her entry into the Carmel before proceeding. Céline (see figure 2.1) had witnessed the entry of two of her sisters to the Carmel of Lisieux and one to the Poor Clares by the time she was seventeen. When Thérèse also entered the Carmel in April 1888, Céline was left bereft without the sibling to whom she was closest, in age, temperament and emotional bond.³ Left with the emotionally troubled Léonie (who had failed at the religious life twice by this point) and an ailing father (Louis Martin had suffered a mild stroke the previous year and, at sixty-four, was showing alarming signs of declining mental alertness), to follow her sisters into the cloister after her father's clearly imminent death would have seemed the obvious path for Céline. However, she had real alternatives to the Carmel made available to her, and over just a few weeks in the spring of 1888 she faced a number of decisions about her life's path. First, she received a marriage proposal. She later wrote 'just in case, I responded that I was not willing, that I wanted to be left in peace for the time being, and that no one should wait for me.'⁴ Her cautious rejection was perhaps borne of the fact that until the age of twenty she was 'perfectly ignorant of the things of nature. The Lord had thrown a veil over them that I did not seek to pull aside.'⁵ Indeed, her attitude towards sex seems to have shaped her reaction when, in June 1888 Louis offered his daughter, seen as the artist of the family (see figure 2.2), the opportunity to go to Paris to pursue an artistic career. Céline later wrote that:

³ For their closeness see HA, Ms. A, 9r^o-9v^o, pp. 25-6.

⁴ CAC, p. 68.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 89.

2. Céline Martin's Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image

Without taking time to think about it... I confided to him that I wanted to be a nun, I did not seek the glory of the world, and that if God needed my works later on, he could very well make up for my ignorance. I added that I preferred my innocence to all other advantages and that I did not want to risk it in artists' studios.⁶

With Céline not willing to 'risk' her chastity in what she saw as the bohemian and godless haunts of the Parisian art world, the Carmel was beckoning. However, she was not to enter for a further six years, as events overtook her again.



Figure 2.1. Céline Martin as a young woman, late 1880s. Source: Album famille Martin, ACL.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 71.



Figure 2.2. Céline painting a portrait of her sister Léonie, accompanied by her cousin Marie Guérin, c. 1890. Source: Album famille Martin, ACL.

In early 1889, Louis Martin became a serious cause for concern. In a distressed and paranoid state, he brandished a revolver in front of his two daughters and had to be disarmed by his brother-in-law, Isidore Guérin, who made immediate arrangements for him to be placed in an asylum in Caen. Céline and Léonie moved in with their uncle, aunt (after whom Céline was named) and two cousins, Jeanne and Marie, in June 1889 and this period saw Céline forced to participate in the active social life of her wealthy relatives, becoming the focus of the unwelcome attentions of various admirers. She took private vow of chastity in December 1889, and this was an attitude well-supported by Thérèse who, on hearing that Céline was attending a wedding ball, tearfully entreated her not to ‘imitate the folly of the times and worship the idol by giving yourself over to dangerous pleasures’.⁷ When Céline was swept onto the dance floor by a young man, both found themselves completely unable to dance, and Thérèse saw this as a result of her fervent prayers to that effect.⁸ For nearly three years Céline filled her time with painting, reading, letter writing and enforced socialising. However, this was punctuated by the appearance of one final alternative route in her life’s path. Père Pichon, a Norman Jesuit who had acted as Céline’s spiritual advisor since late 1887, wrote to her in June 1891 from his missionary post in Canada, making the suggestion that she come and join him working in a new foundation to prepare

⁷ Sœur Geneviève, *Conseils et Souvenirs*, pp. 136-7.

⁸ HA, Ms. A, 82r°, p. 176.

'morally neglected' children for their first communion.⁹ A new option, a life as a missionary, was added to that of nun and was considered right up until her final decision to enter Carmel was made. The return of Louis Martin from the Bon Sauveur asylum in May 1892 saw the beginning of a new period in Céline's life. With the help of her uncle, she re-established the Martin household in a house backing on to the Guérin's property (see figure 2.3). In June 1893, Léonie left for another try at the religious life, leaving Céline alone. After a further year as the head of her own household, Louis died, with Céline at his side. The ordeal of her father's illness had been traumatic for Céline, and she devoted pages and pages to its twists and turns when she wrote her memoirs fifteen years later. Six weeks after his death, she entered the Carmel of Lisieux, and later she would see herself as having had a lucky escape from a sinful life, wanting to call her unpublished memoir *Histoire d'un tison arraché du feu* ('Story of a brand snatched from the fire'). Just four years after her entry, Thérèse was dead and Céline was completing her first portrait of her – her life's work had begun.



Figure 2.3. Céline (centre) with her father, Léonie and the Guérin family, c.1892-94. Source: Album famille Martin, ACL.

⁹ Piat, *Céline*, pp.58-9.

The *Recueil* and the Production of the Prototype Representations

The principal source for retracing Céline's lifetime of artistic work is the *Recueil Travaux Artistiques Geneviève*, held at the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux. This is used here, in an academic context, for the first time.¹⁰ This two-volume, one hundred-page document was commissioned by Mère Agnès in the early forties, and provides an overview of the building of the cult of Saint Thérèse and Céline's half-century of work on her sister's representation. Listing all of Céline's artistic works and giving a short commentary on each, it provides vital information on the portraits of Thérèse, as well as an account of Céline's collaboration with other artists. In the manuscript, Céline's comments are often highly personal, and the text gives an insight into her motivations, influences and responses to her artwork. The *Recueil* was written between January 1941 and November 1956, and Céline was between seventy-one and eighty-seven years old when she composed it. In some cases she was recalling works she had completed some sixty years before,¹¹ and there was a gap of forty-three years between the completion of her first portrait of Thérèse and the commencement of the composition of the *Recueil*. As such, it must be borne in mind that this is not a contemporary document and that Thérèse's official recognition by the Church must have coloured Céline's recollections in the *Recueil* profoundly – for Céline, as a Catholic and a Carmelite, her sister was utterly transfigured by her canonisation. Despite its limitations, the *Recueil* provides an insight into the building of an iconography for Saint Thérèse, and while it is the core source for this chapter, other archival sources are also used, including the correspondence between the convent and Church officials, artists and businessmen, as well as Céline's autobiographical manuscript, *Histoire d'une «Petite âme» qui a traversé une fournaise* (1909). Together these sources reveal the history of the construction and legitimation of the Celinian image.

Carrying Out the Work: Resentment and Toil

In the *Recueil* Céline explains her methods of working in detail, and also expresses considerable bitterness and resentment about her lifetime of artistic work. She explains:

In my compositions I had recourse to living models (alas, only furtively!). Indeed, I posed myself in a small mirror which was part of my painting equipment. Or indeed, I used photography when the

¹⁰ It was, however, used in François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Lisieux, 1961) and Piat, *Céline*.

¹¹ The earliest works catalogued in the *Recueil* are those completed when she was still at the Benedictine Abbey school in Lisieux, which she attended between 1883 and 1885. See RTAG, pp. 1-2.

other sisters posed for me. I had no permanent studio for painting and drawing. I worked in my cell, in the Chapter house, in the library, here or there that allowed me a momentary refuge. Many of my drawings and paintings were done in my free time: the midday silences in summer, Sundays and free days, but in the Community most of the sisters considered this type of work a waste of time.¹²

She echoed this last assertion elsewhere, likening her artistic endeavours to her later employment in the convent kitchen, and saying of the *Recueil* 'when I read it I had the feeling that I wasted my time!', adding that her efforts would have been better spent singing the Divine Office.¹³ When writing of her 1907 composition, 'Thérèse with harp', a very large portrait in oils, Céline again emphasised the very difficult working conditions she faced:

I moved this portrait on entirely during my own time – it required nine months!... How can you complete something *in paint* in periods of just *one* hour or less...?... I must say that this difficult and involved work cost me a lot during my noonday siesta hours in summer – me, who slept such a lot. Also, after having worked with ardour standing up (where to better judge the work I stepped back from it often), I was very tired, and indeed, a few minutes before the end of the Silence, I laid on the floor, with my handkerchief under my head in a ball and I slept for a minute at the feet of the tableau like a dog at the feet of his master. I called it, in fact, 'playing the dog'. Normally, working two hours a day, I could finish a portrait in a month.¹⁴

Throughout the *Recueil* Céline emphasises her suffering for her art, and this is an attitude also found in some of her other writings. In her autobiographical manuscript of 1909, she emphasised her unending struggles to complete her works, explaining how she constantly had to mount the stairs between the attic, where she worked, and her cell, and:

Reading this sentence written on the wall 'Today a little work, tomorrow eternal rest' I said: 'A lie! Today a lot of work and after a long time, alas, eternal rest!'... In these conditions my painting has always been a great ordeal, never did I find pleasure in it, but always more work.¹⁵

In her remarks concluding the *Recueil*, Céline continues the theme of hidden and selfless toil: 'It appears to me that the humble and *hidden* works had had all the value for [God]... these works that I have judged as nothing are... in His eyes, *of value!*'¹⁶ This was how Céline perceived her work at the end of her life, and this is important background to the investigation of her work that follows in this chapter.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. ii.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42-3.

¹⁵ CAC, p. 336.

¹⁶ RTAG, pp. 97-8.

From Jouvenot to Sœur Marie du Saint-Esprit: The Commissioned Artists

Despite her emphasis on her solitary and hidden work on the images of Thérèse, Céline did not in fact work entirely independently, and a small handful of artistic collaborators were brought in to help her. Very little has been written about these artists, but here the archives have been mined to reveal something about these people whose work is known by millions, although their names are forgotten. The initiative to employ other artists came in 1915, when Mère Agnès excused Céline of all other work to concentrate on her art,¹⁷ and the employment of outside help was initially spurred on by the sixty or so images needed for *La Vie en images*, Thérèse's Life in sixty-eight tableaux (see chapter 3). Céline's limited technical skill may also have made the commissions necessary for the production of serviceable works in a short time. In total five commissioned artists contributed to *Vie en images*, all working to directions about composition given by Céline in advance, and most of them also eventually contributed other images of Thérèse to the Carmel's ongoing project. These collaborators included five professional artists outside the convent, along with a nun of the Carmel, Sœur Marie du Saint-Esprit, the convent's other resident artist (see Appendix 1 for a complete list of the works completed by each of these artists for the Carmel).

Charles Jouvenot (1861-1938) was the Carmel's favourite artist and he had considerable influence on Thérèse's public image (see figure 2.4).¹⁸ Primarily an illustrator of children's books, his acquaintance with the Carmel probably began when he provided drawings for the chapter headings of the 1909 popular edition of *Une rose effeuillée*, the shortened version of Thérèse's autobiography. He provided the illustrations for many of the Carmel's other publications (see chapter 3), as well as various other projects, such as the designs for the stained glass windows depicting Thérèse's miracles for the *chapelle de la Châsse*.¹⁹ He developed a close relationship with the Carmel and when he died, Céline wrote on the front of his death notice 'Our Jouvenot!!!'.²⁰ Another artist who worked with Céline was, Pascal Blanchard, a Paris-based painter who worked with Céline from 1920, producing five compositions for *Vie en images* (see figure 2.5).²¹ He would

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹⁸ On Jouvenot, see 'Charles Jouvenot', *Journal des Pèlerins de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, 1st year, no. 23 (30 December 1923-12 January 1924), pp. 1-2, and 2nd year, no. 1 (13-26 January 1924), pp. 3-4.

¹⁹ These designs had originally appeared in Carmel of Lisieux, *Quelques miracles et interventions de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Paris, 1928). On the windows see 'Les Vitraux de la Chapelle du Carmel', *Journal des Pèlerins*, 2nd year, no. 7 (6-12 April 1924), pp. 2-3.

²⁰ Death notice, S-23LL TRAVAUX correspondance Jouvenot dessinateur, env. 4, ACL.

²¹ See Blanchard's correspondence with the Carmel, S-23NN TRAVAUX artistes divers A-B, env. 9, ACL.

later do other decorative works for the Carmel, but their relationship soured when he refused to sign works he had completed but that Céline had significantly retouched (see 'Challenges to Authenticity' below).²² Pierre Annould (1861-1925) was the artistic director at the popular Boumard publishers, well-known for their production of Saint-Sulpician devotional ephemera. He made four contributions to *Vie en images*, as well as completing two images of Thérèse on the battlefields of the First World War.²³

Other artists had only a brief involvement with the Carmel. Pharaon de Winter (1849-1924) produced only one image for them, that showing Thérèse throwing roses towards the Holy Sacrament at a Corpus Christi procession,²⁴ while Samuel Grün, an artist about whom very little is known, contributed the 'Apotheosis above St Peter's Basilica', showing Thérèse, the Virgin and child Jesus in glory.²⁵ Ferdinand Roybet (1840-1920) produced a portrait of the saint that remains one of the most popular and most reproduced.²⁶ He was the most well-known and successful of the artists the Carmel worked with (some of his works are now in the Hermitage and Musée d'Orsay). He did not work collaboratively with Céline and she never dared retouch his work as she did with her other artists (see 'Challenges to Authenticity' below), but the correspondence from Roybet preserved in the archives reveals that the Carmel directed the portrait heavily.²⁷ Céline provided photographs of Thérèse for the work, and she asked him to 'keep these intimate documents for you alone – we are counting on your absolute discretion on this subject', and told him 'I believe you will satisfy us, Sir, if you give Thérèse a heavenly appearance, if you manage to make her an ideal and beautiful character.'²⁸ He was indeed felt to have met this tall order, and Marie later wrote to Léonie that 'It is truly very beautiful and a very good likeness. Everyone is of the opinion that it is an artistic marvel.'²⁹

Perhaps the most important of Céline's collaborators is also the one who is most hidden. Sœur Marie du Sainte Esprit (Marie Elisabeth Marthe Madeleine de Couffon de Kerdellec'h, 1892-

²² See RTAG, pp. v-vi, pp. 51-3, 80.

²³ See Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, p. 488 on these wartime images by Annould. See also Annould's death notice, S-23NN, ACL.

²⁴ RTAG, p. 50.

²⁵ For a letter from Grün, see S-23PP TRAVAUX artistes divers C-M, ACL.

²⁶ The inheritors of Roybet's estate would later threaten the Carmel with legal action for reproducing the image widely without their permission. See Syndicat de la propriété artistique/DB 03/07/1925 and DB/Syndicat de la propriété artistique 10/07/1925, S-23QQ TRAVAUX artistes divers N-R, env. 11, ACL. See also C/FTh 08/04/1917, ACL on the Roybet portrait.

²⁷ See, for example C/R 08/05/1916, S-23QQ, env. 11, ACL.

²⁸ C/R 03/12/1916, S-23QQ, env. 11, ACL.

²⁹ MSC/FTh 15/06/1917, ACL.

1982) was a nun of the Carmel and a clearly accomplished artist who acted as artistic handmaiden to Céline.³⁰ Most of her work involved copying pieces by the other commissioned artists into colour versions. Two of her major projects were the copying in watercolours of several of Jouvenot's works that appeared in *Vie en images* and the entirety of the plates from the illustrated book *La petite voie* (see chapter 3).³¹ She also rendered de Winter's image in oils, as well as Annould's popular 'Nazareth' and his 'The cure of the Holy Virgin'. Sœur Marie's greatest independent works were two large oil paintings depicting Saint Thérèse's canonisation mass inside St Peter's Basilica and showing Thérèse as Patroness of the Missions. She may also have designed the cover of the book *La nielle des blés*.³² Sœur Marie is hardly mentioned in the *Recueil*,³³ and in a note on the images contained in *Vie en images* held by the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux, it is often mentioned that 'a nun of the Carmel of Lisieux' rendered the work of other artists in watercolours or oils, as well as doing twelve original compositions.³⁴ This is undoubtedly Sœur Marie that is being referred to, but her name is not used. Sœur Marie was also an important figure for the business side of the cult, with her name frequently appearing in letters from publishers throughout the twenties and thirties, as well as in correspondence with Jouvenot and the notes by which Raymond de Bercegol, director of the Office Central de Lisieux, the business arm of the Carmel (see chapter 3) communicated with those inside the cloister.³⁵ It seems that the extent of Sœur Marie's contribution to the Theresian project was greater than the *Recueil* suggests. An undated note written by Céline in the archives of the Carmel explains the strict conditions under which Sœur Marie was permitted to use her library of art books and hints at a strained working relationship, which may be the reason for this.³⁶

³⁰ See Marie du Saint Esprit – circulaire inédite établie en 2007, ACL.

³¹ The former are still displayed in Thérèse's bedroom at *Les Buissonnets*. See Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, pp. 490, 492-3 on these. The latter are contained in *La Petite Voie – Aquarelles*, ACL.

³² Carmel of Lisieux, *La nielle des blés ou mission de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus auprès des pêcheurs* (Paris, 1925). This is suggested in J/MSE 06/06/1925, S-23LL, env. 2, ACL.

³³ See only RTAG, p. 52, 78.

³⁴ Archival note 20/02/1975, *Vie en Images de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, ACL.

³⁵ Many of Jouvenot's letters are addressed to Sœur Marie, rather than to Céline, and he called her 'My pupil'. See J/MSE 29/11/1935, S-23LL, env. 4, ACL. See also Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance d'affaires, ACL and Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL.

³⁶ Note kept with catalogues of images Céline used as models, ACL.

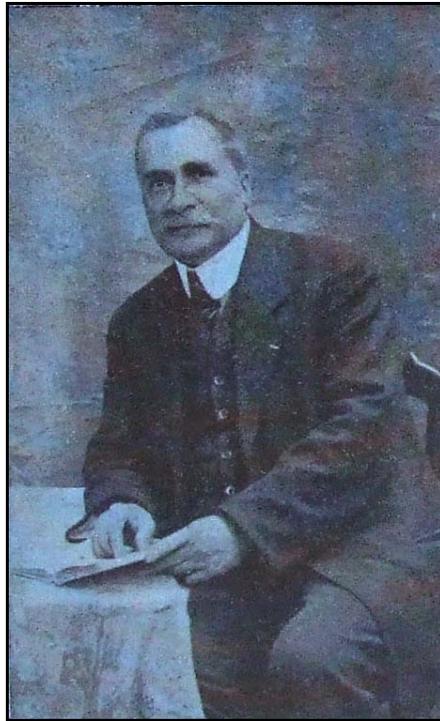


Figure 2.4. Charles Jouvenot, c. 1923. Source : 'Charles Jouvenot', *Journal des Pèlerins de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, 1st year, no 23 (30 December 1923 to 12 January 1924), p. 2.

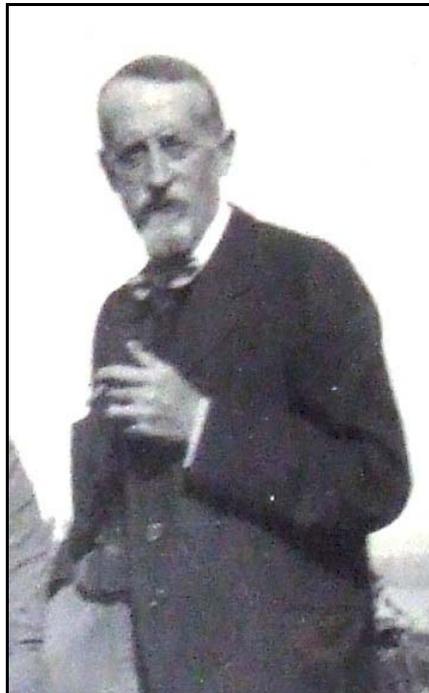


Figure 2.5. Pascal Blanchard, c. 1920. Source: S-23NN, env. 9, ACL.

Père Marie-Bernard and Alliot: The Sculptors

While the work of the commissioned artists remains obscure, another group of artists have fared better in the long-term assessment of their work – the sculptors who ‘moulded’ Thérèse’s iconography. Père Marie-Bernard (1883-1975) was a Trappist monk at Soligny-La-Trappe, Orne, Normandy (see figure 2.6).³⁷ He later carried out many prestigious works for other religious foundations, including the pilgrimage authorities at Lourdes,³⁸ but he became the Carmel’s official sculptor in 1917 and he completed his first work for them, ‘Thérèse sitting’, in 1919.³⁹ In the 1920s and 1930s he provided several statues for the pilgrimage site of Lisieux, including the design for the *gisant* at the *chapelle de la Châsse* (see Appendix 2).⁴⁰ In 1922 Céline directed him to produce a three dimensional version of her famous ‘Thérèse aux roses’ image (see figure 2.24) and Marie-Bernard’s statue was to become, alongside Céline’s original, the best known representation of Thérèse. It was also to become the most pirated of the Carmel’s representations of Thérèse, and Père Marie-Bernard’s birth name, Louis Richomme, would later be invoked in the many legal cases the Carmel launched against the makers of unauthorised statues (see chapter 5). The relationship between Père Marie-Bernard and Céline was a long and close one, and in the *Recueil* Céline called him ‘our good little Frère Marie-Bernard’,⁴¹ while he in return called her ‘My little sister’.⁴² He felt honoured to work on the cult, writing to Mère Agnès ‘I am richly rewarded by the grace and honour that is done to me to work and to struggle for your angel.’⁴³ However, Père Marie-Bernard was unwilling to put up with what Pierre Descouvemont has called Céline’s ‘sometimes bizarre and often contradictory’ instructions, and they often argued.⁴⁴ When Céline asked him to produce a statue for Thérèse’s former burial plot, Père Marie-Bernard flatly refused to show the future saint kneeling on a carpet of clouds, as requested, telling Céline that the design made Thérèse look like she was ‘on her knees on a mushroom.’⁴⁵ He came to refer to Céline somewhat irreverently as Sœur ‘Je veux’ (Sister ‘I want’),⁴⁶ and the

³⁷ On Père Marie-Bernard see: Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*; Judgment de S. Geneviève de la Ste Face sur le P. Marie-Bernard, THER-14 F Marie-Bernard sculpteur, boîte 1, ACL; RTAG, p. 50; V. Hardy, ‘L’un des Sculpteurs de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus’, *Journal des Pèlerins*, 1st year, no. 15 (23-29 September 1923), pp. 1-2.

³⁸ Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*, pp. 142-7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 33, 74-5.

⁴⁰ See Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, pp. 459, 482-3, 485, 507.

⁴¹ RTAG, p. 80

⁴² MB/C 25/04/1919, THER-14 F, boîte 1, ACL. See also Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*, p. 36.

⁴³ MB/MA 18/03/1918, THER-14 F, boîte 1, ACL. See also Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*, pp. 23-4.

⁴⁴ Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*, p. 39, 36-7, 77.

⁴⁵ MB/C 13/11/1923, THER-14 F, boîte 1, ACL. See also Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*, pp. 79-80.

⁴⁶ Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*, p. 37.

Carmel of Lisieux would later request that he burn the letters, numbering around four hundred, that he had received from her.⁴⁷ When Marie-Bernard was uncooperative, a sculptor called Lucien Alliot (1877-1967) was often called in.⁴⁸ He did the actual sculpting of the *gisant*, a statuary group at *Les Buissonnets* and the kneeling figure for the grave, that had been so controversial. In 1924 he also completed a large work showing Thérèse with the Virgin and Infant Jesus for the altar of the Carmel, as well as a number of smaller works for the Carmel's private spaces.⁴⁹ He provided sculptures of angels for the *chapelle de la Châsse*, which were much maligned by critics of the cult and finally removed (see figure 4.4) and similar figures for the Way of the Cross behind the Basilica.⁵⁰



Figure 2.6. Père Marie-Bernard in the garden of *Les Buissonnets*, c. 1920. Source: THER-14 F, boîte 1, ACL.

⁴⁷ See MB/CdeL 24/04/1970, THER-14 F, boîte 1, ACL. See also Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l'âme*, p. 7, 17.

⁴⁸ See Alliot's correspondence with the Carmel, S-23ii TRAVAUX correspondance Alliot 1919-1959, ACL, and RTAG p. 37, 96.

⁴⁹ RTAG, p. 50.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 78-9

'Emploi de Photographie': The Forty-One Photographs

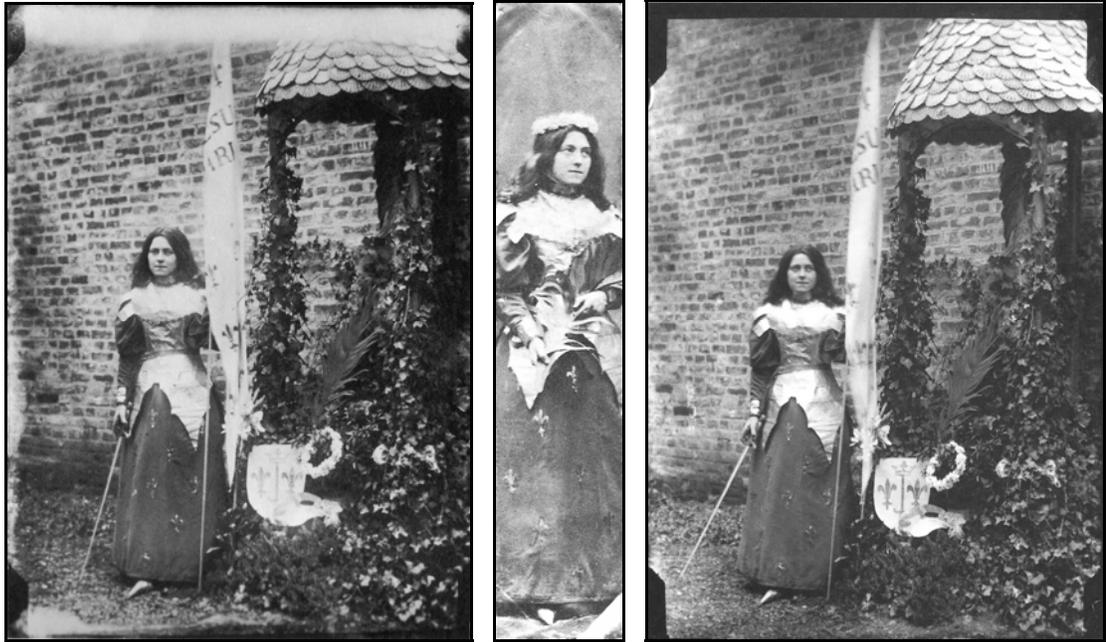
While Céline's original portraits of Thérèse were of great significance for the cult (see below), she had also already produced another set of images of her sister – forty-one photographs, taken inside the cloister between November 1894 and October 1897. Thirteen of these were portraits of the future saint, while the others were group shots in which Thérèse also appeared. These were supplemented by six further photographs of Thérèse – four of her aged between three and fifteen years old, and two of her in novice's garb taken by a visiting priest (see Appendix 2 for a complete list of the photographs). This was a collection that probably made Thérèse the most photographed saint in history at the time of her 1925 canonisation. Céline served as the convent photographer for feast days and special occasions, but she was particularly keen to photograph her sister, even taking a series of three images of her, known as the 'Thérèse *aux images*' series, when she was terminally ill with tuberculosis.⁵¹ Marion Lavabre has seen this as evidence of Céline crafting her sister into a saint even before her death.⁵² Indeed, the photographs were certainly no less influenced by the aesthetic fashions of the times than Céline's painted and drawn portraits. In the late nineteenth century, the sitter's pose was seen as being 'a reflection of [their] character and morality',⁵³ and it was fashionable to give the sitter props related to their profession. Céline posed Thérèse with dramatic props, ranging from a lily (the symbol of virginity), to images of the Holy Face and Child Jesus (her religious titles), to a pitchfork (symbolic of the vow of poverty and the Carmelite's duty to work). It was not only trends in photographic representation that influenced Céline in her photographic work – the poses are often reminiscent of Saint-Sulpician representations of saints, the photographs of Thérèse dressed as Joan of Arc in the play she wrote about her being some of the best examples (see figures 2.7-2.11). Here the photographic medium was being used to produce an aesthetic style usually appearing only in painting and sculpture, showing the integration of ancient tradition and new media, and the adaptability of popular devotional culture.

⁵¹ Photographs 41-43, Appendix 2. See François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage*, p. 75.

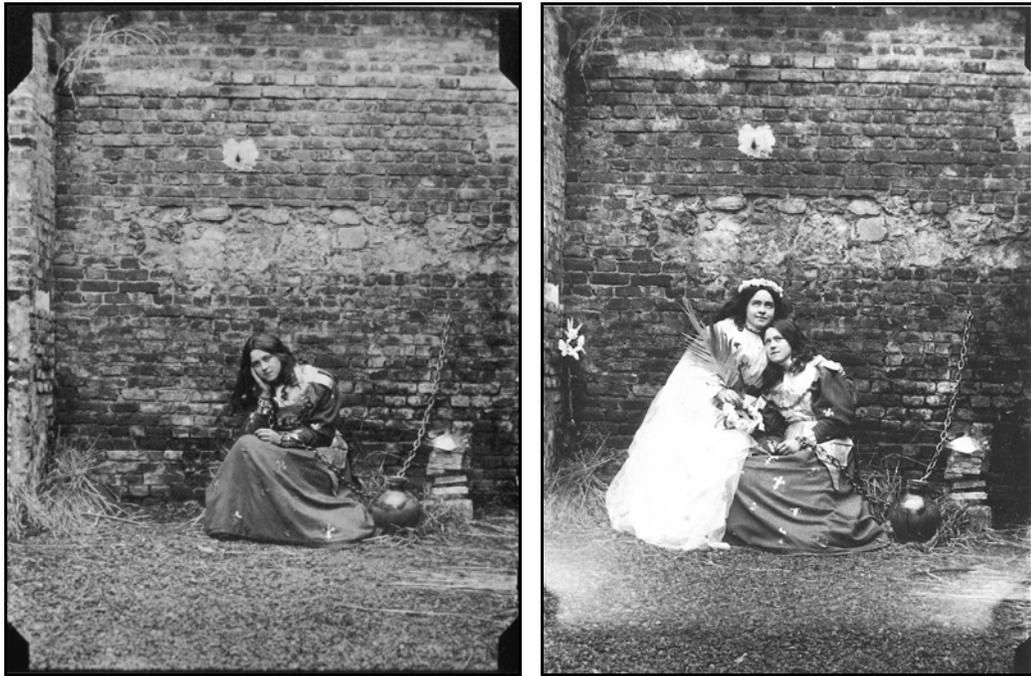
⁵² Lavabre, 'Sainte comme une image', p. 85.

⁵³ Hamilton and Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned*, p. 33. See also François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage*, pp. 14-5.

2. Céline Martin's Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image



Figures 2.7-2.9 Left to right: Thérèse as Joan of Arc (1st pose); as Joan of Arc crowned in heaven; as Joan of Arc (2nd pose), 1895. Source: OCL.



Figures 2.10-2.11 Left to right: Thérèse as Joan of Arc in prison; Thérèse as Joan of Arc with Céline as Saint Margaret, 1895. Source: OCL.

Retouching and Découpage

Despite the instant supply of images of Thérèse that these photographs provided, until Céline's death these ready-made pieces of iconography were almost completely suppressed. Where they did appear they were subject to extremely heavy retouching and, in some cases, outright falsification. While Céline gives minute details about her artistic works in both the *Recueil* and her autobiographical manuscript, she says little about the extensive work she did on the photographs.⁵⁴ Using enlarged prints of her photographs, Céline applied watercolours, pencil and eraser to soften Thérèse's features and produce modified images for circulation. For example, a heavily retouched version of the 'Thérèse *aux images*' photograph was produced,⁵⁵ giving Thérèse a wholly new, Saint-Sulpician face, and this was disseminated widely (see figure 2.12-2.13). Other images were subject to even heavier editing, using découpage techniques to create completely new scenes, not uncommon at a time when photographic images had become a cheap and disposable commodity.⁵⁶ For example, a group photograph of 1894⁵⁷ was cannibalised to create an image of Thérèse in meditation in the convent garden (see figures 2.14-2.15). The figure was cut out, pasted onto a photograph of the cemetery inside the enclosure of the Carmel and the face was entirely repainted.⁵⁸ It was presented as an original image and appeared in early editions of *Histoire d'une âme* and on holy cards. In a photograph of Thérèse with her novices,⁵⁹ the figures of Mère Agnès and Mère Marie de Gonzague were removed and an image of Marie Guérin, the Martin sisters' cousin and a postulant in the convent at the time, was inserted. The end result was a conceptually tidier image of Thérèse, the assistant novice mistress, with the newest members of the community (see figures 2.16-2.17).⁶⁰ The adaptation of the photographs allowed Céline to expand her stock of images quickly and provide a variety of marketable images in a short time, but the retouching also allowed the photographs to be harmonised with the other images of Thérèse the Carmel was producing (see 'The Cultural Inheritance' below). In the period in which Céline was working, retouching of photographs was very common, and as Miles Orvell has noted, 'To the nineteenth century, the camera was an unwieldy machine to be overcome by a combination of

⁵⁴ See only RTAG, p. 51, 76.

⁵⁵ Photograph 43, Appendix 2.

⁵⁶ See Hamilton and Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned*, p. 27, 47.

⁵⁷ Photograph 9, Appendix 2.

⁵⁸ Before the 1907 edition (ninth edition), this composite image had appeared in the autobiography with the face unretouched.

⁵⁹ Photograph 20, Appendix 2.

⁶⁰ These images are mentioned in Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, pp. 510-1.

stamina and subtlety'.⁶¹ Retouching was part of this process, and photographic manuals, like Louise Gérard's *Comment on Retouche Un cliché Photographique* (1925), which Céline owned a copy of, instructed amateur photographers in this art. However, she applied these techniques to an extreme extent and later had to justify her use of them (see 'Retouching and "Reality"' below).



Figure 2.12-2.13. Left: The original photograph, 'Thérèse *aux images*' (3rd pose), June 1897. Source: OCL.
Right: The retouched 'Thérèse *aux images*' photograph, circulated by the Carmel from the early 1920s.
Source: ACL.

⁶¹ Orvell, *The Real Thing*, p. 198.

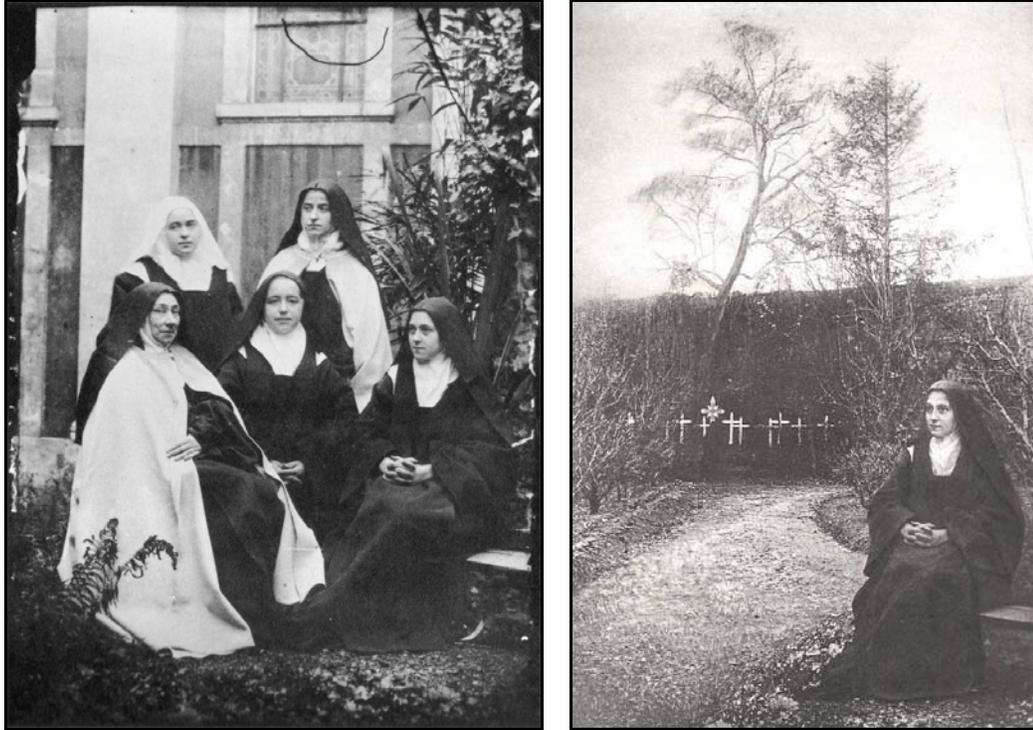


Figure 2.14-2.15. Left: The original photograph of Thérèse et al in the courtyard of the Lourdes grotto (1st pose), November 1894. Source: OCL. Right: The *découpage* image 'Thérèse in meditation', circulated by the Carmel from 1902. Source: *Histoire d'une âme* (Bar-le-Duc, 1907).



Figure 2.16-2.17. Left: Original photograph of Thérèse with novices and hourglass (with the superiors in the window), April 1895. Source: OCL. Right: The retouched image showing just Thérèse and novices, c. 1930. Source: ACL.

The Artistic Inheritance: Christianity, Portraiture and Authenticity

Céline was working in the context of a variety of dominant cultural concepts about good art, authentic religious images and the role of the artist when she produced her portraits of Thérèse. The portrayal of holy figures in the Christian tradition has been underpinned by a concern with authentic representation, images of the holy necessarily having to reveal truth in their role in communicating the Word of God, and indeed 'Images were justified by the Incarnation, which marked a fundamental shift in the relationship between God and the material world.'⁶² There are two principal concepts surrounding portraits in Christian art, and both invest heavily in ideas of the ultimate 'true' representation: *acheiropoietos* ('not made by human hands') – divine images that are believed to have been miraculously made; and the tradition of Saint Luke, where a human artist, with divine inspiration and help, renders a foundational and wholly authentic portrait.⁶³ In the former case, the artist is wholly absent, while in the latter case the artist, themselves always a holy person, is strongly present, but the portrait's 'authenticity is guaranteed by association with the miraculous, an objectivity validated by the means of production.'⁶⁴ The *acheiropoietos* tradition in western Christianity begins with the Veil of Veronica (Veronica meaning 'true image'), produced when Saint Veronica wiped the face of the suffering Christ as he made his way along the Via Dolorosa to Calvary. The true likeness that was seared into the cloth was kept at Rome from the eighth century and venerated as the definitive image of the Saviour. The Turin Shroud, emerging in the historical record sometime in the late middle ages, was believed to have been produced in a similar way. Also part of this tradition is the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, appearing on the cloak of the visionary Juan Diego when the Virgin appeared to him near Mexico City in 1531. These images are not representations, but rather images at a minute distance from their original – a literal re-presentation of the prototype. Such images claim an unassailable authority, promising a level of veracity only a miracle could achieve. As David Morgan has shown: 'The power of these images proceeds from the beguiling myth that they were not fashioned by a wilful hand, but were almost magical transpositions, apparitions projected by God or the unconscious.'⁶⁵ Such images can clearly be related to photography in their

⁶² Richard Marks, *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2004), p. 17.

⁶³ On these two traditions see Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art* (Chicago, 1994), ch. 4.

⁶⁴ Warner, 'The Image of Mary', p. 209.

⁶⁵ Morgan, *Visual Piety*, p. 144.

manner of production – precise, mimetic images, produced without human labour (indeed, Saint Veronica is the patron saint of photographers).

The tradition of the divinely-inspired artist and Saint Luke's portrait of the Virgin also hinges on ideas of authentic, faithful representation, but in this case the painter provides a human presence and acts as an earthly intermediary in the production of the work. The legend is that the Virgin miraculously sat for Saint Luke and he produced a portrait of her. Luke took the position of the portraitist, directing his painterly gaze at the sitter and attempted to turn what was before his eyes into a fixed, faithful representation. Unlike the average portraitist, Saint Luke is believed to have had divine assistance in his work, and some versions of the story assert that the Virgin herself finished off the image. The Saint Luke tradition brings the figure of the artist into view, suggesting that human agency can play a part in the rendering of authentic images of the divine. The eastern Christian tradition of the icon also has relevance here.⁶⁶ Painted by anonymous artists, the icon was a physical artefact which made the invisible divine visible and tangible, not only providing an image which was alleged to bear precise verisimilitude to its prototype, but also providing a material object that was imbued with the power and personality of that prototype (Gilbert Dagon has explained, 'both the reproduction of (ἔχτύπωμα) and equivalent to (ὁμοίωμα) the model').⁶⁷ Indeed, 'the icon works as a statement of authentic identity and theological value', communicating the 'truth about the person' depicted and evoking a solid identity by using a 'strict conformity to style and form... to authenticate the truth'.⁶⁸ Ingrained in the Christian tradition, these are concepts that influenced Céline's work profoundly, as we shall see.

The Great Artist: The Nineteenth-Century Ideal

Céline was also working in the age of the emergence of 'the myth of the Great Artist'⁶⁹ – a secular, modern ideal of the individual, creative personality that was the polar opposite of the anonymous icon-painter. Before her entry to the cloister Céline had received art lessons from a student of the successful Parisian romantic painter Léon Cogniet, as well as some guidance from Édouard Krug, a pupil of Jean-Hippolyte Flandrin, himself a pupil of Ingres.⁷⁰ She was proud of

⁶⁶ See Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, for a definitive account of the icon tradition.

⁶⁷ Dagon, 'Holy Images and Likeness', p. 23.

⁶⁸ Warner, 'The Image of Mary', p. 210.

⁶⁹ Linda Nochlin, 'Why have there been no great women artists?', in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York, 1988), p. 153.

⁷⁰ On Krug see Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, p. 24.

these associations, adding a three-page article at the end of the first volume of the *Recueil* on the achievements of Édouard Krug,⁷¹ and she seems to have fully internalised the ideal of the 'great artist', figuring herself as such throughout the *Recueil*. With the full flowering of Romanticism, the idea that 'the inspired ideas of exceptional individuals' were the force of innovation in art, rather than 'structural shifts involving everyone'⁷² became dominant, and the artist was often depicted as sacrificial author, the act of painting being portrayed as 'a psychological drama, a point of struggle between thought and physical appearance.'⁷³ Indeed, Linda Nochlin has pointed to the 'semireligious conception of the artist's role', with the 'apparently miraculous, nondetermined, and asocial nature of artistic achievement' being emphasised, and 'elevated to hagiography in the nineteenth century... when art historians, critics, and, not least, some of the artists themselves tended to elevate the making of art into a substitute religion, the last bulwark of higher values in a materialistic world'.⁷⁴

In the late nineteenth century, the production of a mimetically faithful physiognomic likeness had come to dominate conceptions of good portraiture. The Victorian idea of the authentic portrait was defined by the concept that 'the viewer could in imagination stand in the place of the original artist as he had once looked at the sitter, and so travel back in time to the moment when the sitter lived.'⁷⁵ But the advent of photography in the mid-nineteenth century problematised the position of the artist, removing the need for an authorial figure and 'implicitly challeng[ing]... portraiture's claim to absolute truth.'⁷⁶ However, although photography was used from very early on in its life for making empirical records,⁷⁷ it had other possibilities as a medium for late nineteenth-century societies, and in some contexts the 'practice of photography was founded on an understanding of the medium as an illusion, and the realism of Victorian photography is properly understood as an "artificial realism", in which the image offers the viewer a representation of reality, a typification, a conscious simulacrum'.⁷⁸ Further, when photographic images were clearly retouched or falsified in other ways, some viewers 'were well aware of the

⁷¹ RTAG, pp. 54 v-vii.

⁷² Joanna Woodall, 'Introduction: facing the subject', in Joanna Woodall (ed.), *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* (Manchester, 1997), p. 5.

⁷³ Paul Barlow, 'Facing the past and present: the National Portrait Gallery and the search for 'authentic' portraiture', in Woodall, *Portraiture*, p. 219.

⁷⁴ Nochlin, 'Why have there been no great women artists?', p. 155.

⁷⁵ Paul Barlow, 'Facing the past and present', p. 221.

⁷⁶ Woodall, 'Introduction: facing the subject', p. 7.

⁷⁷ See Thomas, *Beauty of Another Order*, and Hamilton and Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned* on scientific and legal uses of photography, respectively, early on in its history.

⁷⁸ Orvell, *The Real Thing*, p. 77.

staging and in fact savoured precisely the ontological ambiguity of the resulting image.'⁷⁹ Whatever the perceived 'truth' of photography, the photographic portrait soon became dominant, becoming both 'a trusted method of establishing identity and a key medium for promoting celebrity.'⁸⁰ These ideas of the modern artist and the ideal portrait were a formative influence on Céline Martin, as we will now see.

Christian Artistic Tradition, the Portrait Painter and Céline's Work: A Pre-Cult Case Study

Céline's concept of the authentic image and internalisation of the concepts of both miraculous, unmediated modes of representation (the *acheiropoietos* and Saint Luke traditions), and the idea of the creative artistic personality, are revealed by her work on an image she produced in 1904. This image was not one of Thérèse, but it was the image she considered to be her greatest artistic achievement – a *grisaille* painting of the Holy Face (figure 2.18). She devoted many pages of her autobiographical manuscript to a lengthy and anguished account of its production, and this was undoubtedly the image that she felt had seen the full flowering of her artistic efforts, despite its early production date. The devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus had been revived in nineteenth-century France by Sœur Marie de Saint-Pierre, a Carmelite nun who had visions of Saint Veronica aiding Christ on the road to Calvary.⁸¹ In one vision Christ described blasphemy as a 'poisoned arrow' which added to the insults he had suffered on the Via Dolorosa, and he said that contemplation of the Holy Face was a reparation for these insults. The devotion had clear relevance for France under the anti-clerical Third Republic and Céline was an ardent enthusiast of the devotion, as Thérèse herself had been⁸² – both appended 'the Holy Face' to their names in religion at different times in their lives. But Céline's enthusiasm was reignited when she saw the first photographs of the Turin Shroud, taken in 1898, which revealed the figure on the cloth in far starker detail than was visible with the naked eye.⁸³ In her autobiographical manuscript, Céline explains how she felt on seeing the images for the first time:

I was speechless with emotion. It seemed to me that I was seeing him in person... It was indeed my Jesus, just as my heart had sensed him to be... This image was in no way inferior to the ideal of the mortal traits of God that I had conceived of... Looking for the traces of his

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁸⁰ Hamilton and Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned*, p. 1.

⁸¹ See Sœur Marie Pascale, *Sœur Marie de Saint Pierre et de la Sainte Famille. Carmélite de Tours* (Paris, 1998).

⁸² See Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, pp. 150-77.

⁸³ She first saw them when Isidore Guérin sent her a copy of Paul Vignon, *Le Linceul du Christ. Étude Scientifique* (Paris, 1902).

Love for us, I traced the bloody imprint of his wounds... Then, no longer able to restrain the sentiments of my heart, I covered that adorable Face with my kisses and bathed it with my tears.⁸⁴

The images conformed to Céline's personal vision of Christ, and the reference to his wounds, the physical proof of his sacrifice, also shows her sense of the visceral authenticity of the image, treating it with the same reverence as if faced with Christ himself.⁸⁵ Despite her conception of the image as the ultimate, foundational representation, Céline wished to create her own version of the Holy Face, explaining that her cousin Marie Guérin (Sœur Marie de l'Eucharistie) found the copies of the Veil of Veronica so ugly that she had to turn her back on them when she prayed, while 'Our chaplain... told me he had known pious ecclesiastics estranged from the devotion to the Holy Face due to the imperfect image presented for the veneration of the faithful.'⁸⁶ She felt that there was a need for a new, more artistic rendering of the Holy Face, and accordingly set to work.

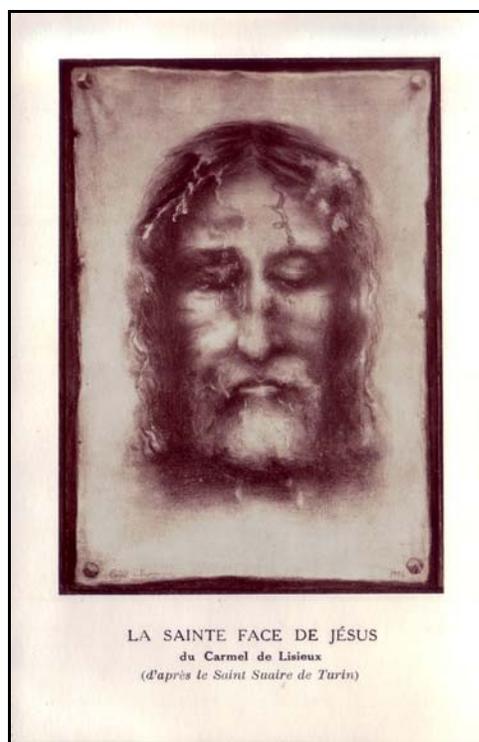


Figure 2.18. Céline's 'Holy Face' on a holy card produced by the Carmel of Lisieux, c.1910. Source: Author's collection.

⁸⁴ CAC, pp. 332-3.

⁸⁵ The violence she saw in the image would inspire her to produce a particularly bloody rendering of the Crucifixion, and also an image showing the flagellation of Christ. It also inspired her to retouch the face of Christ in her rendering of the Agony in the Garden. See RTAG, p. 16-8.

⁸⁶ CAC, p. 333.

Céline shows clear investment in the *acheiropoietos* tradition in her approach to the Holy Face image she created. Already, when completing some paintings for the choir between 1898 and 1900, Céline explained how she 'carried the canvases and paint brushes to the miraculous statue of Mary [that had cured Thérèse of her childhood illness] and asked her to work in my place. She... did not refuse me this gift.'⁸⁷ When she began work on the Holy Face picture in 1904, she again put her paintbrushes in the hands of the statue and brought the canvas before it, making a clear suggestion that the Virgin was the true artist, not her.⁸⁸ She also 'begged the good God... to come and paint the portrait of his son Jesus himself, and that the Spirit of Love would breathe life into it so that it would not be an ordinary portrait.'⁸⁹ This is a remarkable passage, showing a desire for a divinely-created icon, rather than a portrait that was the result of her own labour. Céline also prayed to Saint Veronica – the saint who symbolised the *acheiropoietos* tradition.⁹⁰ Céline's investment in this idea came to its climax when she directly sought to stimulate the miraculous creation of an image by placing her Holy Face canvas before the exposed Holy Sacrament in the convent chapel. She explains in her manuscript:

Placing it as close as possible, I begged Jesus to print his perfect resemblance on it. I said 'O, my Jesus do you prove yourself less powerful than men? They have invented the photo. We need do nothing but put an object before a sensitive plate and immediately the object is printed on the plate with an amazing exactitude. I expose my canvas to the rays of love from the living Host, which is your holy body, and I come away with no imprint.'⁹¹

Here there is a marrying of Christian tradition and modern ideas of photographic accuracy, and despite her rejection of the authenticity of photography (see 'Challenges to Authenticity' below), Céline shows here that her concept of the ultimate authentic image is a divinely-inspired photograph. Gilbert Dagron has suggested that when 'the saint or Christ himself helps the powerless artist, or takes his place in order to achieve an absolute likeness... in this multiform topos, the image creates itself; it is a photograph, a relic.'⁹² Céline took this analogy to its extreme.

With the failure of her attempts at divine photography, Céline returned to the methods and tradition of Saint Luke, placing emphasis on her labour as a human mediator receiving divine

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 335.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 344.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 345.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 344.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, pp.345-6.

⁹² Dagron, 'Holy Images and Likeness', p. 23.

aid, and also showing investment in the 'Great Artist' tradition by highlighting the role of the portraitist as someone with first-hand knowledge of the subject's appearance. We have already seen how Céline believed that she did not need artistic training, as God would make up for her shortcomings,⁹³ and in the *Recueil* she speaks of the Virgin being her 'mistress of painting',⁹⁴ finding that 'every time I took up pencil and paintbrush after long periods of inactivity it was always with greater fluency... I did homage to the Holy Virgin, for I knew that I owed her everything'.⁹⁵ She felt that she never worked on her images alone then, but like Saint Luke was always in receipt of divine assistance. When it came to her Holy Face image, she emphasised another element of the Saint Luke tradition – the artist having a vision of the divine subject. She explains:

Many times, during the course of my work, the face of the suffering Jesus appeared before me (this was not through bodily eyes) but this vision was extraordinarily clear and striking. I looked at Jesus like this to etch it on my spirit, it was the model I posed before me.⁹⁶

The importance of seeing the subject, and the work involved in transcribing it onto canvas, is a key part of the concept of the 'Great Artist', and Céline goes on to explain that, having benefited from this 'vision which lasted a few seconds', she 'copied with great faithfulness the tiniest details' of the face she had seen onto her composition, 'changing the least detail that was not him'.⁹⁷ Her labour is underscored and her agency as artist in transcribing the vision she had seen into a tangible image is emphasised.

Despite her investment in the Saint Luke tradition, in her account of the creation of the Holy Face image, Céline never fully abandons the *acheiropoietos* tradition either. She explains that in the finished image 'There is a certain little light which draws the gaze to the half-closed left eye... but it was not me alone who rendered this on my canvas, it is something that I cannot explain.'⁹⁸ In her autobiographical manuscript Céline describes the picture's production as a complex emotional drama, suggesting throughout that her painstaking transcription of her vision of the suffering Christ had been complemented by miraculous action – the work was ultimately a meeting of her labour as artist and divine intervention. The finished picture is strongly marked out as an incontestably genuine, faithful representation in the manuscript. She explains that soon after

⁹³ CAC, p. 71.

⁹⁴ RTAG, p. 54.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. iv. See also CAC, pp. 334-5.

⁹⁶ CAC, p. 346.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 346-7.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

finishing it, she took the portrait before the statue of the Virgin and 'turned towards the assembly of the elect and asked them if they recognised him'. Then, opening the Gospels at random for her answer, she chanced upon the line from Saint Matthew 'Truly, this was the Son of God.'⁹⁹ Her image is thus confirmed as not only a good resemblance, but like an icon, interchangeable with its prototype and an embodiment of Christ himself. She also explains that, shortly after finishing the picture 'the demon, jealous of the good wrought in the world by this holy image' attacked her one night, smashing objects and making her pillow seem as if it was on fire¹⁰⁰ – divine approval was twinned with diabolical disapproval as proof of the authenticity of the image.

The Pope himself commended Céline's Holy Face image, sending her a special medal in recognition of her work.¹⁰¹ The piece also won the grand prize at the International Exposition of Religious Art at Bois-le-Duc, Holland. Céline promoted the image alongside those of Thérèse on postcards and in the popular publications produced by the convent, and the first mention of Thérèse in the national press, in an article by François Veuillot in *l'Univers*, was in fact in an article about Céline's Holy Face image, which praised it fulsomely.¹⁰² Such approval no doubt played a part in Céline's suggestion that this semi-divinely wrought image in fact had miraculous properties, working many conversions. She recounted how one priest told her that 'This is not an ordinary image... one believes oneself in the presence of a living person.'¹⁰³ Céline explained 'He did not know that it was the work of the whole heavenly court and that the Spirit of Love had come to animate it with its divine breath.'¹⁰⁴ Here Céline not only positions herself as the divinely-inspired artist, but goes beyond this to suggest that this was a miraculous image which, like the icons of Orthodox tradition, was in some way indistinguishable from the person it represented. Her conception of her artistic practice, and her work on the Holy Face image in particular, is directly illustrated by a mysterious image in the convent archives (see figure 2.19). Here, Céline is shown at work on her Holy Face image, while no fewer than five angels, looking like little elves, help her by holding her palette, steadying the canvas or arranging her paintbrushes. Meanwhile, Thérèse has appeared in a puff of clouds, directing her work, while Christ hovers

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* Matthew 27:54.

¹⁰⁰ CAC, p. 347-48.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

¹⁰² François Veuillot, 'Cà et là. Une image de la Sainte Face', *l'Univers*, 9 July 1906.

¹⁰³ CAC, p. 349.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

above, making a gesture of blessing.¹⁰⁵ This image has no attribution and it is not clear whether Céline herself completed it, but it nevertheless conforms precisely to her written account of her work, showing the artist labouring for perfection, but with divine help.



Figure 2.19. Céline completing the Holy Face image, c. 1910. Source: Dessins, modèles, photos de Céline, ACL.

The Cultural Inheritance: Nineteenth-Century Devotional Culture and Saint-Making

The idea of the great artist and of the religiously authentic image were enduring concepts for Céline, but she was also working within trends in contemporary religious art and sought to insert her images into the landscape of dominant devotional fashions, as well as the classic modes of representation of the holy figure. A major consideration here is the place of the saint, and the changing nature of their representation, in the period in question. The saint has a unique position in the economy of popular devotion, and this perhaps most true of the female saint.¹⁰⁶ Each with their own individual character, they are often more personal to the faithful than the emotionally

¹⁰⁵ This is a photograph of the original. Dessins, modèles, photos de Céline, en vue des statues, tableaux etc, ACL.

¹⁰⁶ See Ford, 'Female Martyrdom and the Politics of Sainthood'.

distant Christ and Virgin and they occupy a special place as intercessor. Otherwise standardised in their physiognomic representation, the saint's attribute makes them instantly recognisable and reduces the system of representation to its bare bones.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, until the nineteenth century, the representation of individual saints was highly standardised, with the almost cartoon-like quality of bold, clear identifying features, but this mode of representation saw a revolution with the advent of photography, leading to more individualised representations of saints who were 'no longer incorporated into the depersonalised and allegorical frame of traditional iconography.'¹⁰⁸ The Curé d'Ars was the first saint to be photographed, captured laid out for burial in 1859, while Marian visionary Catherine Labouré was photographed right at the end of her life, in 1876. Saint Bernadette of Lourdes (not canonised until 1933 but, like Thérèse, treated as a saint long before) was photographed extensively during her life, and it was her cult that was to herald a more complex approach to the representation of saints. In her cult, what became the traditional representation of her at the Lourdes grotto, in the staid and dramatised style of traditional hagiographical images (see figure 2.20), existed side by side with photographic portraits of her – a much more personalised form of representation. These photographs were often subject to retouching – René Laurentin has made a study of the images of Bernadette, which reveals that the extent of the diversification of her representation was similar to that of Thérèse.¹⁰⁹ The cult was also characterised by a strong concern with finding the ultimate authentic image of Bernadette, and many of the images of her sold commercially proclaimed themselves to be a '*portrait authentique*' (see figures 2.21 and 2.22). An 1864 advertisement of a portrait of Bernadette made claims to 'truthful and perfect resemblance', stating that 'One should not confuse it with all the other portraits which... have been reproduced without the same guarantee.'¹¹⁰ Indeed, the privileging of 'genuineness' in representations of saints pre-dated Thérèse's cult and would endure until after its heyday. Theologian Wilhelm Schamoni's 1938 book *Das wahre Gesicht der Heiligen (The True Face of the Saints)* claimed to provide '120 authentic likenesses of saints in full-page illustrations', making some effort to ameliorate the fact that 'through the new technique of unlimited reproduction, as well as through shoddy, sentimental printed and plaster-work reproductions, the true visage of the

¹⁰⁷ On saints' attributes see Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, 6 vols (Paris, 1955-59).

¹⁰⁸ Taylor, 'Images of Sanctity', p. 269.

¹⁰⁹ The historiography on the representation of Bernadette provides a parallel literature to that on Thérèse. See René Laurentin (ed.), *Visage de Bernadette*, 2 vols (Paris, 1978). This study was explicitly based on François de Sainte-Marie's *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux*. See also Taylor, 'Images of Sanctity' and Langlois, 'Photographier des Saintes', for comparative examinations of the images of the two saints.

¹¹⁰ Laurentin, *Visage de Bernadette*, 1, pp. 96-7. See also Taylor, 'Images of Sanctity', p. 277.

saints has become falsified in the visualizations given to the general public.’¹¹¹ Yet photography was not to lead to a purely ‘scientific’ approach to images of saints, and older forms of representation persisted. As Thérèse Taylor has shown, in the case of Bernadette, the photographic images of her did not remain popular, and ‘in the decades after her death photographic prints were replaced by rendered images which reproduced her according to the conventions of religious art... throughout the twentieth century the most common pictures are imaginary images of her with Our Lady of Lourdes.’¹¹² Such was the case for Thérèse too, with portraits of the saint dominating until well after Céline’s death, and still remaining popular. Even into the twentieth century, the saint had to be depersonalised to be successful, and it is this process of depersonalisation in the case of Saint Thérèse that we shall now turn to.



Figure 2.20. Postcard of the Lourdes grotto with glow-in-the-dark Virgin, c. 1900. Source: author’s collection.

¹¹¹ Wilhelm Schamoni, *The Face of the Saints* (London, 1948) [original publication 1938], trans. Anne Fremantle, p. 23.

¹¹² Taylor, ‘Images of Sanctity’, p. 279.



Figure 2.21. Postcard image of Bernadette of Lourdes, carrying the caption 'Portrait authentique', c. 1900. Source: Album cartes postales diverses, ACL.

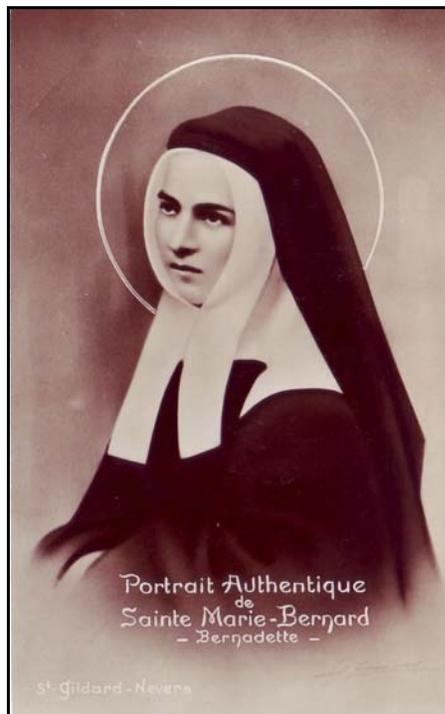


Figure 2.22. Bernadette in the habit of the Sisters of Charity of Nevers, c. 1935. Source : author's collection.

Making a Saint: The 'Buste Ovale'

Through her images, Céline tried to situate Thérèse in this contested terrain of the representation of saints at the end of the 'long nineteenth century', as she faced the task of turning an ordinary nun who had been dead for just a little over eighteen months, into a saint. Gilbert Dagron has asserted that 'a cult image can only be recognized as true and, therefore, valid if the artist and the art disappear, in other words, if subjectivity acting as a screen, and if an illusion which would be a lie, disappear.'¹¹³ David Morgan has concurred that 'The image's power consists in its ability to conceal the historical difference separating it and its admirers from the distant figure of history whom the image portrays.'¹¹⁴ Thérèse was not a 'distant figure of history', and Céline needed to strip away her sister's historical specificity in order to create a convincing visual image. Gilbert Dagron has noted the key functions of the icon or cult image:

The person described or represented is integrated into classifiable categories (bishops, hermits, monks, soldiers). The person is linked to more or less refined moral and physical models. The ... painter brings his model to the threshold of individuality, but it is up to the imagination of the reader or spectator to do the rest: to fill in the fixed form, give it life, and make it into a perfect image.¹¹⁵

The cult image 'eliminates anything circumstantial, and aims at pure presence', 'never putting [the holy person] "in context," but making the subject appear posed, fixed, with a vacant expression, as in an identity photograph.'¹¹⁶ The first portrait of Thérèse Céline created after her death, known as the '*buste ovale*' (see figure 2.23), conforms to this description perfectly. With blank expression and an ahistorical, timeless quality, Thérèse is represented as pious nun – a moral model and pre-existing holy 'type'. There is a personality here, but it is one that is open to the viewer's interpretation – the face is a blank canvas, allowing for a range of personal interpretations, but maintaining the universal, unearthly quality of the saint. David Morgan has shown how 'Popular religious art... is received because it reinforces what people *already* believe, tells them what they *already* know',¹¹⁷ and here Céline was using accepted modes of representation of the saint – pure and iconic – to naturalise her representation. This charcoal drawing, as frontispiece for the second

¹¹³ Dagron, 'Holy Images and Likeness', p. 23.

¹¹⁴ Morgan, *Visual Piety*, p. 48.

¹¹⁵ Dagron, 'Holy Images and Likeness', p. 26.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Morgan, *Visual Piety*, p. 122. 'Popular art is essentially a conventional art which restates in an intense form, values and attitudes already known; which reassures and reaffirms, but brings to this something of the surprise of art as well as the shock of recognition.' Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel, *The Popular Arts* (New York, 1965), p. 66.

edition of *Histoire d'une âme* and many editions thereafter, immediately signalled to the reader what kind of personality they would encounter inside. While the portrait was principally based on a photograph taken in November 1894,¹¹⁸ Céline said of it 'We decided to paint such a portrait which would be a composite of all the photographs we possessed of our saint.'¹¹⁹ This was, in its method of composition, an archetype – a generalisation of the appearance of Thérèse Martin, with a large dose of saintly gloss thrown in.¹²⁰ In the *Recueil* Céline would emphasise that 'it was declared 'authentic' by the Ecclesiastical Tribunal at the process of beatification.'¹²¹ In the 'buste ovale' Céline had created the 'fixed form' of the saint that would endure and which earned official approval. Indeed, until she produced 'Thérèse aux roses' in 1912 this was the standard representation of Thérèse, disseminated widely through the Carmel's publishing programme.



Figure 2.23. The 'buste ovale', 1899. Source: ACL.

¹¹⁸ Photograph 9, Appendix 2.

¹¹⁹ RTAG, p. 40.

¹²⁰ Morgan calls this the 'ideal method': 'The ideal method proceeds by abstracting features from a class of particulars in order to arrive at a composite that represents the essential characteristics, the true likeness.' Morgan, *Visual Piety*, p. 40.

¹²¹ RTAG, p. 40-1.

The Consolidation of Sainly Identity: 'Thérèse aux Roses'

In the wake of the very successful interviews of witnesses by the diocesan Tribunal for the beatification that had taken place at the Carmel between the summers of 1910 and 1911, Céline made a move towards a bolder figuring of Thérèse as saint. With her 'Thérèse aux Roses' of 1912 (see figure 2.24), she made Thérèse a much more identifiable saintly personality than was the case in the 'buste ovale'. Dagron has noted that in the cult image:

individualization is obtained... by accumulated details which gradually modify a general schema: sometimes a scar (for Gregory of Nazianzus), age, hair and beard, and more often, for convenience, costume, posture, and material attributes. The cult image is put together somewhat like the "identikit" picture of our criminal investigators by approximations based on types.¹²²

'Thérèse aux roses' showed Thérèse with an attribute for the first time – that of the crucifix and roses. Earlier Céline had tried other attributes – the Gospels and a harp, in a large oil painting of Thérèse, but the results had been less than satisfactory, and Céline feared that 'the public did not understand [the attributes] sufficiently – their force wasn't very direct.'¹²³ 'Thérèse aux roses' was done at the request of Mgr. Roger de Teil (1848-1922), Vice-Postulator of the cause for Thérèse's beatification,¹²⁴ who 'said that it was necessary to have a portrait of Sœur Thérèse other than the simple bust known as the 'buste ovale', namely a portrait with an [iconographical] attribute which, in depicting the personality and the spirituality of the Saint, represented the devotion of believers with a mark of its own.'¹²⁵ Here was the consolidation of Thérèse's visual representation as a saint – given the 'material attribute' that allows for the 'identikit' representation Dagron mentions, she was easily recognised and given a stronger identification, more 'direct' in its public understanding. The attribute also made an important point about Thérèse's unique spiritual message, the crucifix all but concealed by roses symbolising suffering and trials patiently borne, and the image summed up the personality the Carmel were putting forward in both image and text. Céline would later emphasise that this was 'the principal portrait, the portrait of the Saint published everywhere'.¹²⁶ Indeed, Thérèse's iconic passivity in this image, evoking a strong sense of the presence of the saint and fixing her identity, made it the authoritative prototype image and saw the final erasure of any

¹²² Dagron, 'Holy Images and Likeness', p. 26.

¹²³ RTAG, pp. 42-3, 45. See also T/MMA 05/05/1909, ACL.

¹²⁴ Mgr. de Teil had met Thérèse when he gave a lecture at the Carmel on the martyred Carmelites of Compègne in 1896 and he became a devotee of the future saint. See 'Un grand ami du Carmel: Mgr. de Teil', *Journal des Pèlerins*, 1st year, no. 3 (30 June-7 July 1923), pp. 1-2.

¹²⁵ RTAG, pp. 44-5. See also Céline's statement on the image, published in Tomás Alvarez, 'Retrato y carácter de S. Teresa de Lisieux', *Ephemerides Carmeliticae*, 24, 1 (1973), pp. 130-47.

¹²⁶ RTAG, p. 44.

sense of Thérèse Martin, the historical personality, from representations of this prospective saint. This was the 'pictorial "founding father"' of a 'visual genealogy' that comes down to us today.¹²⁷



Figure 2.24. 'Thérèse aux roses', 1912. Source: ACL.

The Influence of Saint-Sulpician Art

Through these two best-known works, Thérèse was inserted into the timeless tradition of the saint, but Céline was also heavily influenced by contemporary devotional fashions, and Saint-Sulpician art in particular. Claude Savart has seen the cult of Saint Thérèse as being typically Saint-Sulpician, asserting that it is a devotion that in fact typified the final period of style: 'The apparitions at Lourdes designate the initial phase, the canonisation of Joan of Arc and Thérèse of Lisieux the final phase'.¹²⁸ The Saint-Sulpician quality of Céline's images are clear – romantic and sentimental, Thérèse is depicted as the ideal of beauty, with the rounded face, pink cheeks and fine features of contemporary depictions of the Virgin. The devotional ephemera that the Martin sisters

¹²⁷ Woodall, 'Introduction: facing the subject', pp. 3-4.

¹²⁸ Savart, 'A la recherche de l'"art" dit de Saint-Sulpice', p. 276.

owned, still preserved at the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux, reveals that Céline was often directly inspired by specific Saint-Sulpician images here. When she portrayed Thérèse as Saint Agnès,¹²⁹ she was clearly influenced by a particular image of the saint produced by a company based on rue Saint Sulpice, even copying the trimming on the neckline of the saint's robe (figures 2.25-2.26).¹³⁰ Elsewhere, the composition of the 1920 image 'Thérèse *expirante*', showing Thérèse having her alleged death bed ecstasy, was very similar to a holy card that had belonged to Thérèse herself (it was sent to her by her cousin, Jeanne La Néele, in 1897) (figures 2.27-2.28).¹³¹ Such images showed Thérèse as a fashionable saint, inserting her into contemporary modes of representation of the holy. A photograph of a wall in Céline's workspace, held in the Archives of the Carmel, shows the images she found inspiring, including a Saint-Sulpician rendering of the death of Saint Cecilia, a retouched photograph of the nineteenth-century missionary and martyr Théophane Vénard, and an image of rather older provenance of King David playing the harp, and this demonstrates the nature of the visual milieu she was influenced by (see figure 2.29).

Saint-Sulpician art was also popular art, and the mainstream, secular visual culture of early twentieth-century France, much of which could be defined as 'kitsch', was also influential for Céline. A large folder of cuttings of popular images from magazines that she used for her artwork still survives in the Archives.¹³² The use of such popular visual styles was not only a consideration of fashion, but also allowed the authentication of the images of Thérèse by consolidating them into the accepted, anodyne modes of representation for mass cultural images. Robert C. Solomon has explained how kitsch works in this regard, using an image of two little girls by nineteenth-century painter Adolphe Bouguereau as an example:

What makes Bouguereau kitsch is the one-dimensional purity of the emotion. These girls don't do any of the nasty things that little children do. They don't whine. They don't tease the cat. They don't hit each other. They don't have any bruises. They aren't going to die. The art gives us a false portrait, a carefully edited portrait that limits our vision and restricts our sense of reality. It 'manipulates' our feelings. There is no ambiguity. Above all, there is no discomfort, no ugliness or awkwardness, no sense... of intruding on privacy.¹³³

¹²⁹ RTAG, p. 17 and plate between pp.18-9. This was adapted from her painting 'The Annunciation', 1900.

¹³⁰ This card is reproduced in Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, p. 326.

¹³¹ See RTAG, p. 51 and Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, p. 438.

¹³² Modèles Céline, ACL. See also François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage*, p. 27.

¹³³ Solomon, 'On Kitsch and Sentimentality', p. 5.

Such art made universalised figures, bereft of any of the complexities of their real lives. In adopting such popular styles, Céline modelled the individual into an archetype – a saint. By the time of the beatification, less than twenty-six years after her death, Thérèse could be shown in highly exalted ways, and had become fully separated from her historical original, with the 'Little Apotheosis for the Beatification' (1921) showing her kneeling on a cloud, surrounded by angels (see figure 5.5) – she had been severed from the earthly and become celestial.¹³⁴



Figure 2.25-2.26. Left: An image of Saint Agnès, produced by a company on rue Saint Sulpice, c. 1895. Source: ACL. Right: Céline's image of Thérèse as Saint Agnès, c. 1900. Source: ACL.

¹³⁴ RTAG, pp. 51-2.

2. Céline Martin's Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image

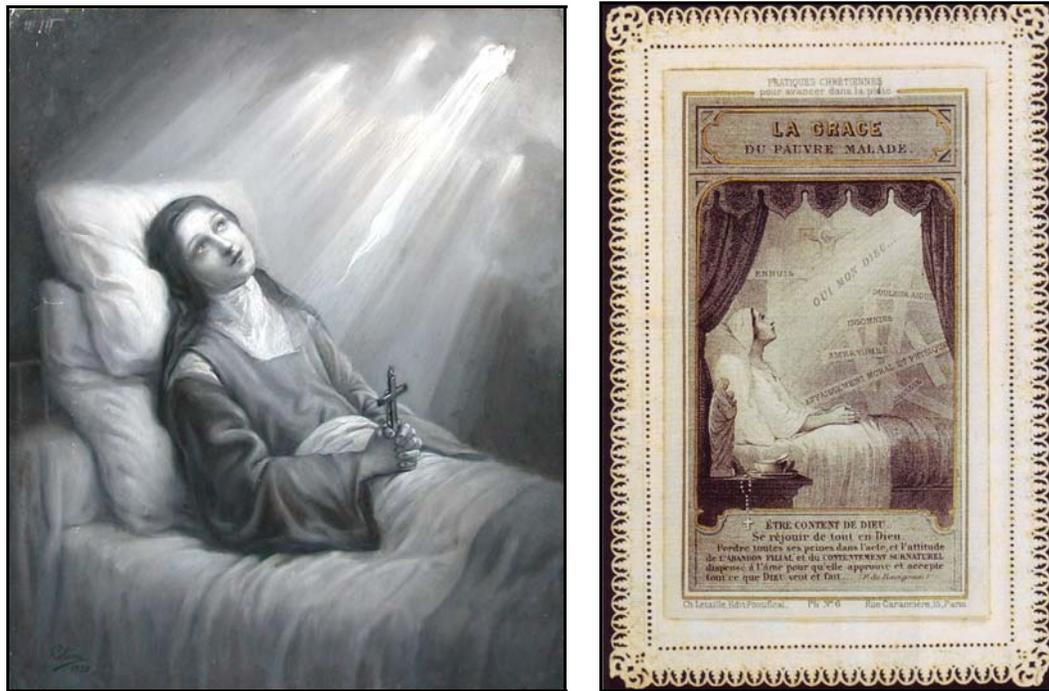


Figure 2.27-2.28. Left: 'Thérèse expirante', 1920. Source: ACL. Right: 'La grace du pauvre malade', 1897. Source: ACL.



Figure 2.29. A display from the wall of Céline's work space, c. 1920. Source: Dessins, modèles, photos de Céline, ACL.

Joan, Christ and the Virgin: Likening to Holy Figures

Céline's representation of Thérèse in the guise of Saint Agnès was not the only time she likened her to holy figures in such a way. The *'buste ovale'* was very similar to the iconic, half-length representations of the reformer of the Carmelites, Teresa of Ávila.¹³⁵ Céline's later image echoes the composition of a holy card of the saint that the Vicar General of Bayeux, Abbé Révérony, had given Thérèse on the day of her profession, for example (see figure 2.30).¹³⁶ Here, Céline was not only likening Thérèse to her namesake saint, but was harnessing the pull of the Catholic past and its great figures, suggesting that Thérèse was the latest in the line of descent of a history of Catholic icons, and was the inheritor of a saintly tradition. Céline directly likened Thérèse to a holy figure in her composition *'Thérèse and Joan of Arc'* (figure 2.31). Completed in 1909, the year of Joan's beatification when, as Céline herself commented, *'Joan of Arc was at the height of her glory'*,¹³⁷ Céline no doubt wished to liken her sister to this other saint-in-waiting (Joan would be canonised in 1920, only five years before Thérèse), also Thérèse's great heroine and a towering figure of the Catholic past. In 1913, Céline also depicted Thérèse holding the infant Jesus (see *'Thérèse au Bambino'* and *Roman Disapproval'* below on this) and commissioned the image *'Nazareth'*, showing her sister entering the home of the Holy Family (figure 2.32). When the Carmel commissioned a biography of Thérèse for children, they added scenes from the early life of Jesus at the head of each chapter, making a clear analogy between the steps of Thérèse's life and those of the life of Christ.¹³⁸ In all of these examples, the Carmel were making a powerful statement about Thérèse's religious importance, only a few years after her death and long before her official recognition by the Church.

¹³⁵ On images of Teresa of Ávila see Salinger, *'Representations of Saint Teresa'*.

¹³⁶ Reproduced in Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, p. 184.

¹³⁷ RTAG, p. 44.

¹³⁸ Père J. Carbonel SJ, *La Petite Thérèse. Histoire de sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus pour les enfants* (Bar-le-Duc, 1914).

2. Céline Martin's Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image



Figure 2.30. Holy card, featuring Teresa of Ávila, c. 1890. Source: ACL.



Figure 2.31. 'Thérèse and Joan of Arc', 1909. Source: ACL.



Figure 2.32. 'Nazareth', c. 1925. Source: ACL.

Making Political Images

Céline also gave her sister with the marks of the authentic saint by signaling Thérèse's place in the political landscape, depicting her in scenarios that spoke to the concerns of French Catholics, and giving her a clear purpose in the economy of popular devotion. In a recent article, Steffen Lösel has asserted that 'Catholics responded to the increasingly secularizing Third Republic by retreating into an unreal romantic counterworld – a kitschy imitation of past times'¹³⁹ – Céline provided images that fitted into this 'counterworld'. Raymond Jonas has recently examined the role of the image in the intersection between politics and religion in France in the early twentieth century, exploring the case of Claire Ferchaud, a young woman from a farming family in the strongly Catholic Vendée, who had a series of visions of Jesus during the First World War.¹⁴⁰ In a highly eschatological vein, he warned her of the punishments that France was bringing on itself through its ungodliness, gesturing to his 'Heart covered with wounds', and saying 'this large wound, it's France that caused it.'¹⁴¹ Claire commissioned an image of Jesus as she saw him in her visions – bloodied and sorrowful (figure 2.33). This image was highly symbolic for French

¹³⁹ Lösel, 'Prayer, Pain, and Priestly Privilege', p. 282.

¹⁴⁰ See Jonas, *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud*.

¹⁴¹ Claude Mouton, *Au plus fort de la tourmente... Claire Ferchaud* (Montsurs, 1978), pp. 96-7.

Catholics living under an anti-Catholic government, and suffering a war that seemed like it hailed the apocalypse. Other images of the period were more literal in their political message. An image in the Archives (possibly by Jouvenot) showed France as a woman in chains, with ruined churches in the background and a building signposted '*Ecole sans dieu*' (figure 2.34). Meanwhile, Joan of Arc appeared in the sky, gesturing towards a crucifix bearing the Holy Face and the phrase '*In hoc signo vinces*' ('In this sign you shall conquer'). This image was very similar to Annould's composition showing Thérèse on a First World War battlefield, which co-opted the tragedy of the war into the desire for the recovery of the embattled Catholic religion, symbolised by a broken calvary and a burning cathedral (figure 2.35). In the book *La petite voie* (1919), an allegorical journey through the soul's journey on Thérèse's 'little way', one of the plates showed God's 'torrent of love' being 'dammed by the hatred in [men's] hearts', with men in jarringly modern dress rushing to put out the fire (figure 2.36).¹⁴² Indeed, Céline's own picture of Thérèse with Joan of Arc was highly politically charged, inspired by a poem Thérèse herself had written which called for Joan to 'Come down to us, come convert France'.¹⁴³ Céline later explained that the picture showed 'Joan's response not only to France but to the whole Church', but that 'her flag does not flap in the wind and it is not enough for all the needs of the Church. Who will come to her aid? Ah! Here... it's Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus, her imitator in love'.¹⁴⁴ Here Thérèse was being strongly cast as a heroine of the Catholic right, a saviour of godless France and champion of the Church.

¹⁴² Mère Agnès de Jésus, *La petite voie. Ascension mystique de la montagne de la perfection d'amour et d'enfance spirituelle de la Servante de Dieu Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Tableaux allégoriques* (Paris, 1919), section 8.

¹⁴³ Thérèse of Lisieux, *Poetry*, pp. 46-9.

¹⁴⁴ See the loose leaf at the end of RTAG, dated 1956, on the Joan of Arc image.

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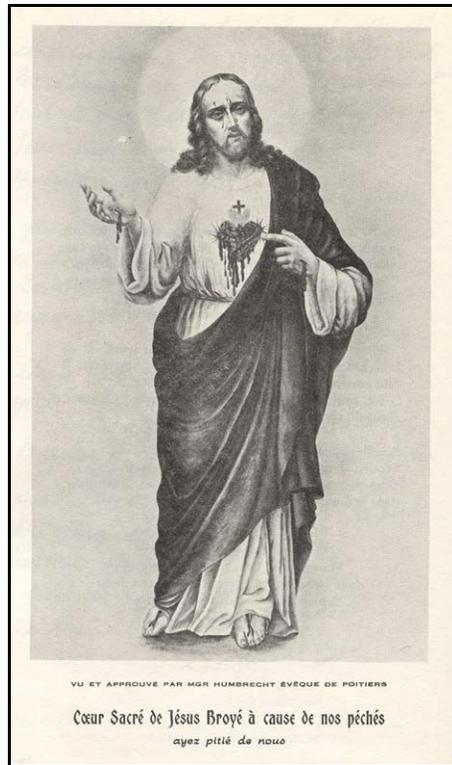


Figure 2.33. Holy card showing Jesus, as seen in the visions of Claire Ferchaud, c. 1918. Source: author's collection.



Figure 2.34. France in chains, c. 1920. Source: Dessins, modèles, photos de Céline, ACL.

2. Céline Martin's Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image

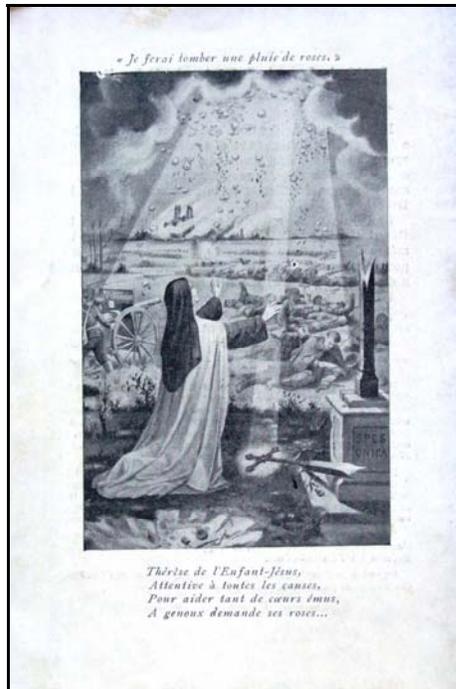


Figure 2.35. Annould's image of Thérèse on the battlefield. Source: Mère Agnès de Jésus, *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie ; depuis sa mort* (Bar-le-Duc, 1916).

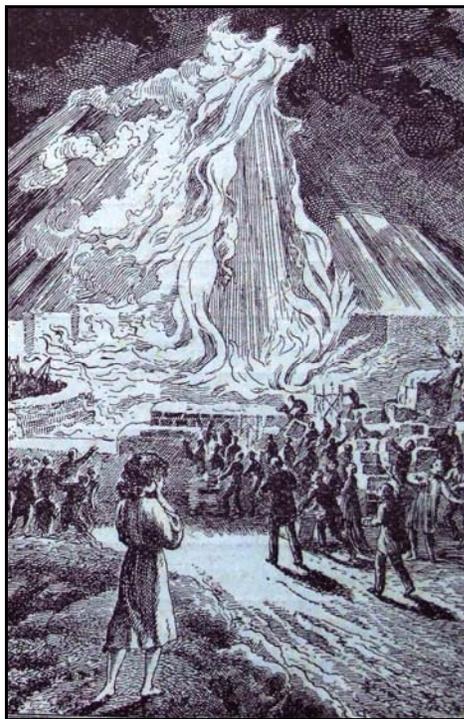


Figure 2.36. God's love, extinguished by men on earth. Source: Mère Agnès de Jésus, *La petite voie* (Paris, 1919).

Challenges to Authenticity

While Céline called on a number of pre-existing traditions to define her artistic practice and drew on existing trends in devotional art in the images she produced to frame Thérèse as an authentic saint, she faced a number of challenges to this process of legitimation. The first of these was that her use of collaborators was, in her conception, detrimental to her self-presentation as a lone artistic genius. Their involvement meant a greater need to centralise creative credit in her hands, and in order to do this Céline carried out extensive retouching on almost all of the works her commissioned artists produced. She had reworked Pascal Blanchard's image 'Thérèse and the stars' extensively,¹⁴⁵ while Thérèse's face in his 'First Communion' was also changed and her dress was altered in the scene showing her taking the habit that Blanchard had also completed.¹⁴⁶ In the *Recueil*, Céline recounted an argument she had with Blanchard over the issue of the authorship of some of his pictures that she had retouched:

He did not want to sign them... truly I do not understand [Blanchard's refusal], for the composition remained his work, and I had always heard my teachers say that 'what really makes a work an artist's is the composition and design.'... the effort, the laborious and praiseworthy part, is set up in the design of a composition: once done, the rest is nothing but play.¹⁴⁷

In making this point, Céline was asserting that the many artworks where she had dictated the compositions, but not carried out the actual work, were in fact of her authorship. Accordingly, although Blanchard had painted the large *grisaille* 'Thérèse expirante' (1920), Céline had sketched out the design, so she claimed complete authorship of it and signed it 'Céline'. She later justified this by emphasising the extent of her own artistic labour to correct the image, saying 'Thérèse's face was so bad that one believed the work was lost, but I vainly tried to keep it. I remember the day when, posed with palette and paintbrush, I allowed myself to sob. Finally, by force of prayer, I arrived at the face that the photograph [in the *Recueil*] shows.'¹⁴⁸

As well as outlining composition as the key to authorship, Céline directed her commissioned artists' work very closely during production, maintaining complete creative control. When Jouvenot was working for Céline she often provided annotated photographs of

¹⁴⁵ C/FTh 27/01/1921, ACL.

¹⁴⁶ RTAG, pp. 49-50.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. v-vi.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

other nuns posing to provide him with exact models for his work (see figure 2.37).¹⁴⁹ In the *Recueil* Céline emphasised that on all three of his major projects for the Carmel (the publications *Vie en images*, *La petite voie* and *Miracles et Interventions* – see chapter 3 on these) the plates were not produced by Jouvenot alone, writing, ‘we retouched them together’.¹⁵⁰ Meanwhile, most of the artists who worked with the Céline on the images remained anonymous. The works of Sœur Marie du Saint-Esprit, Blanchard, de Winter and Grün remained wholly without attribution. The lines between Céline’s work and those of other artists were frequently blurred and it is often difficult to attribute authorship to individual works. In some cases, as many as four people worked on one piece, as in the case of the popular ‘Nazareth’, which was designed by Annould, painted by Blanchard, retouched by Grün and then by Céline.¹⁵¹ In the case of the sculptural works too, she was keen to emphasise that it was she who ‘carr[ie]d out all these works and provided models and instruction.’¹⁵² In Alliot’s case, we find Céline making her position clear in the *Recueil*: ‘Statues of Saint Thérèse by M. Alliot – I directed the execution of all of them.’¹⁵³ Indeed, she had strongly asserted her authority with Alliot, demanding large last-minute changes to his work,¹⁵⁴ and having a protracted and heated exchange of correspondence between June 1933 and January 1934 over one project.¹⁵⁵ In her interactions with her collaborators, as well as her later reflections on this, Céline always figured herself as the source of artistic inspiration and the ultimate author of the artworks in question. In some cases this was highly successful, and the Office Central de Lisieux still sell postcards of Annould’s two images ‘An evening at Alençon’ and ‘An evening at Lisieux’ as ‘a charcoal drawing by Céline’ – the images have been popularly claimed as hers.

¹⁴⁹ See the hundreds of letters between the Carmel and Jouvenot, S-23LL, ACL. See, for example, the photographs provided for Jouvenot’s series of images of Thérèse’s miraculous appearance at the Carmel of Gallipoli, 1910: *Etudes photo pour les lavis de Jouvenot*, ACL. Jouvenot’s finished drawings for this appear in Carmel of Lisieux, *Quelques miracles et interventions*, pp. 61-73.

¹⁵⁰ RTAG, p. vii, 37.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-9

¹⁵⁵ See S-23ii, env. 7, ACL.



Figure 2.37. One of the photographs Céline sent to Jouvenot to give precise directions for his work, c. 1920. Source: Etudes photo pour les lavis de Jouvenot, ACL.

Retouching and 'Reality'

The retouching of photographs that Céline had carried out was also a challenge to the perceived authenticity of the Theresian iconography she had created, and Céline attacked the aura of authenticity surrounding the photographic medium in an attempt to rebut this. Céline asserted that a photograph could never be as accurate as a portrait produced by a true artist, particularly one who knew their subject as well as she did. The Carmel always maintained that the long exposures required by the photographic technology of the day, which required the sitter to remain absolutely still and hold an unnaturally stiff pose for several seconds, deformed Thérèse's features, and Céline is said to have commented that Thérèse's face 'was retouched by photography itself.'¹⁵⁶ Her view of the value of photography was summed up in a statement of 1950:

Brutal mechanical processes of reproduction, showing only the physical structure of the face, cannot capture the soul any more than they can capture refinement of manners or the perfume of a rose. What I always and *only* wanted to capture and show to others, as much as possible, was this 'je ne sais quoi', with the true picture of her soul beneath her features.¹⁵⁷

A photograph could not capture Thérèse's soul like Céline could, and this was a powerful statement of the authority of the artist. In an earlier statement of 1940, Céline suggested another

¹⁵⁶ François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage*, p. 77.

¹⁵⁷ Statement 11/02/1950, quoted in François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage*, p. 24.

source of authority – that of the family. She wrote ‘I have asked myself many times why many people have not had confidence in the retouches done on certain portraits of Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus... I don’t understand why anyone who *never knew* Saint Thérèse would suspect the good faith of her sisters’.¹⁵⁸ The sisters were figured as the ultimate authority on Thérèse’s appearance here, possessing a more intimate knowledge of what she looked like than anyone, having spent years with her both inside and outside the cloister. Céline pointed out that ‘I used photographs *and my memories* when working on the portraits of my Thérèse. During her last illness, being close to beginning my work on the subject, I posed her and examined her traits at leisure, engraving in my memory her physical form. Her expression was etched on my heart...’¹⁵⁹ In a further statement, produced for the ecclesiastical authorities of the process, she stated that ‘no retouches were made with the intention of embellishing – they had no need of it – but *only to make them a better resemblance*.’¹⁶⁰ Here the photograph is figured as an ultimately unfaithful medium, which, in the case of the photographs of Thérèse, needed to be corrected by Céline, with her artist’s eye and intimate knowledge of her sister’s soul, in order to restore her true appearance. Accordingly, the retouched images were framed as the genuine, authentic representations of the saint, while the photographs were utterly rejected.

This attitude to photography was not unique to the Carmel, and they were supported by senior men of the Church. Canon Théophile Dubosq, Promoter of the Faith in Thérèse’s cause (commonly known as the Devil’s Advocate), former priest at the church of Saint Sulpice, director of the great seminary at Bayeux and a fellow Norman, backed up the view of photography as a false medium wholeheartedly. In early 1911 he wrote to Céline ‘We are in absolute agreement in our ideas and taste in the question of photography... Very often the photograph is *false* while the artist... can make their subject live.’¹⁶¹ In the *Recueil* Céline asserted, in the only place where she mentions retouching in the manuscript, that it was Dubosq who had suggested undertaking the retouching work in the first place:

I forgot [to mention] all the enlargements that we had made or that I made myself so to retouch the flaws created by photography, that is always brutal. It was M. Dubosq [*sic*] who encouraged

¹⁵⁸ Déclaration de Céline 29/04/1940, ACL.

¹⁵⁹ Emphasis author’s own. RTAG, p. 39.

¹⁶⁰ Témoignage de Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face au sujet des portraits et photographies de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus, ED Vrai Visage, env. 1, ACL, p. 1.

¹⁶¹ D/C 25/01/1911, THER-5 DUBOSQ, ACL.

us to use this means of rendering useful certain portraits of our Saint, which would not have seen the light of day without it.¹⁶²

But this idea of the inherent failings of photography was not always enough for either Céline or Dubosq, and other excuses were made for the retouching work. In April 1926 Dubosq said of the retouched 'Thérèse *aux images*' photograph (figure 2.13) that the Carmel should point out that:

This photograph was taken when Sœur Thérèse was already very ill, and overcome with a fever of 40°... As a result, her face has a strained and suffering expression which was not normal... Some retouches done by Sœur Geneviève have reduced this strained look and given the photograph a very faithful resemblance.¹⁶³

Elsewhere he asserted that 'it is not appropriate to multiply and *diversify* the type [of images] – they must hold with the sanctioned type, which remains that of the frontispiece of *Histoire d'une âme* [the '*buste ovale*']'¹⁶⁴ Dubosq was clearly concerned that the original photos would problematise the portraits, creating multiple faces for the saint and potentially confusing the public. Indeed, despite their philosophical approach to the photographs, the business of promoting the cult in the marketplace was a clear consideration for the Carmel and their allies here (see chapter 3).

Disapproval and Family Feuds

Céline's work also faced disapproval from family members, a real threat to the perceived authenticity of her images, but this disapproval was powerfully rebuffed. When Léonie, the only Martin sister not in the Carmel, expressed some concern about a picture of Thérèse as first communicant, Marie wrote to her 'Do not complain that Céline has idealised our little saint – for me none of her portraits show her as beautiful as she was in reality', adding that 'the talent of the artist is to show the *soul* of their subject, that is to say to *interpret* and not to copy slavishly.'¹⁶⁵ The sisters' uncle, Isidore Guérin, also disapproved of the images and when, in February 1909, Monsieur de Teil was to make his first visit to Lisieux and was to stay with the Guérins, the prioress felt it prudent to warn him that 'Monsieur Guérin has all sorts of prejudices against the autobiography, and these have been passed on to his daughter and son-in-law, Doctor La Néele,

¹⁶² RTAG, p. 51.

¹⁶³ D/MA 29/04/1926, THER-5, ACL. See also D/MA 07/11/1923, THER-5, ACL.

¹⁶⁴ D/C 25/01/1911, THER-5, ACL.

¹⁶⁵ MSC/FTh 16/07/1913, ACL. Shortly afterwards Léonie wrote back, clearly chastened, saying Thérèse was 'perfect' in the image. FTh/C 06/08/1913, ACL.

who live with him. He constantly objects to the illustrations in the book'.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, his daughter, Jeanne, and her doctor husband, Francis had begun to circulate an original photograph of Thérèse as a novice they had in their possession as an antidote to Céline's images. Céline said of this photograph, known as the '*cliché* Gombault' (named after the priest who took it when he entered the cloister of the Carmel to undertake some repairs for the community),¹⁶⁷ that 'If the friends of Saint Thérèse want to know her, they should not look for her in this photograph' (see 'The '*Cliché* Gombault', chapter 4, on this image).¹⁶⁸ Céline later reported to Léonie, with great indignation, a meeting she had had with Francis:

We have the joy of suffering for justice... Francis came to the parlour the other day... he reproached us, particularly me, saying that *none* of our portraits of Thérèse looked like her, and also that he had had an image enlarged (the photograph of Thérèse as a novice by M. Gombault) and that he did not wish to see any other but this. He shook while talking to me like this – our Mother was very sad.¹⁶⁹

The rejection of her images by people who had known Thérèse well (Francis had even treated her a month before her death) undermined Céline's standard defence of her images – that she had unique first-hand experience of her appearance. Later, the Carmel would have to deal with the fallout from the illicit circulation of photographs that threatened Céline's portraits, and the '*cliché* Gombault' in particular would cause them many problems (see chapters 4 and 5).

Dubosq, de Teil and Clerical Approval

The authority of the men of the Church was often used by the Carmel as a powerful tool of legitimation of Céline's images. Officially the Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux was responsible for approving both the written and visual works produced by the Carmel, and the matter of the representation of holy figures ultimately fell under the jurisdiction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. However, their interest was mainly limited to images in liturgical settings, and in practice it was the Churchmen involved in Thérèse's process of beatification and canonisation, Canon Dubosq and Mgr. de Teil, who exercised a controlling hand over Céline's work, and their approval was often used to confer a sense of authenticity on her images. Céline recalled in the

¹⁶⁶ MMA/T 02/02/1909, ACL. See also Céline's warning to Léonie 'Don't talk to my uncle about *any* of the new images, we are avoiding this issue with him'. C/FTh 25/12/1907, ACL.

¹⁶⁷ Photograph 6, Appendix 2.

¹⁶⁸ Témoignage de Sœur Geneviève, ED Vrai Visage, env. 1, ACL. Canon Dubosq also railed against this photograph – see D/C 14/12/1917, THER-5, ACL.

¹⁶⁹ C/FTh Christmas/1913, ACL. See also: C/FTh 11-12/02/1917; C/FTh 15/08/1917; C/FTh 25/12/1919, ACL.

Recueil that 'I had the encouragement of hearing from Monsieur Dubosq, though sparing in his praise, that I *drew* perfectly.'¹⁷⁰ While, of her picture of Thérèse at the feet of Leo XIII, completed in 1903, she stated 'it has earned me praise, even from Rome! Monsignor de Teil admired it very much.'¹⁷¹ Of her colour version of the '*buste ovale*' she wrote 'It had even been *very much appreciated* by the Men of the Tribunal and illustrated Monsignor de Teil's *Articles* [for the cause of beatification]. It was even reproduced in colour.'¹⁷² Céline even co-opted the Pope himself into this method of legitimation of her images, saying that when Cardinal Pacelli (by the time she was writing, Pius XII) was shown some of the 'defective' photographs during his visit to the Carmel in 1937, he declared himself content with her retouching work on them.¹⁷³ But the men of the Church also often acted as critics of her work, with de Teil saying of the colour version of the '*buste ovale*' that 'the lips are too red in the tri-colour picture. One would think that Sœur Thérèse was wearing lipstick.'¹⁷⁴ He even suggested changes to the foundational '*Thérèse aux roses*',¹⁷⁵ while Dubosq gave Céline extensive advice on a rendering of the Crucifixion she was working on in 1921.¹⁷⁶ But such critiques of her images were very minor in comparison to the Churchmen's reactions to some of her other images, whose religious orthodoxy was called into question.

Taste and Theology

When Céline's images faced censure from within the Church itself, their authenticity was severely threatened, and in a number of cases she struggled to produce images that were theologically acceptable. We have already seen how Céline depicted Thérèse in holy guises well before her recognition by the Church, but in other cases she produced images which bordered on the heretical. In 1909 de Teil wrote to the then prioress of the Carmel, Mère Marie-Ange, about the image on the back cover of their publication *Appel aux petites âmes* (1904), apparently showing Thérèse as an angel (figure 2.38):

I don't like the baby... with angel's wings and bare legs and arms... our judges in Rome... will say that you have placed the Servant of God in a nimbus of light in Heaven, among the stars... she

¹⁷⁰ RTAG, p. vi.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 44. See Roger de Teil, *Articles pour la Cause de Béatification de la Servante de Dieu Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face carmélite du Monastère de Lisieux* (Lille, 1910).

¹⁷³ Déclaration de Céline 29/04/1940, ACL.

¹⁷⁴ T/MA 04/06/1911, ACL. See also: T/MA 17/04/1911; T/MA 27/11/1911, ACL.

¹⁷⁵ T/MA 27/08/1912, ACL.

¹⁷⁶ D/C 15/04/1921, THER-5, ACL.

treads branches of roses that unpetal and fall to the earth – you crown her and give her the attributes of angels. You are pre-empting the process of the Church.¹⁷⁷

He went on to say that this could jeopardise the cause of beatification – indeed, the non-cult process would need to establish that the Church's proper judgement had not been compromised by any premature glorification of the subject of the cause. Mère Agnès was the one to reply, confirming that she had sent a telegram to the publisher to stop the sale of the edition immediately, but adding 'this little angel has been going for a long time! Indeed thousands of copies have been sold!!!'¹⁷⁸ The origin of the representation was typical of Céline's reuse and refashioning of images. In 1898 she produced a large oil painting representing the Holy Family with two small angels and putti in the sky (figure 2.39). Inspired by themes from Thérèse's plays 'Les anges à la crèche de Jésus' and 'Le divin petit mendiant de Noël',¹⁷⁹ Céline explained that she 'wanted to represent Thérèse who, in the lineaments of an infant, was *calling* the "little souls" to surround the sleeping child Jesus. But I did not succeed in giving her the resemblance I desired'.¹⁸⁰ This painting appeared as a plate in *Histoire d'une âme* as early as 1902, but by the 1906 edition the picture had been adapted to rectify the lack of resemblance that Céline saw in the image – Thérèse's face from a photograph of her aged eight, posing with Céline (figure 2.40), had been pasted over the painted face. This bizarre composite image was used on holy cards (see figure 2.41) and by 1904 had been adapted into the image de Teil objected to. The use of a photograph in such a way suggested that Céline's attitude to photographic representation was not as simple as her denunciations of it in defence of her retouching work suggested, but it also revealed that the angel was clearly intended to be a representation of Thérèse. The Carmel were not ready to admit this, however.

Mgr. de Teil was forced to write to the Carmel about the 'Thérèse-angel' again, some eight months later. He wrote:

About the guardian angel of Sœur Thérèse on the cover of the new blue edition, I have been struck by the similarity between the angel's head, that indeed represents Sœur Thérèse, on the edition that you deleted, and on the one that has just appeared. As the edition will have run out by the time of the non-cult process and you can make a substitution, leave out the little angel carrying the banner...

¹⁷⁷ T/MMA 05/05/1909, ACL.

¹⁷⁸ MA/T 05/05/1909, ACL.

¹⁷⁹ See Thérèse of Lisieux, *Théâtre au Carmel*, pp. 85-109, 181-200.

¹⁸⁰ RTAG, p. 16. Some pages later she states that this was 'a mistake' and that 'my aim was not to do a portrait of Thérèse but a tableau for the choir'. RTAG, p. 40.

The coat of arms of Carmel will certainly have a better effect without being susceptible to any unfavourable interpretation.¹⁸¹

Clearly the angel had continued to be used, despite de Teil's warnings. Mère Agnès had been re-elected prioress the previous November, and she sent the following reply:

Can we leave this little angel? It doesn't represent Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus at all. *We have never had this thought*, it is a simple little angel who expresses one of her sayings... In any case, Monsignor, we have such confidence in you that I do not hesitate, if some of the edition is still not bound, to start again with this cover which simply has the arms of Carmel.¹⁸²

That the image in question was substantially an actual photograph of Thérèse as a child makes Mère Agnès' assertion that 'it doesn't represent Sœur Thérèse' very surprising. Indeed, on one of the holy cards that the image had appeared on, a note on the back explained 'The child-Thérèse is represented as a little angel who throws flowers (tableau by her sister).'¹⁸³ Two days later de Teil wrote: 'I did not ask for a modification of the blue edition at this stage, but I cannot thank you enough for your attentiveness in preventing the difficulties that are always possible, I *am very touched*.'¹⁸⁴ The 'Thérèse-angel' did not appear in the autobiography after 1906 and the back cover of the 1910 edition of *Appel aux petites âmes* carried the coat of arms of Carmel, as de Teil had asked. The Martin sisters frequently referred to Thérèse as an angel,¹⁸⁵ but it is clear that here, in depicting this idea so literally, they had overstepped the limits of taste and decency as far as the Church was concerned. This was a religiously inauthentic image, which did not gain the approval of the Church, but it was not the only such image that Céline was responsible for.

¹⁸¹ T/MA 21/01/1910, ACL.

¹⁸² MA/T 21/01/1910, ACL.

¹⁸³ Holy card titled 'Noel !', produced by the Imprimerie Saint-Paul, undated (figure 2.41). ACL.

¹⁸⁴ T/MA 23/01/1910, ACL.

¹⁸⁵ See François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage*, pp. 17-8 and Peter-Thomas Rohrbach OCD, *The Search for Saint Thérèse* (New York, 1961), p. 58.

2. Céline Martin's Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image



Figure 2.38. The 'Thérèse-angel', c. 1904. Source: Mère Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur, *Appel aux petites âmes* (Bar-le-Duc, 1904).



Figure 2.39. 'The Holy Family', 1898. Source: ACL.



Figure 2.40. Thérèse aged eight with Céline (left), 1881. Source: OCL.

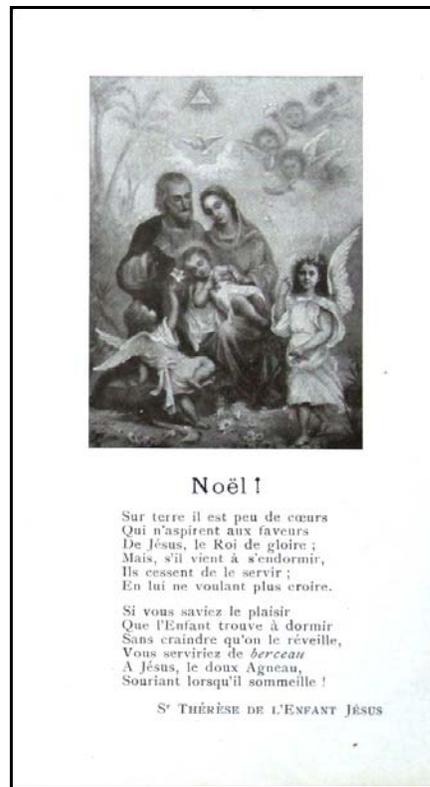


Figure 2.41. Holy card, showing the 'Thérèse-angel', c. 1906. Source: ACL.

'Thérèse au Bambino' and Roman Disapproval

When one of Céline's images again incurred the displeasure of Church authorities, it would be censured by Rome itself. Around 1913 Céline produced an oil painting of Thérèse embracing the baby Jesus (figure 2.42). Known as *'Thérèse au Bambino'*, Céline explains in the *Recueil* 'Here, she had a very good likeness, but Rome did not accept the subject and we had to destroy all the reproductions that had been made.'¹⁸⁶ The maquette for *La petite voie* carried the picture as a frontispiece, although it never appeared in the final publication.¹⁸⁷ It had also been used on holy cards, as Céline suggests, and the sculptor Alliot had even made a small statue inspired by it for inside the cloister of the Carmel – in the *Recueil* Céline refers to this very simply as *"Thérèse au bambino" (prohibited)*.¹⁸⁸ But the image was not completely lost, and Céline wrote in the *Recueil* that later 'I added the most important person to the tableau: the Holy Virgin!'¹⁸⁹ (see figure 2.43). Indeed, the problem with the image seems to have been the representation of Thérèse with the child Jesus alone – usually only the Virgin was shown in this way.¹⁹⁰ In an archival document on the plates contained in *Vie en images*, written in 1970, the subject was still contentious, the note stating 'Portraits by Céline... these subjects can be disseminated *on request*, except the one on p. 56 [*'Thérèse au Bambino'*] (it has been eliminated).'¹⁹¹ Another note in the Archives of the Carmel reproduces a passage from Dom Guéranger's *l'Année Liturgique*, suggesting that this is what Céline was representing:

Saint Bonaventure explains... the sentiments the Christian may have near the cradle of the new-born Jesus: 'And you also', he says... 'Take him in your arms, hold him and contemplate his lovable face; kiss it reverently and delight yourself confidently in this. You can do that; because it is for sinners that he has come for their salvation, and that he has humbly spoken with them.'¹⁹²

In the transcription the mentions of 'the Mother' and 'the holy old man Joseph' from Guéranger's text had been excluded, as had his order 'ask Our Lady to give him to you or to let you take him' – the text had to be adapted to give the meaning Céline's image implied.¹⁹³ This picture did have

¹⁸⁶ RTAG, p. 47.

¹⁸⁷ *La petite voie* maquette, ACL.

¹⁸⁸ RTAG, p. 50.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁹⁰ Even so, the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux holds a large collection of holy cards, produced by outside parties, showing Thérèse alone with the Infant Jesus. *Cartes Thérèse et Jésus seule*, ACL.

¹⁹¹ Archival note 20/02/1975, *Vie en Images de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, ACL.

¹⁹² *Thérèse au bambino*. Note de janvier 1932, ACL, quoting Dom Prosper Guéranger, *L'Année Liturgique, 1: Le temps de Noël* (Tours, 1934), pp. 284-5.

¹⁹³ Guéranger, *L'Année Liturgique*, p. 284.

some life after it was given the necessary addition of the Virgin, appearing in later editions of *Vie en images*, but the controversy demonstrates how much Céline's ideas could deviate from the opinions of the Church and their ideas of orthodox iconography. This was such a religiously unacceptable image that it had to be suppressed and, finally, greatly modified.



Figure 2.42. 'Thérèse au bambino', 1913. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.43. 'Thérèse au bambino' with the figure of the Virgin added, 1935. Source: ACL.

Holy Figures and the Scattering of Roses

If the portrayal of Thérèse as an angel or with the infant Jesus was alarming to the Church authorities, her representation as the Virgin in Céline's rendering of the Annunciation (figure 2.44) may have been seen as even more outrageous. This image was completed in 1900 and in the *Recueil* Céline did not say explicitly that this was representation of her sister, but did confirm that 'Crowned with roses, the head of the Virgin made a picture of Saint Agnès' – the image we have already seen (figure 2.26).¹⁹⁴ Indeed, the face of the Virgin in the original image echoed the face of the young Thérèse that reoccurs again and again in Céline's images (see figure 2.45), and it seems clear that the original painting was intended to represent Thérèse in the guise of the Virgin. Elsewhere Céline showed more caution in her approach, and her travails over the representation of Thérèse scattering roses, symbolic of her favours on earth (she was said to have vowed 'Je ferai tomber une pluie de roses' ('I will let fall a shower of roses') on her deathbed), shows how she struggled for religious authenticity in her images. Charles Jouvenot's original design for a mosaic for the apse of the Basilique Sainte-Thérèse showed roses cascading from Thérèse's chest, directly onto the earth below (figure 2.46).¹⁹⁵ The implication that Thérèse was intervening directly on earth was theologically problematic, the role of saints being only to intercede with God the Father and Son on the behalf of the faithful, and this design was never used. Grün's image 'Apotheosis above St Peter's Basilica' avoided this problem by showing roses in the lap of the Virgin, from which Thérèse gathers them and scatters them in turn (figure 2.47). This was acceptable in its theological implication, showing the saint as a simple intercessor, not a source of divine power. Indeed, in the 'Thérèse-angel' case de Teil had particularly mentioned that the figure appeared to be scattering roses, and this seemed to form a main part of his objection to it. Similarly, a sketch for a planned statue carried the caption, 'Always our Mother's original idea was that Thérèse would receive roses from Jesus' heart' (see figure 2.48).¹⁹⁶ Although this statue was never made, the design did conform to the theological hierarchy the Carmel was trying to stick to in their efforts to provide representations that were acceptable to the Church.

¹⁹⁴ RTAG, p. 17.

¹⁹⁵ S-23LL, env. 4, ACL.

¹⁹⁶ THER-14 F, boîte 3, ACL.

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Figure 2.44. 'The Annunciation', 1900. Source: ACL.



Figure 2.45. Céline's Thérèse. Left to right: Detail from 'The Annunciation' (1900), 'Thérèse and Leo XIII' (1903) and 'Thérèse as first communicant' (1909-10). Source: ACL.

2. Céline Martin's Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image



Figure 2.46. Charles Jouvenot's design for a mosaic for the apse of the basilica, showing Thérèse showering roses from heaven, 1930. Source: S-23LL TRAVAUX, env. 4, ACL.

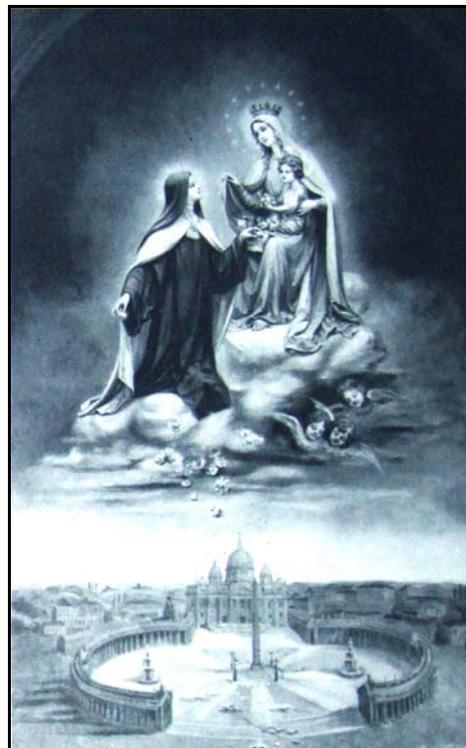


Figure 2.47. Grün's 'Apotheosis above St Peter's Basilica', c. 1920. Source: ACL.

blood. He made us become *spiritual sisters*'.¹⁹⁹ In her autobiographical manuscript Céline wrote of the two loves of her spiritual life – 'my Thérèse and the Holy Face',²⁰⁰ and she depicted herself alongside her holy sister in two of her images (figure 2.49 and 2.50).²⁰¹ But Céline would also speak of the 'virtues of Thérèse and the faults of Céline',²⁰² and her relationship with her younger sister – the favourite daughter who outstripped her in spiritual achievements – was often conflicted.²⁰³ Less than a year after Thérèse left her behind to enter Carmel, Céline wrote to her, making reference to one of Thérèse's many self-effacing names for herself:

I don't want you to call yourself the little grain of sand because this is not true. If you persist in calling yourself this, then give me the name of imperceptible atom, and then things will be right. I always come *after* you; I am another you, but you are the reality while I am only your shadow.²⁰⁴

After Thérèse's death, Céline was able to appropriate her sister and perhaps ameliorate this sense of inferiority to some degree by living through her sister. In her later career, Céline became 'Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face *et de Sainte Thérèse*' – Thérèse, and everything her success meant, had become integral to her personality. As such, the portraits were not just the result of an attempt to make Thérèse 'eternally present', making her a concrete 'reality' through them, but were also part of Céline's quest to find her own identity – to become more than a 'shadow'.

¹⁹⁹ HA, Ms. A, 47v°, p. 103.

²⁰⁰ CAC, p. 6.

²⁰¹ See RTAG, p. 49. See also D/MA 16/11/1911, THER-5, ACL on the former image.

²⁰² CAC, p. 1.

²⁰³ See Laurentin and Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, pp. 132-4.

²⁰⁴ C/Th 01/03/1889, ACL.



Figure 2.49. 'Thérèse and Céline', 1911. Source: ACL.



Figure 2.50. The 'bouquet', 1909, showing all the Martin sisters and their cousin. Clockwise from bottom: Céline, Marie, Pauline, Léonie, Marie Guérin. Source: ACL

In this chapter we have revealed the history of the production of the Celinian image, its insertion into pre-existing devotional trends and the building and challenging of its authenticity. We have seen Céline Martin struggling to establish her authority as an artist and to produce religiously legitimate images. This was an ultimately successful project, the proof being in the association the images gained with the miraculous. The sisters emphasised that 'these portraits have done conversions and miracles',²⁰⁵ and during her testimony for the beatification in 1910, Céline stated that the former prioress of the Carmel, Mère Marie de Gonzague, had been 'converted' by a copy of one of her portraits of Thérèse as a child.²⁰⁶ Indeed, perhaps the ultimate approval of Céline's images was that, even before the canonisation, the Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, Mgr. Thomas Lemonnier, asserted in a note on the portraits that appeared in every edition of the autobiography from 1924 until 1950 that the 'Thérèse *aux roses*' image was a fully authentic representation because 'Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus appears to understand herself in this way and uses it to her credit, since, most often... she appears under this form to her favoured people.'²⁰⁷ Indeed, Thérèse was appearing in visions with the crucifix and roses her sister had invented as a symbol for her only after her death.²⁰⁸ Here, the image is not legitimated by its appearance in the vision, but the process goes a step further and the image has gained such power that it legitimates the vision itself. Gilbert Dagron has identified this process, saying 'The image authenticates the vision more than it is authenticated by it, because consensus is based on the image, and it is from the image that a collective imagination springs, which is simply confirmed afterwards by the imagination of the visionary or the dreamer.'²⁰⁹ By at least 1924, if not well before (many of Thérèse's miraculous appearances during the First World War featured the crucifix and roses) Céline's most famous image of her sister had gained such potency that it was the defining mark of an authentic encounter with the saint. 'Thérèse *aux roses*' had become a true icon, 'telling the faithful under what form he will see the saint appear, and the saint what face he must assume and what clothes he must wear in order to be recognized.'²¹⁰ Ultimately, the images were a powerful means of legitimation of the cult itself, being the means by which this miraculous association became possible, for example, and providing a concrete method by which the cult may

²⁰⁵ MSC/FTh 16/07/1913, ACL.

²⁰⁶ Christopher O'Mahony (ed.), *St. Thérèse of Lisieux by Those Who Knew Her* (Dublin, 1975), p. 163.

²⁰⁷ Carmel of Lisieux, *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Histoire d'une âme écrite par elle-même* (Lisieux, 1924), p. 596.

²⁰⁸ See Carmel of Lisieux, *Pluie de Roses*, 7 vols (Bar-le-Duc, 1910-26) for hundreds of miracle accounts where this is the case.

²⁰⁹ Dagron, 'Holy Images and Likeness', p. 31.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

be disseminated. Having been moulded into an archetype, the 'new' Thérèse, the Celinian Thérèse, had become ideal propaganda for her own cult. Indeed, we are reminded of Adorno and Horkheimer's assertion that the cultural commodity 'has been essentially objectified and made viable before the established authorities began to argue about it. Even before Zanuck [the Hollywood producer of the 1943 biopic *The Song of Bernadette*] acquired her, Saint Bernadette was regarded by her latter-day hagiographer as brilliant propaganda for all interested parties. That is what became of the emotions of the character.'²¹¹ As discussed in chapter 2, Adorno's pessimistic view of mass culture is rejected in this thesis as ignoring the significance of mass cultural forms, but the process of objectification before the Church officially appropriated Thérèse is similar, and Adorno points out a valuable parallel here. Through Céline's images, Thérèse was reshaped to fit recognised narratives and the 'emotions of the character' were erased to create a representation that was suitable for mass dissemination. It is that dissemination that is the subject of the next chapter.

²¹¹ Adorno and Horkheimer, 'The Culture Industry', p. 129.

Chapter 3

La Vie en images: The Dissemination of the Celinian Image and the Building of a Commercial Cult

‘Made to order for her century’ – what a fine compliment for a saint!

Gilbert Cesbron, *Briser la Statue* (1952).

This chapter traces the Carmel of Lisieux’s creation of an industry around Saint Thérèse of Lisieux in the first decades of the twentieth century, and the promotion of Céline’s images that we examined in chapter 2 through this industry.¹ It makes use of a previously unexamined source – the collection of monthly commercial catalogues, held by the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux, produced by the Carmel’s publisher, the Imprimerie Saint-Paul, and later, their business arm, the Office Central de Lisieux. This is an invaluable source on the commerciality of the Theresian cult, showing exactly what publications and devotional products the Carmel were producing and when, making it possible to trace the commercial development of the cult in detail. Taken along with the Carmel’s business correspondence, also little used previously, this chapter reveals a number of previously hidden figures involved in the commercial promotion of Thérèse and gives the first sustained account of the development of the business side of the cult, as well as of the use of Céline’s images in consumer products. The Celinian Thérèse appeared on everything from bracelets to calendars, but the images featured most prominently in the over thirty different popular publications about Thérèse, presenting her life story and spiritual ideology, that the Carmel produced over a sixty year period. Céline’s images played an essential role in the content, message and appeal of these books. Crucial tools for the dissemination of the cult, these publications were key in the construction of Thérèse’s public persona and were the principal means by which Céline’s images reached a wide audience.

The use of Céline’s images in the popular publications produced by the Carmel of Lisieux was not simply a method for their dissemination, however. They also allowed Céline’s images to be presented in a coherent series, one that came to be used again and again in different publications, presenting a homogenous landscape of Theresian iconography to the faithful and a

¹ Some attention is paid to the commercial elements of the cult in Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*. See ch. 5 in particular. Some of the popular publications are mentioned in Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, pp. 452-3, 471-2, 488, 495. See also his *Thérèse et Lisieux*, p. 311, 316. Antoinette Guise has examined the popular publications, with a particular emphasis on the miracle accounts. See ‘Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse’ and ‘Thérèse de Lisieux et ses miracles’.

visual counterpart to the increasingly standardised textual hagiography. In ordering the presentation of Céline's images, these books shaped their meaning. The constant repetition of a small handful of images gave Thérèse a recognisable public face – a brand – and the images by Céline and her collaborators were figured as the original and only genuine representations of Thérèse through this. Colleen McDannell has written of the Gospel Trumpet religious goods company, founded in the United States in the late nineteenth century and in existence until the 1960s, that 'In order to distinguish Gospel Trumpet goods from other goods, a limited number of Christian symbols were used on products... By using only a limited number of religious images, Gospel Trumpet...established a small set of Protestant representations as a "brand name".'² The Carmel did just the same, offering a large array of images of Thérèse, but concentrating on a core few that were used most frequently. It is argued here that the Carmel's commercial activities in general, and this focus on a few specific images in particular, created a brand around the saint, inserting Thérèse into the living popular religious culture of the time. By making Thérèse a force in the market place, she gained a foothold in the economy of popular devotion, competing successfully for adherents against devotions of much longer pedigree. It is therefore suggested that the creation of a fully-fledged commercial enterprise around the saint acted as an instrument of cultural legitimisation, placing this only recently-dead nun alongside well-established saints and likening her cult to other commercialised devotions. In addition, the gradual presentation of Thérèse in the popular publications as a miracle-worker and saint, rather than historical personality, contributed greatly to the legitimisation of the cult.

While this chapter principally focuses on the popular publications, here we find the Carmel fully embracing modern technology and taking a multimedia approach to their promotion of Céline's images, using print, film and even waxworks as part of their marketing plan. The examination of the Diorama Sainte-Thérèse waxwork museum at the end of this chapter unearths the history of this commercial attraction for the first time, underscoring the diverse ways in which Céline's representations were promoted and highlighting their use of modern media to proclaim an anti-modern message. The history of the commercial activity surrounding the cult of Saint Thérèse has until now been a notable absence in the existing literature on the commercial promotion of modern devotional cults and the tensions that surrounded the burgeoning mass-

² McDannell, *Material Christianity*, p. 240.

consumerism of turn of the century France.³ While work by Suzanne Kaufman and Robert Orsi has examined the building of commercial enterprises around nascent cults (in the case of the Lourdes devotion and the cult of Saint Jude, respectively), this intersection of the commercial and the devotional is still understudied.⁴ This chapter makes a contribution to research on this topic, giving an insight into commercial religion in early twentieth-century France by examining the production of consumer items and development of the commercial profile of a cult from the very beginning of its life.

There is still much work to be done on the monolithic body of devotional literature the Martin sisters produced in the early part of the twentieth century, its massive sales figures demonstrating its significance to popular Catholicism in that period.⁵ This chapter is not exhaustive in its examination of these rich sources on the devotional culture of French Catholics, focussing only on the publications that were most significant for their dissemination of the Celinian image. These books deserve further study and close textual analysis, which is not attempted here. Here, the publications the Carmel produced (almost all text-light and image-heavy) are recognised as pieces of material culture – palpable, tactile, physical objects which, in the home or workplace, carried on one’s person or kept in a handbag, were marks of allegiance to a set of social, religious and cultural identities.⁶ The many heavily-illustrated publications the Carmel produced had more in common with the other devotional items they sold than the few text-heavy books they issued (notably, the deluxe editions of *Histoire d’une âme*), and it should be borne in mind that ‘The religious life of Christian people is reflected less by the writings of theologians or spiritual masters than by the objects handled each day by the masses’.⁷ In examining these devotional publications as products rather than literature, we can fully appreciate their highly multivalent nature. Reproduced in millions of examples, principally through these books, Céline’s representations of Thérèse became the absolute opposite of the fetishised, miraculous, cult image – these were throw-away, mass produced and ephemeral, without any liturgical ‘staging’. Here, at what Richard Marks has called ‘the Woolworths end of the market’,⁸ Céline’s images became desirable

³ On this see Lisa Tiersten, *Marianne in the Market: Envisioning Consumer Society in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Berkeley, 2001).

⁴ See Kaufman, *Consuming Visions* and Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude*.

⁵ See chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁶ McDannell’s approach has been influential here. See McDannell, *Material Christianity*.

⁷ Jean Pirotte, ‘Les images de dévotion, témoins de la mentalité d’une époque 1840-1965: méthodologie d’une enquête dans le Namurois’, *Revue d’Histoire de la Spiritualité*, 50 (1974), p. 479.

⁸ Marks, *Image and Devotion*, p. 212.

commercial items. Some commentators have spoken of Thérèse herself as a product,⁹ and the publications were the principal medium through which Thérèse, as a desirable consumer item, could be appropriated. The articulation of faith through the purchase and use of such books and other commercial devotional items had become a prominent part of Catholic religious practice by this period, with the mass production of domestic devotional products allowing the faithful to stamp their Catholic identity on their homes, and the proliferation of portable items, such as medals, rosaries, scapulars, pocket oratories and, perhaps most importantly, small holy images, allowed believers to show their religious allegiances to the outside world. This chapter looks at how the Carmel made Thérèse a part of this landscape of material culture, showing how central consumer items were to the playing out of religious faith, and how entrepreneurial propagators of devotional cults could be.¹⁰

Nuns and Businessmen: The Creators of the Theresian Industry

While all the images of Thérèse had been created by Céline or under her direct guidance, as we saw in chapter 2, the commercial industry around Thérèse that used these images as its main asset required the involvement of many more actors. The successive prioresses and sub-prioresses of the Carmel were important figures here. Mère Marie de Gonzague (Marie Adèle Rosalie Davy De Virville, 1834-1904) (figure 3.1) is a notorious figure in Thérèse's history, a wilful and difficult personality who the Martin sisters denounced as a tyrant at the Tribunal of the Apostolic Process for Thérèse's beatification.¹¹ Nevertheless, Mère Marie had known Thérèse from the age of nine (from the time of Mère Agnès' entry to the Carmel), and had broken the Order's rules on the number of blood relatives allowed in one community, as well as facing down the staunch opposition of the ecclesiastical superior of the Carmel, to allow Thérèse to enter the convent. Mère Marie was in her third term as head of the community at the time of Thérèse's death, and less than a month later she sent the young nun's autobiographical manuscripts to Père Godefroy Madelaine (1842-1931), monk of the Abbey of Mondaye, for his opinion on publishing the work.

⁹ See Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 41.

¹⁰ Raymond Jonas has highlighted the spontaneous production of devotional images by grassroots constituencies in early twentieth century France, including by the Œuvre de l'Insigne du Sacré-Cœur, and Claire Ferchaud and her allies. See Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, pp. 88-91, 141 and *Idem.*, *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud*, pp. 88-91.

¹¹ See Dans quel milieu Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus s'est sanctifiée au Carmel de Lisieux, *Procès de béatification et canonisation de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face, 2: Procès apostolique* (Rome, 1976), pp. 357-70. The accusations made in this document would later become the foundation of the work of most of the cult's detractors (see chapter 4).

After his edits and those of Mère Agnès, and once the Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux had given the Carmel permission to publish in March 1898, she oversaw the publication of *Histoire d'une âme* – Thérèse's public debut. Mère Marie died of cancer in 1904, having made a large contribution towards securing a legacy for Thérèse.

Another important figure for the development of the Theresian industry was Mère Marie-Ange de l'Enfant-Jésus (Jeanne Mélanie Burban, 1881-1909) (see figure 3.2), elected as prioress of the Carmel in May 1908. Her enthusiasm for Thérèse was of a new kind for the community – that of the convert. She had found her vocation after reading Thérèse's autobiography, and had particularly emphasised the role of Thérèse's 'gracious portrait' in her conversion, entering the Carmel in early 1902.¹² Mère Marie-Ange was determined in pushing for Thérèse's official recognition, writing to Bishop Lemonnier to urge for the opening of the preliminary process for her beatification on the very day of her election as prioress. Another nun who entered the Carmel of Lisieux in this period as a result of the dissemination of the cult that had already taken place was Sœur Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur (Yvonne Daurelle, 1882-1914) (see figure 3.3). After reading the autobiography, she had gone so far as to seek out Isidore Guérin to secure his aid in entering the Carmel, which she did in 1904. Sœur Isabelle became Mère Isabelle as sub-prioress and was, in Ida Friederike Görres' words, 'Thérèse's most faithful disciple and interpreter'¹³ – indeed, she would call herself the 'Herald of the Little Queen'. The author of a number of popular works on the saint, including *Le secret du bonheur pour les petits enfants* (1915), *Appel aux petites âmes* (1904),¹⁴ the poem that was reworked as *La petite voie* (1919) and the prayer to obtain Thérèse's beatification, as well as editing three editions of the *Pluie de Roses* series of miracle accounts (1910, 1912, 1913), Mère Isabelle was a tireless promoter of Thérèse and had an undoubted talent for popular devotional writing.¹⁵ Her death from tuberculosis in the first months of the First World War was a loss for the cult, as much as for the community. Mère Marie-Ange also died of tuberculosis in

¹² See her poem 'A l'Ange de ma Vocation, Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus' in Mère Agnès de Jésus, *Une conquête de Sr Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. La vénérable mère Marie-Ange de l'Enfant-Jésus du Carmel de Lisieux, 1881-1909* (Paris, 1913), pp. 3-6.

¹³ Görres, *The Hidden Face*, p. 272.

¹⁴ This was reworked by Céline for later editions. See RTAG, p. 99.

¹⁵ See Mère Agnès de Jésus, *Mother Isabel of the Sacred Heart, Carmelite Nun of Lisieux, 1882-1914* (London, 1916), p. 12, 60-1, 65. Mère Isabelle's personal papers are testimony to the extent of her work on the cult in the ten years she was in the Carmel. See ED Livres de Sr Isabelle du S.C. – boîte 2, ACL.

November 1909, seeing Mère Agnès re-elected prioress, an office she would hold for the next forty-two years.¹⁶



Figure 3.1. Mère Marie de Gonzague, 1894. Source: OCL.



Figure 3.2. A portrait of Mère Marie-Ange de l'Enfant-Jésus by Céline. Source : *Une conquête de Sr Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. La révérende mère Marie-Ange de l'Enfant-Jésus du Carmel de Lisieux, 1881-1909* (Paris, 1913).

¹⁶ Mère Agnès died on 28 July 1951, and Mère Françoise Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte Face (Simone Marie Edmée Charnelet, 1903-1979) became the Carmel's prioress, serving until 1959.



Figure 3.3. Mère Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur, 1906. Source: *Mère Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur, religieuse carmélite de Lisieux, 1882-1914* (Paris, 1914).

Commercial Enterprises

As cloistered nuns, the Martin sisters and their fellow Carmelite promoters of Thérèse could not achieve all they wanted to alone, and they set up a framework of institutions in the outside world to aid the Theresian project. Their first outside business partner was the Imprimerie Saint-Paul – the publisher of the first edition of *Histoire d'une âme*. Isidore Guérin had taken charge of finding a publisher for the work, and the company was recommended to him by an Assumptionist connected with *La Croix* after he approached the newspaper about publishing the book.¹⁷ Founded in 1873 by Swiss-born clergyman Canon Schorderet, also founder of the Catholic daily *La Liberté*, the Imprimerie Saint-Paul was based in Bar-le-Duc, Meuse, and worked 'for the defence and propagation of Catholic truth through the creation and setting-up of a good value printing business.'¹⁸ It was run by the Sisters of Saint Paul, an order founded for the purpose by Schorderet. On 30 September 1898 the Imprimerie Saint-Paul published two thousand copies of *Histoire d'une âme*, and this was to be the beginning of a long business relationship. They would

¹⁷ See *La Croix*/IG 26/03/1898 and 30/03/1898, Père Marie/IG 12/05/1898, ACL.

¹⁸ Père Marie/IG 12/05/1898, ACL.

publish the majority of the convent's publications, as well as images and other ephemera, until the 1940s, advertising these through their commercial catalogues, until the establishment of the Office Central de Lisieux, who produced their own catalogues (see below). These made all their items available by mail order, providing devotees all over the world with Theresian merchandise and providing a point of contact with Lisieux for people who would never visit the town. The Imprimerie Saint-Paul also ran at least six shops, located in Paris, Bar-le-Duc and Fribourg,¹⁹ and were crucial facilitators of the Carmel's commercial activities in the early days of the cult, producing their print media, publicising it and selling it to the consumer. But the Carmel also worked with at least fifty other publishers in producing their devotional ephemera, including some of the big producers operating from around place Saint Sulpice. Correspondence survives from such major names such as Boumard and Bouasse-Lebel, dating from as early as 1911 to the end of the period of this study.²⁰ The Carmel were harnessing the power of the existing devotional product industry to promote the cult, using some of the biggest companies in the business. But as the cult grew, the Carmel began to develop their own business organs. The first of these was La Procure, the Carmel's own shop, opened in August 1912 at a location directly opposite the convent, at 46 rue de Livarot. This was run by volunteers and sold the books and cards printed by the Imprimerie Saint-Paul and their other publishers. But this was soon insufficient for their needs – the convent needed its own commercial wing which would be entirely devoted to their cause. This would be the role of the Office Central de Lisieux.

The Founding of the Office Central de Lisieux

The Imprimerie Saint-Paul produced their last catalogue of Theresian items in November 1916 and the first Office Central catalogue appeared in July 1917. Here, the OCL introduced themselves as 'Specially authorised by the Carmel of Lisieux and by the rights-holders... for the reproduction of portraits of the Servant of God.'²¹ Even though the OCL very quickly offered a dazzling array of products, building on the already impressive variety of products the Imprimerie Saint-Paul had offered, they made apologies for the limited choice, saying that 'Their diversity is forcibly limited by the restrictions demanded by the laws of the Church, as long as the process of

¹⁹ See S24B Office Central Catalogues, env. 1, ACL.

²⁰ See the voluminous correspondence, Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL. See also Flavio Cammarano and Aldo Florian, *Santini e Storia di un Editore parigino. Maison Bouasse-Lebel* (Marene, 2009).

²¹ July 1917 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

beatification and canonisation is not finished.’²² The commerciality of the cult was only artificially restrained at this time then. The OCL was run by Raymond de Bercegol (1869-1946) (see figure 3.4), a former employee of the Union photographique industrielle, établissement Lumière et Jouglà réunis, Paris and a third order Franciscan, who wrote to Mère Agnès in November 1916 asking to defend the business interests of the Carmel, eventually securing permission to do so from Bishop Lemonnier five months later.²³ De Bercegol and his wife had first heard of Thérèse in 1912 (perhaps through his sister – a Carmelite nun), praying to her when their daughter Simone, aged two, fell gravely ill.²⁴ They also wrote to the Carmel to ask for novenas to be prayed for her recovery. She died in September that year, and just two months later the other de Bercegol daughter, Marie-Henriette, also died, aged fourteen. De Bercegol would later speak of his devotion to Thérèse in very personal terms, linking it explicitly to the loss of his children.²⁵ The future saint clearly meant much to the family, and a photograph sent to the Carmel of Marie-Henriette laid out for burial showed an image of Thérèse placed on the girl’s body.²⁶ When his sons Pierre and René also died in 1922 and 1925, respectively, both aged twenty, both their death cards mentioned Thérèse, while the former’s carried Céline’s rendering of the Crucifixion on the back.²⁷ De Bercegol’s devotion to Thérèse made him a tireless worker for the propagation of the cult and he would later say that he offered his services to her like ‘a servant-knight.’²⁸ Céline and de Bercegol developed a strong relationship even before the OCL came into being, with him offering advice on her photographic work.²⁹ Their relationship began on the eve of the First World War and it was in the fevered atmosphere of that war, a period of great activity for the cult, that their friendship was forged.³⁰ Later, de Bercegol would write her long letters containing extended spiritual reflections and family news. On the occasion of the silver anniversary of Céline’s profession, de Bercegol wrote to her ‘Walls, grilles and veils may indeed hide your physical

²² *Ibid.*

²³ See DB/L 30/04/1917, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL. A later legal document reveals that de Bercegol possessed the exclusive right to sell Céline’s works for six years from 1 July 1923, a period that could be renewed. See Cailliau declaration, S24D Office Central Contrefaçons, env. 5.

²⁴ See DB/MA 20/01/1931, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

²⁵ DB/L 30/04/1917, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

²⁶ See Marie-Henriette de Bercegol sur son lit de mort, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

²⁷ See Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

²⁸ Necrologie, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

²⁹ See in particular the letters from 1916, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

³⁰ In early 1915 he wrote to Mère Agnès about the death of a young soldier who had converted after being given an image of Saint Thérèse. DB/MA 14/04/1915, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

features, but not your heart which is *golden* or your soul which is *crystalline*'.³¹ In de Bercegol the Carmel had a loyal friend and enthusiastic advocate of Thérèse's cult.

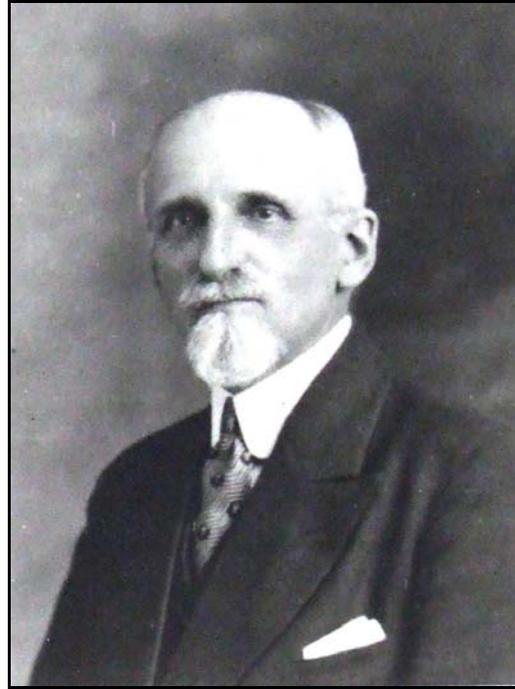


Figure 3.4. Raymond de Bercegol, c. 1930. Source: Death notice, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

The Expansion of the OCL

The personal nature of de Bercegol's commitment to Thérèse and her family did not mean that he approached his work on the cult in an un-businesslike manner, however. With de Bercegol at the helm, the OCL was a large and expanding business in the early twentieth century. At first the business was based in Paris, but sometime in 1918 it moved briefly to a property in Castelfranc, Midi-Pyrénées, before finally moving to Lisieux sometime between late 1919 and early 1920. In April 1920 the OCL opened a workshop on rue Fournet for making medals of Thérèse. On 10 June 1915 Pope Benedict XV had given permission, quite exceptionally, for medals of Thérèse to be struck before her official recognition by the Church, and the OCL took up this opportunity keenly.³² As well as selling by mail order via their regularly updated commercial catalogues, from July 1920 de Bercegol took over La Procure and later opened a larger shop

³¹ DB/C 23/02/1921, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

³² See Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 87.

occupying its original premises and the adjacent buildings at 44-46-48 rue de Livarot, diagonally opposite the Carmel (see figure 3.6). On 29 April 1921 the Office Central de Lisieux was formed as a public company, and it was the beginning of many years of success, which also saw the establishment of the Ateliers Saint-Joseph, a workshop making official statues of Thérèse, based on a site directly next door to the Carmel at 53 rue de Livarot.³³ These statues all carried the OCL's registered trademark – a monogram incorporating a shooting star and a cross (see figure 3.5). By 1928 the OCL had its main depot on rue Bonaparte, Paris, just off place Saint Sulpice, as well as two branches in Lourdes and another in Brussels. Later, the bombing of 1944 destroyed the headquarters of the OCL in Lisieux, although the Carmel's side of the road was spared, and the business moved into the Ateliers Saint-Joseph building. In the same year de Bercegol would retire as director of the OCL, with a Monsieur de Bossoreille taking over (followed by Monsieur Mariette in 1950 and Monsieur Mir in 1958). After the rebuilding of the OCL's offices, they expanded their large mail order operation into the premises of 51 rue de Livarot, next-door to the headquarters.³⁴ A large concern, the OCL oversees Thérèse's commercial success to this day, still being based in premises opposite the Carmel and selling books and devotional items.



Figure 3.5. The Office Central de Lisieux's trademark. Source: 1917 flyer, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

³⁴ On the history of the OCL see *Historique de l'Office Central de Lisieux*. Note établie en 2007, ACL.

The Role of the OCL

The OCL saw itself as the ‘organisation for the dissemination of the Theresian message’,³⁵ with de Bercegol calling it the ‘indispensable assistant for Theresian publicity.’³⁶ They did the work of commissioning items from the Imprimerie Saint-Paul (still the Carmel’s publisher of choice) and other publishers, as well as advertising and selling them. But the OCL had another role too – that of keeping the commercial elements of the cult at a comfortable distance from the Carmel and the Martin sisters. In delegating the business and legal side of the cult to another organisation, the Carmel had a much broader reach in the outside world, while also avoiding raising questions about the suitability of nuns engaging in commerce. In chapter 5, for example, we will see how the OCL was able to act where it would have been undiplomatic for the Carmel to do so in prosecuting the makers of unauthorised images of Thérèse. But as a commercial enterprise that was involved in the religious world, the OCL was not uncontroversial. As early as 1926, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus wrote in her iconoclastic book about Thérèse that ‘a Jewish company had taken over the business side of the cult’,³⁷ causing disquiet amongst some of the saint’s devotees, and in 1932 Maurice Privat described the Office Central as the ‘public company who exploits the fame of the saint’³⁸ (see chapter 4 on these authors). Canon Dubosq was also wary of the presentation of the OCL as an ‘ordinary retailer’ and in the year of the publication of Privat’s book he advised the Carmel to emphasise that the OCL would ‘never be a true money-making business’ and stated that ‘the Carmel must indeed refuse [to work with] enterprises which embrace the enthusiasm of the salesman.’³⁹ Dubosq was clearly trying to distance the OCL from the many private enterprises, with no connection to the Carmel of Lisieux, that had opened on the convent’s very doorstep, seeking to profit from Thérèse’s fame (see figures 3.7 and 3.8). Despite the presentation of the OCL as the organisation that dealt with all the commercial elements of the cult, the Carmel itself was still intimately involved in the commissioning of commercial items. Direct correspondence between the Carmel and over fifty different publishers survives.⁴⁰ Céline was frequently written to directly, for example in correspondence from l’Imprimerie d’Art G. Boüan in 1927,⁴¹ and as late as October 1957 she was corresponding directly with the publisher SILIC about the images to be

³⁵ Pressant appel, flyer dated 1948-49, S24B, env. 2b, ACL.

³⁶ Necrologie, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

³⁷ Delarue-Mardrus, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 19.

³⁸ Privat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 7.

³⁹ D/MA 07/02/1932, THER-5, ACL.

⁴⁰ See Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL.

⁴¹ L’Imprimerie d’Art G. Boüan/C 07/10/1927 and 13/10/1927, Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL.

included in a later edition of the book *Histoire d'une famille* (1945).⁴² The OCL furthered the commercial aims of the Carmel, but the community, and Céline in particular, maintained control of even the finer details of the commercial output of the cult.

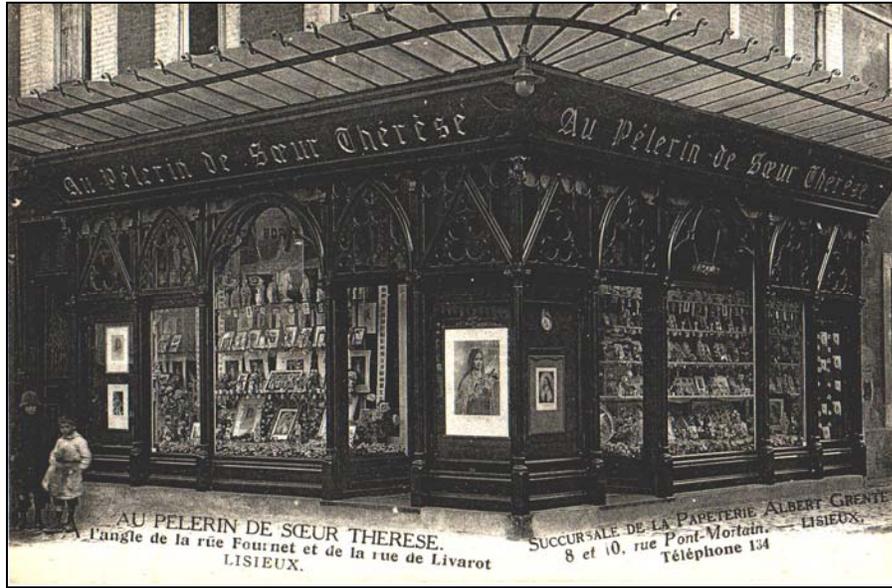


Figure 3.7. A shop owned by Papeterie Albert Grete, on the corner of rue Fournet and rue de Livarot, just yards from the Carmel, c. 1920. Source: author's collection.



Figure 3.8. The scene in front of the Carmel on the day of the translation of Thérèse's relics to the chapel of the convent (27 March 1923), showing privately-run shops and hotels opposite the convent. Source: Album cartes postales diverses, ACL.

⁴² SILIC/C 28/10/1957, Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL.

The Popular Publications and the Carmel's Publishing Empire

The books produced by the Carmel of Lisieux were a key means of marketing the cult of Saint Thérèse. There were three key periods of publishing activity in the convent's history, the first being 1910-17. 1910-14 were the years of the preparatory and ordinary processes of the introduction of the cause for Thérèse's beatification, and these years saw a great deal of publishing activity. Although some notable additions would come later, by 1913 – a year of prolific production – the principal popular works were established and these would be promoted with little change until Céline's death. The Carmel had a substantial body of work in place on the eve of the First World War, a key turning point in the cult, seeing the signing of the Decree for the Introduction of Thérèse's cause in the month of the outbreak of the war and the founding of the Office Central de Lisieux in early 1917, and this left the cult in an ideal position to capitalise fully on the missionary potential of the war. The early to mid-twenties, which for the Carmel were consumed by the run-up to the canonisation, saw a large rise in their production of printed works, and can be seen as the second significant period of publishing activity. 1923, the year of the beatification, and 1926, the year after the canonisation, also showed peaks of productivity, largely owing to the need to produce new editions of old works using Thérèse's new titles of *Bienheureuse* and *Sainte*. The ten year period between 1946 and 1956 is the third period, and is particularly significant for Céline. During this time she was involved in the production of six important works: *Histoire d'une famille* (1945), with Père Stéphane-Joseph Piat; the first substantial publication of Thérèse's letters (1948), with Abbé André Combes; *Conseils et souvenirs* (1952); *Le père de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (1953); *La mère de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (1954); and the first unedited edition of the autobiography, *Manuscrits Autobiographiques* (1956), produced with François de Sainte-Marie.

The Carmel's publishing output was at first dominated by heavily edited versions of Thérèse's own writings, with *Histoire d'une âme*, the very first Theresian publication, being the jewel in the Carmel's publishing crown. This was followed by an abridged version, *Une rose effeuillée*, in 1902, and Thérèse's poems and extracts of her letters appeared in 1908 and 1914 respectively. But other genres of publication quickly appeared, and as early as 1904 second-hand interpretations of Thérèse's spirituality were produced, the first of which was *Appel aux petites âmes* (1904). *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort*, first appearing in 1913 and written by Mère Agnès, followed a very similar approach to *Appel*, and in the early twenties this

'interpretation' approach reached its apogee, with the appearance of the heavily allegorical *La petite voie* in 1920 and Céline's personal interpretation of the 'little way', *L'esprit de la bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus d'après ses écrits et les témoins oculaires de sa vie* in 1924. The visual hagiography *Vie en images* appeared in 1923 – a crucial publication for the promotion of Céline's images. The first independent volume of miracle accounts, titled *Pluie de Roses*, appeared in 1910. Six further volumes later appeared in this series and the miracle narrative would become central to the Carmel's publishing strategy.⁴³ Books for children quickly appeared, including *Deux mois et neuf jours de préparation à ma Première Communion, d'après la méthode suivie par sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* in 1911, *La Petite Thérèse. Histoire de sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus pour les enfants* in 1914⁴⁴ and *Le secret du bonheur pour les petits enfants*, by Mère Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur, the following year. The Carmel were providing different types of publication for different audiences, defined by age group, by devotional or literary taste and by socio-economic grouping, and the latter consideration in particular was reflected in the carefully tiered pricing structure. A commercial flyer of 1905 demonstrates neatly how the three publications available at the time offered everything from leather-bound luxury to throw-away booklets, at a range of prices. *Histoire d'une âme*, with 20 plates, sold at 4 francs, *Une rose effeuillée*, described as the 'popular edition' of the autobiography, but still running to 287 pages and with four plates, at 1 franc 50, and *Appel aux petites âmes*, little more than a booklet and also containing four plates, at only 25 centimes.⁴⁵ This suggests a well-planned commercial strategy, offering items suitable for all potential target markets. The convent's use of images in these publications varied according to the end of the market they wished to appeal to, and we will now examine the use of images in some of the most significant of these publications.

The Images and the Autobiography

Histoire d'une âme was the mainstay of the Carmel's publishing activity and it was a key vehicle for the dissemination of Céline's images. By 1955, forty-six editions had been published, all using Céline's images heavily. Between 1898 and 1955 well over 350,000 copies of the autobiography (not including the abridged version, *Une rose effeuillée*) were sold in France,

⁴³ On this see Antoinette Guise, 'Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse' and 'Thérèse de Lisieux et ses miracles'.

⁴⁴ See C/T 11/09/1911, IIIa Boite 3a de Sr Geneviève – Céline Correspondance, ACL.

⁴⁵ 1905 commercial flyer, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

meaning Céline's images enjoyed a huge circulation through the autobiography.⁴⁶ As soon as Céline produced new images, they quickly appeared in the most recent edition of the book. The way Céline's images were used in the successive editions of the autobiography is revealing of the Carmel's quite static approach to their marketing of Thérèse over a sixty-year period. The illustration of the first edition, with the use of an unretouched photograph as the frontispiece (figure 3.9), was very rare in the Carmel's publishing history. An original photograph would not appear in the commercial output again for another sixty years, and even retouched photographs were very rarely used in *Histoire d'une âme* before the early 1930s. The 1899 second edition bore the 'buste ovale', produced for the purpose, as well as Céline's image of Thérèse with her father (figure 3.10). These images signalled the Carmel's approach to illustrating *Histoire d'une âme* for the next fifty years. The photographic was eschewed in favour of romantic representations of the saint, with a strong emphasis on Thérèse as a girl. As Céline's stock of images developed, the number of illustrations used in editions of the autobiography rocketed from just three in 1898 to a peak of forty-one in 1933. As early as 1902 fifteen plates were included: six photographs of places associated with Thérèse; six original images by Céline; one 'découpage' image; and two retouched photographs. By 1906 Céline was using even her images that did not feature Thérèse to provide new plates for the autobiography, including her rendering of the Holy Face, and soon the images by her collaborators also appeared. The July 1914 edition featured the allegorical 'Nazareth' (figure 2.32), and many of the images the collaborators had produced for *Vie en images* became included as illustrations in the autobiography in the key period of 1923 to 1925. Plates carrying a number of images and photographs of places associated with Thérèse also became common (figure 3.11).

Here we can see that the Carmel made use of a number of different types of image to provide as many illustrations as quickly as possible. However, once this collection of images was established, the visual content of the book changed very little until after the Second World War, and even then the approach was the same – no original photographs and Céline's images dominating. A sign of Céline's fixed approach to the illustration of the autobiography, and presentation of the same face for Thérèse throughout the sixty years of her work on the cult, is the illustrative content of the forty-fourth edition of *Histoire d'une âme*, published in 1953. While four significant new photographs of Thérèse appeared here, all were very heavily retouched. The

⁴⁶ See Éditions de *Histoire d'une âme*, ACL. Figures for the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 21st, 35th, 36th and 45th editions are not recorded.

classic Celinian images ‘Thérèse and her mother’, ‘Thérèse and her father’, ‘Thérèse as first communicant’, ‘Thérèse and Céline’, ‘Thérèse *expirante*’ and ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ all appeared, and it was the creative images that remained the dominant force in the book. The nature of the illustrative content of the edition was summed-up by the cover, which bore a very heavily retouched version of the third pose of the ‘Thérèse *aux images*’ series (figure 3.12). This was a telling symbol of Céline’s approach – an essentially nineteenth-century, Saint-Sulpician face was being presented here in the mid-twentieth century, on the eve of the 1960s and the changes in popular Catholicism brought by Vatican II. A photograph taken in 1957 shows Céline holding this book – here, aged eighty-eight, she was still literally holding on to her fixed vision of her sister’s ideal representation (see figure 3.13). Just three years later, the three volume *Manuscrits Autobiographiques de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus*, the first unedited edition of the autobiography, produced in facsimile, stripped back illustration to one plate only – the photograph known as ‘Thérèse *au lys*’,⁴⁷ and the single volume edition of 1957 contained only the photograph of Thérèse standing in the cloister courtyard of July 1896 on the cover.⁴⁸ This was a sudden break with the approach that had remained the same for the preceding fifty years, and the use of these images symbolised the end of the Celinian period of Thérèse’s representation, two years before her death.

⁴⁷ Photograph 38, Appendix 2.

⁴⁸ Photograph 29, Appendix 2.

3. The Dissemination of the Celinian Image and the Building of a Commercial Cult

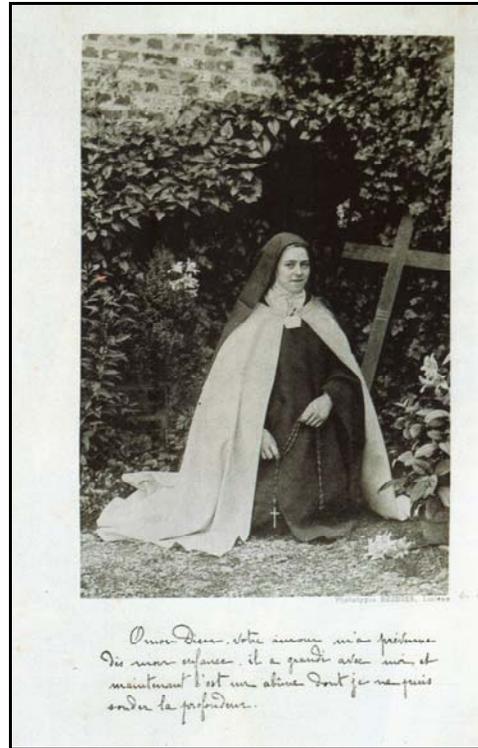


Figure 3.9. Frontispiece of the first edition of *Histoire d'une âme*, 1898. Source: *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face, religieuse carmélite, morte en odeur de sainteté au carmel de Lisieux à l'âge de 24 ans le 30 septembre 1897, Histoire d'une âme écrite par elle-même* (Bar-le-Duc, 1898).

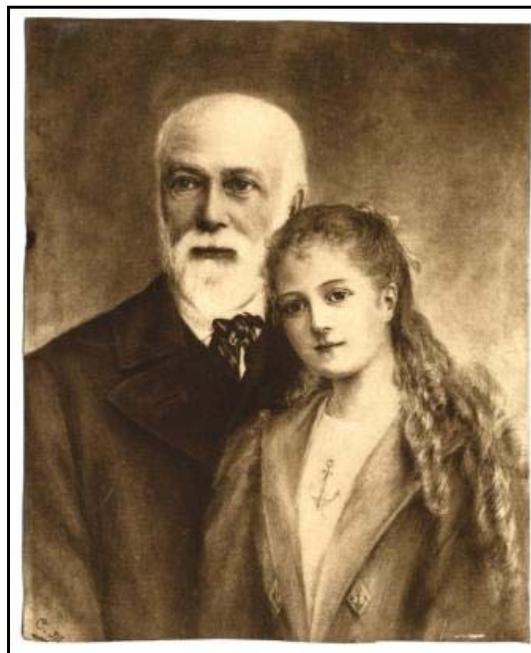


Figure 3.10. 'Thérèse and her father', 1898. Source: ACL.

3. The Dissemination of the Celinian Image and the Building of a Commercial Cult



Figure 3.11. Plate from the twenty-third edition of the autobiography, 1920. Source: *Histoire d'une âme* (Bar-le-Duc, 1920).

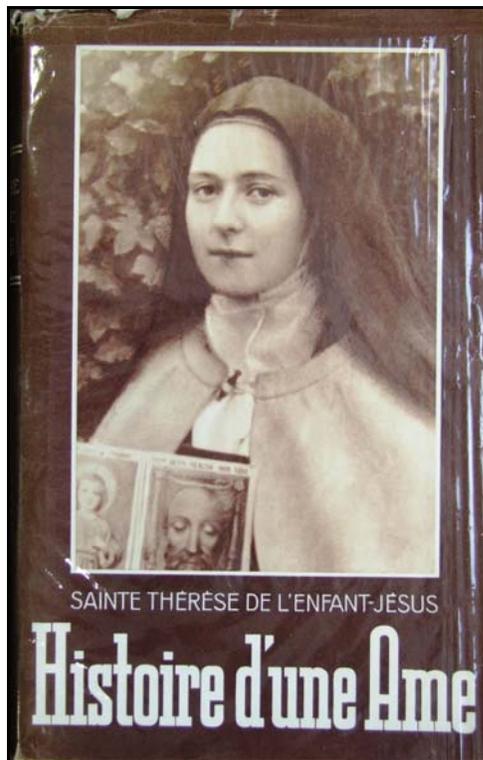


Figure 3.12. Cover of the forty-fourth edition of the autobiography. Source: *Histoire d'une âme* (Lisieux, 1953).

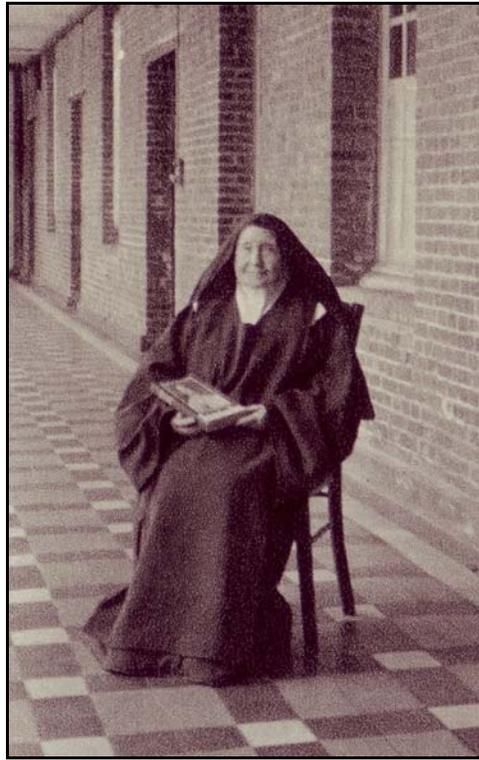


Figure 3.13. Céline pictured in 1957, holding the 1953 edition of *Histoire d'une âme*. Source: ACL.

'Une rose effeuillée': The First Popular Publication

Thérèse's writings formed a substantial part of the Carmel's publishing campaign, but it is in the *éditions de propagande illustrée* (heavily illustrated, cheap paperbacks, aimed at the promotion of the cult) that we find the real reshaping of Thérèse as a product and the most effective use of Céline's images. The popular version of the autobiography, *Une rose effeuillée*, first published in 1902, meant that 'Thérèse was now available in a pocket edition',⁴⁹ and it marked an important move into the production of mass-market, popular publications. The original edition sold 140,800 copies before 1924, while the deluxe edition of 1909 sold 98,300 copies by the same year.⁵⁰ In 1908 the Imprimerie Saint-Paul advertised a special offer – buy three copies of *Histoire d'une âme* and get one copy of *Une rose effeuillée* free – a clear strategy for wide dissemination of the cult.⁵¹ The illustration of the book was not extensive, but the representations of the future saint that did appear in it were representative of the stars of the Carmel's stable of images: the 1909 deluxe

⁴⁹ Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 35.

⁵⁰ See chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁵¹ 1908 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

edition contained the *'buste ovale'* as a frontispiece, 'Thérèse and her father' and 'Thérèse morte', while the deluxe edition of 1913 added 'Thérèse as first communicant' and 'Thérèse and her mother' to the images featured in the book. The popular version of 1909 carried only the *'buste ovale'* as a frontispiece, but interspersed the text with engravings which gave an impression of rich illustration without the need for expensively printed plates (indeed it cost 1 franc 80 centimes to the deluxe edition's 2 francs 50 centimes).⁵² These engravings were an important feature of the Carmel's publications and demonstrate that the Carmel's commercial activities sometimes dictated the images they produced. Chapter heading illuminations (sometimes appearing as illustrations integral to the text) showing scenes from Thérèse's life, from the life of Christ, or of Thérèse in allegorical situations with holy figures, appeared in many of the early publications. These biographical pictures were prototype images for those that later appeared in more fleshed-out form in *Vie en images* in 1923. The 1909 popular edition of *Une rose effeuillée* carried chapter heading images which included the precursors to Sœur Marie du Sainte-Esprit's 'Thérèse fishing', de Winter's 'Thérèse strewing flowers on the Holy Sacrament' (see figures 3.14 and 3.15), Annould's 'The cure by the Holy Virgin', Blanchard's 'First communion' and 'Thérèse taking the habit', Céline's 'Thérèse and Leo XIII' and several images later reworked in watercolours by Jouvenot. It seems likely that all these engravings were suggested by Céline, done by Jouvenot and served as templates to the other artists who later rendered them in watercolours or oils. *La Petite Thérèse. Histoire de sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus pour les enfants* (1914) contained many more such biographical engravings than eventually made it in to *La Vie en images*. Even after the appearance of *La Vie en images*, these black and white engraving-style scenes from Thérèse's life still appeared in the cheaper publications, including *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie, sa pluie de roses* (1926), a thirty-two page booklet. The evolution of these images into more fully-fledged representations in *Vie en images* demonstrates both the way the Carmel was producing different types of illustrations to suit different types of publication, here commissioning images that were cheaper to reproduce than Céline's originals, as they did not need to be printed on separate plates, and the way in which they routinely reused and recast images.

⁵² 1909 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

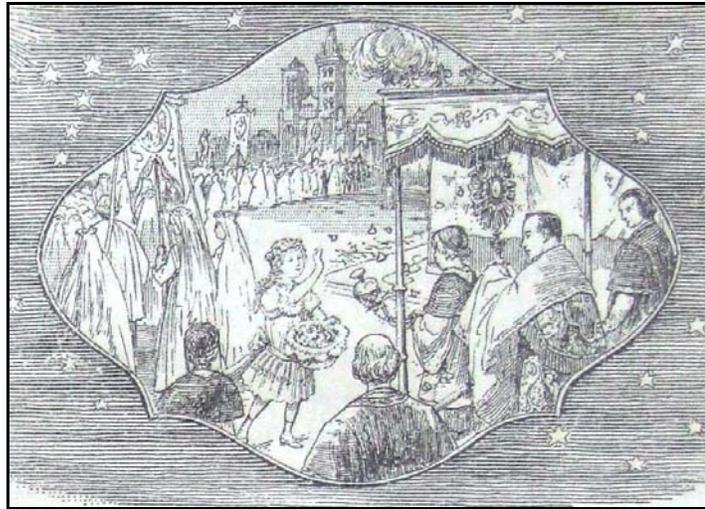


Figure 3.14. Thérèse strewing flowers on the Holy Sacrament chapter heading illumination. Source: Carmel of Lisieux, *Une rose effeuillée. Édition populaire de l'Histoire d'une Âme* (Bar-le-Duc, 1909).

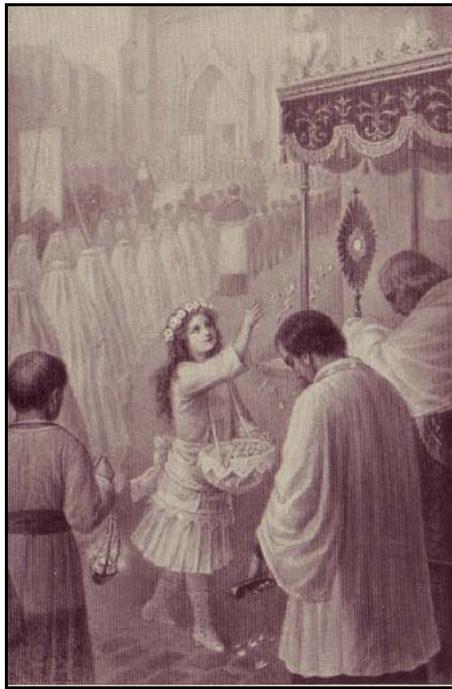


Figure 3.15. De Winter's 'Thérèse strewing flowers on the Holy Sacrament' as it appeared in *Vie en images*. Source: Carmel of Lisieux, *La Vie en images de la bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus en 68 tableaux, avec couplets et musique pour séances de projections* (Bar-le-Duc, 1923).

'Appel aux petites âmes' and Its Derivatives

Appel aux petites âmes is of huge importance for the history of the Theresian publications. Textually light and heavily illustrated, it told Thérèse's story in a concise thirty-three pages for

only 25 centimes. As such, *Appel aux petites âmes* made Thérèse's life story and the Carmel's images of her available to anybody. First published in 1904, it was later reworked into several different versions with different titles. It got an enthusiastic reception from Bishop Amette, Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, who sanctioned this dramatically pared down version of Thérèse's writings as an acceptable proxy for the full version, saying 'I read it with much pleasure – it reminded me of the sweet impression which I adopted of the dear Sœur Thérèse when I read her *Histoire [d'une âme]* for the first time.'⁵³ There were new editions of *Appel* every year between 1908 and 1917, with the exception of the early war years of 1914 and 1915, and another in 1920. The illustrations inside were extremely numerous considering the cost of the book, but this was achieved by cramming several images onto one plate. The 1904, 1912 and 1917 editions all used either Céline's image 'Thérèse with harp', the 'buste ovale' or 'Thérèse aux roses' as a frontispiece, and then included three plates, each with six or seven images on it. A plate from the 1917 edition (figure 3.16) used a retouched photograph, the *découpage* image 'Thérèse in meditation', three of Céline's original portraits, and Annould's 'Nazareth', mirroring the eclectic approach taken to the illustration of *Histoire d'une âme*. However, the most significant element of illustration in the case of *Appel aux petites âmes* and its derivatives (it was adapted into different versions at least three times) was the cover illustrations – highly allegorical images that illustrated aspects of Thérèse's spiritual philosophy. Such illustrated covers made the image particularly immediate and made the publication a desirable product on the shop shelf. The cover of the first edition showed a dove sailing in a boat, symbolising the soul, sailing towards perfection with the help of a lighthouse, representative of God's love (figure 3.17). The cover of the second version of the book, *Vie abrégée de sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face religieuse carmélite, 1873-1897. Appel aux petites âmes* (1909) showed Jesus with small children and the inscription 'Whoever is a little one, let him come to me.' Almost certainly by Jouvenot, this image represented Thérèse's philosophy of 'spiritual childhood' – becoming childlike and almost passive in one's approach to God.⁵⁴ The cover of another incarnation of the book, *Appel aux petites âmes. Vie abrégée de la Servante de Dieu Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (1913), continued the theme of spiritual childhood, but this time reflected Thérèse's analogy of God's love being like an elevator that lifts 'little souls' to perfection (see figure 3.18). Showing Jesus lifting a child up to view Heaven, while others pulled at his robes to be next, the caption was directly from the autobiographical manuscripts: 'The elevator which

⁵³ A/ISC 14/05/1904, ED Livres de Sr Isabelle, env. 1, ACL.

⁵⁴ See HA, Ms. B.

must raise me to heaven is Your arms, O Jesus!⁵⁵ In 1925 the title became *Appel à l'Amour divin*. *J'ai ma devise écrite sur ma voile: vivre d'amour! Signé: sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* and the cover showed Thérèse herself sailing in a boat called 'abandon' towards paradise (figure 3.19). This was perhaps an even more crude visual rendering of Thérèse's philosophy of abandoning one's will to God as the way to perfection. The illustration of the covers of the *Appel aux petites âmes* series shows the process of turning Thérèse's key teaching into images, which in turn became commodities of the cult. The images made these abstract ideas tangible and, by printing them on the covers of cheap, disposable pamphlet-style books, they could be easily possessed and appropriated into the devotional lives of the faithful.

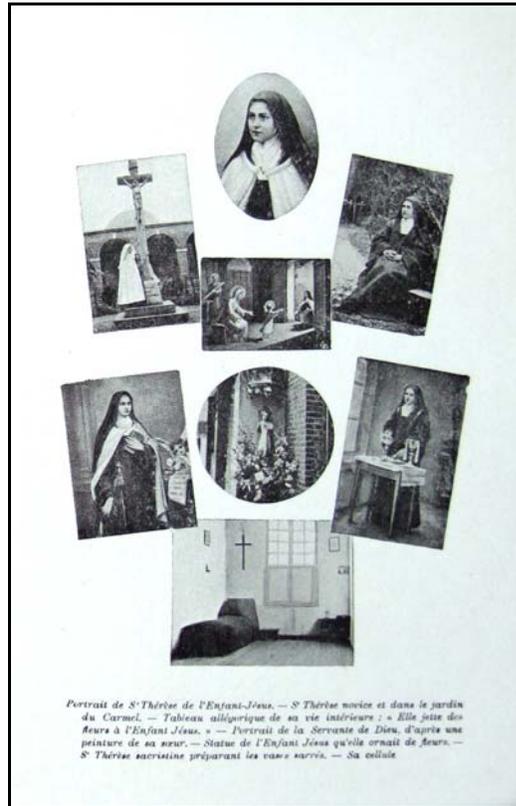


Figure 3.16. Plate from the 1917 edition of *Appel aux petites âmes*. Source: Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Appel aux petites âmes* (Bar-le-Duc, 1917).

⁵⁵ See HA, Ms. C, 2v°-3r°, pp. 207-8.

3. The Dissemination of the Celinian Image and the Building of a Commercial Cult

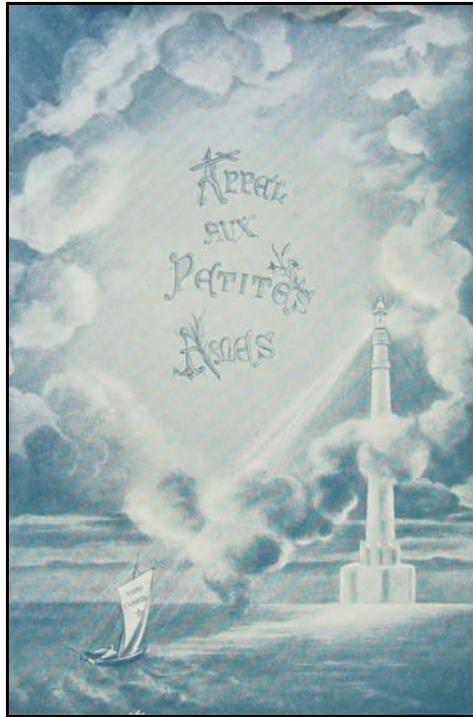


Figure 3.17. Cover of the 1904 first edition of *Appel aux petites âmes*. Source: Mère Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur, *Appel aux petites âmes* (Bar-le-Duc, 1904).

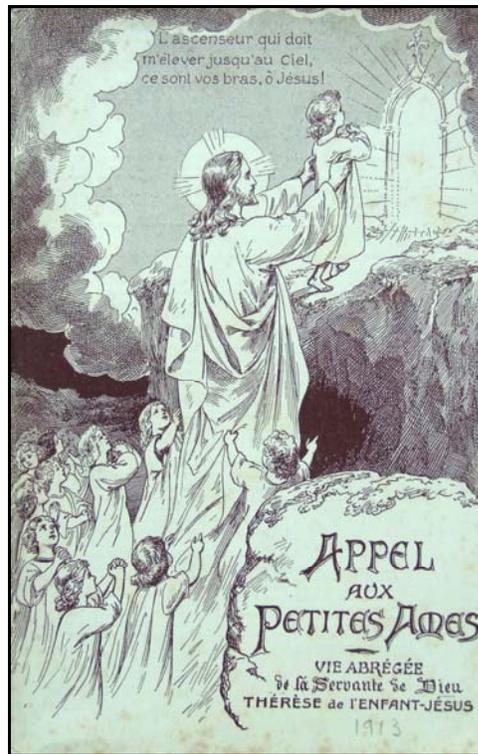


Figure 3.18. Cover of the second version of *Appel aux petites âmes*. Source: Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Appel aux petites âmes. Vie abrégée de la Servante de Dieu Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Bar-le-Duc, 1913).

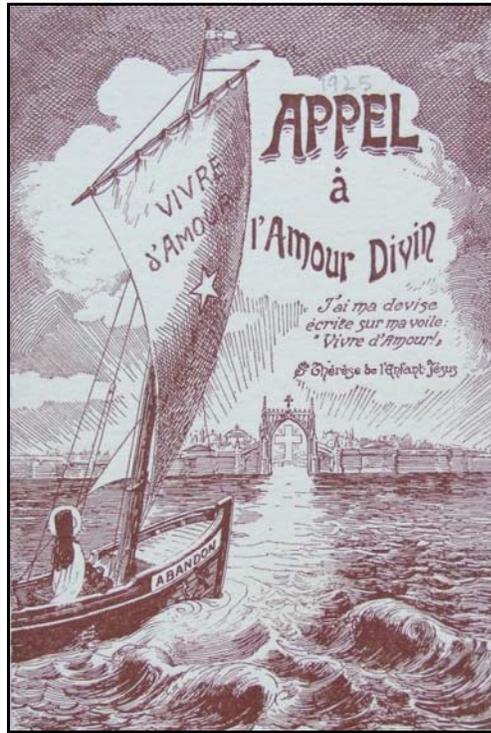


Figure 3.19. Cover of the third version of *Appel aux petites âmes*. Source: Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Appel à l'Amour divin. J'ai ma devise écrite sur ma voile: vivre d'amour! Signé: sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Barle-Duc, 1925).

'Sœur Thérèse... sa vie': Mère Agnès' 'Opuscule'

Appel aux petites âmes and its later incarnations were essentially heavily pared-down biographies, quoting heavily from Thérèse's autobiographical manuscripts and ending abruptly with a dramatic account of her death. Thérèse's writings had been approved by Rome in December 1912 and the advancing cause of her beatification required something more than *Appel aux petites âmes* – the cult needed a popular publication that made clear Thérèse's 'uses' as a saint, highlighting how she was already acting on earth from Heaven and shaping her as a religious personality. Accordingly, in July 1913 *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort* appeared. Written by Mère Agnès, it had very little direct quotation from Thérèse herself, and devoted only twenty-four pages to retelling her life. These were heavily illustrated with the engravings that had first appeared in *Une rose effeuillée*, leaving space only for a very brief and simplistic retelling. The second part, 'Depuis sa mort' contained twenty-five pages of miracle accounts, followed by 'Nouvelles de la Cause', Thérèse's prayer 'Acte d'Offrande à l'Amour Miséricordieux' and a prayer for her beatification. A full, four-page catalogue of commercial items available from the

Imprimerie Saint-Paul followed. The emphasis here was on Thérèse as a present, tangible spiritual personality, whose potency on earth was being proved by regular miracle-working and whose fame was growing steadily. The catalogue at the end of the book made it easy for readers to invest in the cult further through the purchase of devotional items. The booklet used the recently-finished ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ on the cover (figure 3.20), making full use of its iconic power. The use of Thérèse’s most famous sayings on the cover – ‘Je veux passer mon ciel à faire du bien sur la terre’ (‘I want to spend my heaven doing good on earth’), and ‘Après ma mort, je ferai tomber une pluie de roses’ (‘After my death, I will let fall a shower of roses’)⁵⁶ – fast becoming slogans for the Carmel’s marketing project – contributed further to the moulding of Thérèse into a strong, easily-identifiable personality. At only 10 centimes a copy, and with a buy twelve, get one free offer,⁵⁷ this was the most affordable publication the Carmel ever produced and it went into several editions. It sold 460,000 copies by the middle of the First World War, surpassing *Appel aux petites âmes* (379,000 copies of the *Appel* were sold by 1916) as the premier popular Theresian publication.⁵⁸

Sœur Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort was particularly important for the spread of Thérèse’s fame during the First World War, a period when the promotion of the cult accelerated quickly. The 1916 edition showed how aware the Carmel was that the war was a time when the cult might make headway. A picture of soldiers making a military pilgrimage to Thérèse’s grave in Lisieux was added (figure 3.21), complete with Thérèse’s statement ‘J’aime la France, ma Patrie. Je veux lui conserver la Foi’, (‘I love France, my Fatherland. I want to preserve the Faith’). A crudely-drawn image of medals sent to the Carmel as ex-votos was also included. Eleven pages of extracts from letters sent to the Carmel during the war, thanking Thérèse for her intervention in the trenches or for the spiritual strength she had given soldiers, also appeared. Finally, as if to prove the foothold Thérèse was gaining in the Catholic world by reference to an authoritative source, the *La Croix* article ‘Du Carmel aux tranchées’, commenting on the growing devotion to Thérèse at the Front, was included, a clever contribution to the book’s attempt to present Thérèse as the soldier’s saint.⁵⁹ Annoult’s image of Thérèse showering roses on a battlefield (see figure 2.35) was used on the back cover of this 1916 edition, forming a

⁵⁶ On the dubious provenance of these sayings, see Six, *Lumière de la Nuit*, pp. 140-5.

⁵⁷ See August 1913 commercial flyer, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

⁵⁸ See chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁵⁹ François Veuillot, ‘Du Carmel aux tranchées’, *La Croix*, 27 September 1916, p. 1.

powerful association between Thérèse and salvation from the myriad perils of war, also the function of his image of Thérèse ministering to a dying soldier, produced in 1915 (figure 3.22). A rather dramatic illustration of the association of Thérèse in general, and this publication in particular, with miraculous happenings during the war is the copy of *Sa vie; depuis sa mort* on display in the new permanent exhibition at the Carmel of Lisieux. This copy of the book has a bullet-hole in it, and was sent to the Carmel by a soldier who said it had saved his life. Thérèse was fully subsumed into the mythology of the First World War even as the battles raged,⁶⁰ and the appropriation of an idea of the salvific image, usually associated with eastern icons, was clear evidence of the iconic charge the portraits of Thérèse had gained, even when mass-produced. The beatification and canonisation of Thérèse saw new editions of the book with her new titles, and in 1926 the title changed to *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie, sa pluie de roses*, the change reflecting the book's even greater emphasis on miracles (Thérèse's promised '*pluie de roses*'), with the inclusion of eight plates showing Jouvenot's rendering of Thérèse's miracles, later to receive their own volume. It is to these miracle accounts that we shall now turn.

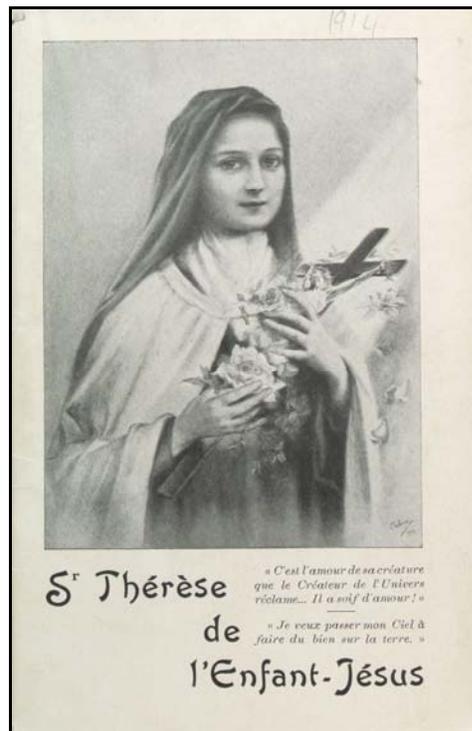


Figure 3.20. Cover of the 1914 edition of *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort*. Source: Mère Agnès de Jésus, *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort* (Bar-le-Duc, 1914).

⁶⁰ On Thérèse's appeal during the war see Nevin, 'Je veux lutter'.

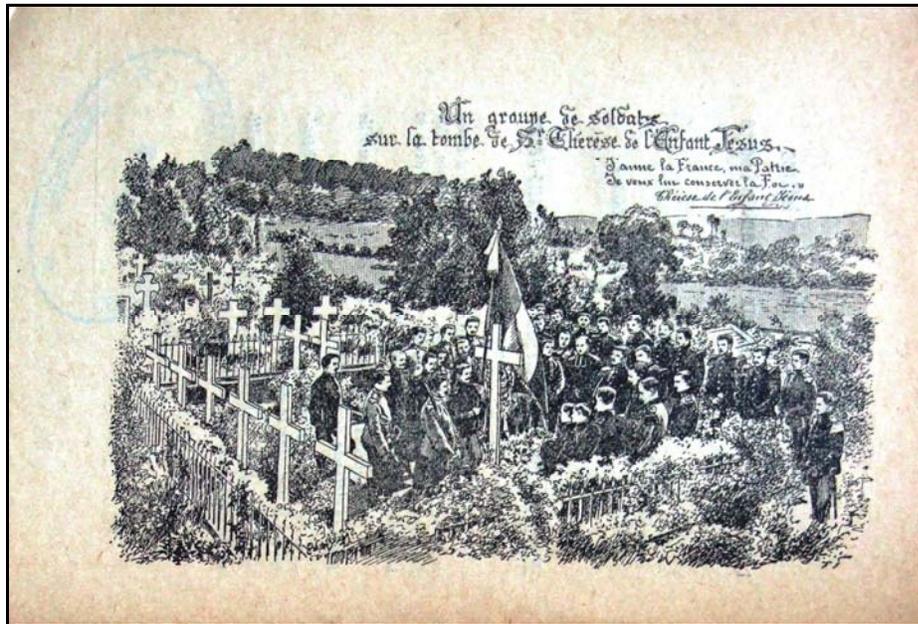


Figure 3.21. Soldiers making a military pilgrimage to Thérèse's grave in Lisieux. Source: Mère Agnès de Jésus, *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort* (Bar-le-Duc, 1916).



Figure 3.22. Annoult's 'Death of a soldier', 1915. Source: ACL.

'Pluie de Roses': The Miracle Accounts

Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort, saw the incorporation of miracle accounts in the *éditions de propagande* as they moved from a purely biographical approach to presenting Thérèse as a potential saint. But the huge number of letters the Carmel began to receive from devotees who claimed they had been the beneficiaries of Thérèse's miraculous intervention were to be used much more extensively.⁶¹ Dedicated volumes of miracle accounts appeared and the presentation of Thérèse as a miracle-worker became central to the cult in the period from the later years of the First World War to the run up to the beatification and canonisation. Already a dedicated volume of miracle accounts had appeared, *Quelques-unes des grâces et guérisons attribuées à l'intercession de sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, morte en odeur de sainteté au carmel de Lisieux, 1873-1897* (1910) and this was to be the first of seven volumes of miracle accounts, known as *Pluie de roses*.⁶² Ida Friederike Görres remarked that this series was made up of 'badly printed volumes, cheap in their format, virtual museum-pieces of tasteless book-making',⁶³ but they sold nearly four hundred thousand copies by 1932.⁶⁴ The *Pluie de roses* series was not well-illustrated, but the covers of the books cast Thérèse strongly in the role of thaumaturge, the showering of roses being promoted as a universal symbol of her favours.⁶⁵ The cover of the fourth edition, published in June 1914, the month of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was eerily prophetic, showing a mass of lambs caught in a thicket of brambles, with Thérèse casting down a shower of roses on them (see figure 3.23). No doubt originally intended to show the saving of imperilled souls in general, the relevance of the image to the slaughter in the trenches became clear as the war began. The fifth volume capitalised on the war more fully, carrying the subtitle 'Conversions, Guérisons. Interventions de S^r Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus pendant la Guerre' and showing rows of medals on the front, juxtaposed with roses. The highlights of the wartime miracles had already appeared in *Quelques extraits des nombreuses lettres reçues au carmel de Lisieux pendant la guerre* (1916), which bore the image of Thérèse on the battlefield on the cover, and ran

⁶¹ The Carmel directly solicited such letters from the very beginning of the war. The July 1914 Imprimerie Saint-Paul commercial catalogue called for news of 'all the graces and cures attributed to the intercession of Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus'. See July 1914 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

⁶² Vol. II (1912), III (1913), IV (1914), V (1920), VI (1923), VII (1926). There was also several books of extracts from these volumes, including: Carmel of Lisieux, *Pluie de Roses, extraits des tomes I et II* (Bar-le-Duc, 1912); *Idem., Pluie de Roses, extraits du tome VI* (Bar-le-Duc, 1923).

⁶³ Görres, *The Hidden Face*, pp. 10-1.

⁶⁴ See chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁶⁵ On this see Guise, 'Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse', pp. 36-8, and *Idem.*, 'Thérèse de Lisieux et ses miracles', pp. 98-100.

to only thirty-two pages. Costing only 15 centimes to volume four's 2 francs 50 centimes,⁶⁶ it was a powerful promotional tool, with four pages of Theresian merchandise listed in the back, including medals available in five different metals and four different sizes – the ideal devotional item for the soldier. The inclusion of a very short biography of Thérèse on the back cover allowed the saint to be learned about without even having to open it as the book passed from hand to hand in the trenches. Additionally, *Histoire de l'avion sœur Thérèse, 1917-1918* (1919) focussed on a specific miracle story – that of a priest mobilised as a pilot in the war, and his miraculous survival of a plane crash after he invoked Thérèse's help – while *Interventions de sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus pendant la guerre* (1920), running to 256 pages, was a deluxe collection of the wartime miracles. Again using 'Thérèse on the battlefield' on the cover, the image on the back cover of a *tricolore* bearing the Sacred Heart was particularly significant, as Raymond Jonas has shown, as 'an ensign that blended faith and nationalism' and that represented the feelings of millions of French Catholics who saw the war as a punishment of the godless French republic.⁶⁷ After the war, the miracle accounts found a new cause, coming to focus on Thérèse's status as a friend of the missions, and *Pluie de Roses en faveur des Missions* (1923) bore on the cover a picture of a sick missionary in the Congo having a vision of Thérèse. The book was an important contribution to the association of Thérèse with the Catholic missions, which would culminate in her naming as Patroness of the Missions in 1927.

None of the miracle account publications examined thus far had been heavily illustrated, but the potential for dramatic illustration of these stories was not passed over. In 1922 the Carmel produced a series of slides by Charles Jouvenot and a book of music and verses to go with them, *Miracles et interventions de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Pour séances de projections* (1922). The slides were advertised in an Office Central catalogue of 1923 as two sets: 'Miracles' – a mixture of Thérèse's miraculous appearances from across the world (fifty-eight slides at 45 francs for black and white, 100 francs for colour); 'Interventions' – miracles that occurred during the First World War (forty-four slides at 35 francs and 80 francs). The two sets could be rented for a week for 12 francs and 10 francs for black and white, and 25 francs and 20 francs for colour, respectively.⁶⁸ The book itself came separately at 6 francs 50 centimes and reproduced only

⁶⁶ See July 1916, commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 1, ACL and July 1919 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

⁶⁷ Jonas, *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud*, p. 87.

⁶⁸ 1923 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

twelve of this total of 102 images.⁶⁹ In 1928, most of these images were made available to those unable to afford to buy or rent the slides or to attend a showing of them, with the publication of *Quelques miracles et interventions de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (1928) which reproduced ninety-six of the images. The task of showing Thérèse's miraculous interventions was often a difficult one for Jouvenot, and her appearance, frequently in a three-quarters view, peering out of a frame of billowing clouds, was often awkward, particularly when she appeared to well-dressed people in modern domestic settings, next to expensive furnishings, for example in the slide showing her with Reverend Grant, a Scottish Presbyterian minister who later ran the *Maison Natale* (the house where Thérèse was born) at Alençon (figure 3.24). The image showing Thérèse's intervention when a priest was in danger of falling over a precipice in his car seems to have been particularly difficult to render, showing a double-scale Thérèse, rendered ghostly by the disappearance of her lower limbs, supporting the front wheels of the car (figure 3.25). But despite their often jarring nature, the images did bring Thérèse closer, showing her intervening for the benefit of ordinary people and being physically close to them.⁷⁰ These images also showed Thérèse in many different environments – in the missionary lands, in the trenches, in seminaries and hospitals, at sea and in the air and in the bedrooms of the ailing across Europe. These pictures took Thérèse out of the biographical and allegorical context in which she had been pictured thus far, underscoring her mobility and potency since her death and providing a series of visual representations of her posthumous life. With re-editions in 1936 and 1938, *Quelques miracles et interventions* sold 33,000 copies.⁷¹

⁶⁹ April 1923 music catalogue, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

⁷⁰ During the Middle Ages, portrayal in half-length, bringing the subject 'closer to the edge of the picture-plane and therefore into closer proximity to the beholder [was] a pictorial device introduced in the Netherlands to facilitate a more intimate association with the sacred.' Marks, *Image and Devotion*, p. 33. The same method is used by Jouvenot in the Reverend Grant image.

⁷¹ See chiffres de publications, ACL.

3. The Dissemination of the Celinian Image and the Building of a Commercial Cult



Figure 3.23. Cover of the fourth edition of *Pluie de roses*. Source: Carmel of Lisieux, *Pluie de roses IV* (Bar-le-Duc, 1914).

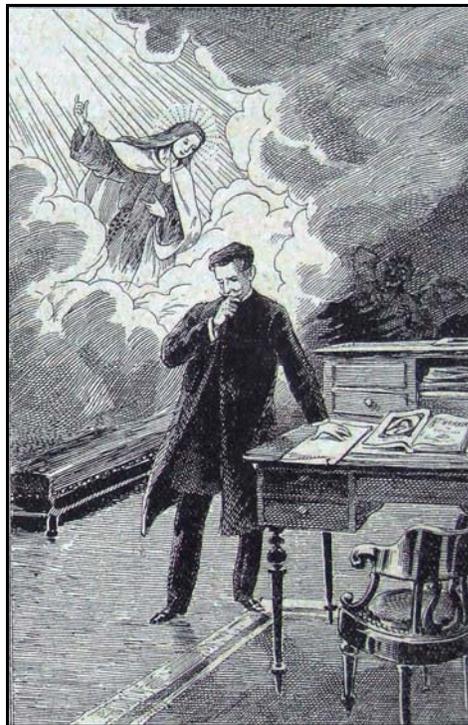


Figure 3.24. The conversion of Reverend Grant. Source: Carmel of Lisieux, *Quelques miracles et interventions de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Paris, 1928).

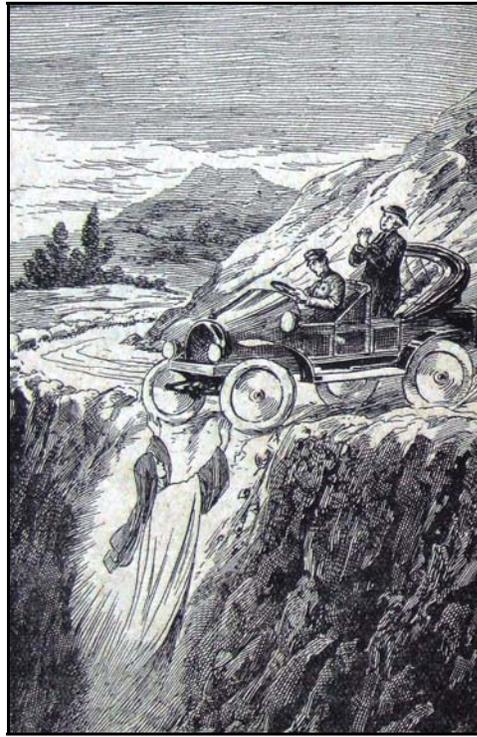


Figure 3.25. The rescue of a motoring priest. Source: Carmel of Lisieux, *Quelques miracles et interventions de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Paris, 1928).

'La petite voie': An Allegorical Journey to Salvation

In 1919 the Carmel made the move from illustrated texts into picture-book publications, where the image dominated and text was sparse. *La petite voie. Ascension mystique de la montagne de la perfection d'amour et d'enfance spirituelle de la Servante de Dieu Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Tableaux allégoriques* was written by Mère Agnès and illustrated by Jouvenot.⁷² Here the aim was to communicate Thérèse's spiritual message to the masses, leaving behind the biographical and miraculous entirely. The book contained thirty-one tableaux with accompanying verses and the introduction explained 'With the help of allegorical pictures, we are going to follow the Servant of God through the various stages of a mystic life suitable to all souls desirous of climbing with her THE MOUNTAIN OF PERFECTION BY THE WAY OF LOVE AND SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD.'⁷³ The book was indeed highly allegorical. Thérèse was shown visiting Bethlehem and cradling Jesus, leading to the insight that she must become like a child if she is to achieve

⁷² Later called *La petite voie d'enfance spirituelle suivie par la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Poème allégorique en 32 tableaux* (Bar-le-Duc, 1923).

⁷³ Mère Agnès de Jésus, *La petite voie*, p. 2.

holiness. She was then shown in the guise of a child struggling towards perfection, and discovering the importance of self-immolation, before finally putting her trust in God and being borne along the path to sanctity by Jesus himself. In the final plate, Thérèse was seen, once again in her familiar form, wearing the Carmelite habit, shepherding souls towards Heaven (figure 3.26) and the text says:

To our land of exile Thérèse returns/ Confiding her secrets to the children of God/ She extends her mantle over the innocent flock /Over the simple and humble of heart/ ‘Children’, she says, ‘ascend! My way is luminous/ It is the shortest route to Heaven above/ This happy experience is my own/ Yes, my way is indeed sure and leads to the God of Love!’⁷⁴

The spiritual philosophy of the ‘little way’ was being sold as a guaranteed route to Heaven here, and through this picture book the image and the spiritual philosophy were intimately linked. While Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, contemporary critic of the Theresian enterprise, said that the images had ‘dramatic tendencies’, with the plate showing the child receiving God’s love from Heaven described as showing her ‘receiving full in the chest a gigantic cushion flung from the stormy clouds’,⁷⁵ the book sold 121,000 copies by 1928⁷⁶ and was fulsomely praised by Canon Dubosq.⁷⁷ Such was its popularity, it was published with full-colour plates (reproducing watercolours done by Sœur Marie du Sainte-Esprit) in 1930.⁷⁸ At 12 francs 50 centimes, it was one of the Carmel’s more lavishly-produced and expensive publications but, five years after the canonisation, a market for such a luxury item was assured.⁷⁹ *La petite voie* indicated the sisters’ desire to promote the ‘little way’ as Thérèse’s central message, but they were to return to a focus on Thérèse as both a historical and saintly personality in the 1920s.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, tableau 31.

⁷⁵ Delarue-Mardrus, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 36, 38.

⁷⁶ Chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁷⁷ D/C 28/09/1918, THER-5, ACL.

⁷⁸ Mère Agnès de Jésus, *La voie d’enfance spirituelle suivie par Ste Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus. 31 tableaux en couleurs* (Bar-le-Duc, 1930).

⁷⁹ July 1931 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2b, ACL.



Figure 3.26. The last tableau of *La petite voie*. Source: Mère Agnès de Jésus, *La petite voie. Ascension mystique de la montagne de la perfection d'amour et d'enfance spirituelle de la Servante de Dieu Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Tableaux allégoriques* (Paris, 1919).

'Vie en images': A Visual Hagiography

The production of images for the publication *Vie en images* was mentioned in chapter 2, and we have already seen how the engravings that first appeared in *Une rose effeuillée* were the prototypes for many of these representations. The book was the most important publication in the Carmel's history for the promotion of the Celinian image. Consisting of sixty-eight tableaux with accompanying eight-line verses (see figure 3.27), it was first published as *La Vie en images de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus* in 1923. Transcribing the events from the autobiography into pictures, it cost only 4 francs to *Histoire d'une âme's* 14,⁸⁰ and told the story of Thérèse's life in a much more accessible manner than her sometimes rambling autobiography. The book brought together almost all the images of Thérèse that Céline had created or commissioned in the twenty-six years since her sister's death, combining retouched photographs, découpage images and original portraits, both by her and her collaborators, and presenting them in a coherent series, forming a visual hagiography. These tableaux became the standard representations of Thérèse's life, just as the various episodes from her autobiography had already become standardised in

⁸⁰ May 1923 commercial flyer, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

countless devotional books, as well as editions of the autobiography. The publication of this series of visual counterparts to these well known episodes profoundly shaped how Thérèse's life was presented to the public, and its influence was far reaching, with the book going into several editions and selling 48,500 copies by 1925, and 177,800 by the last edition of 1955.⁸¹ As Thérèse gained new identities, for example Patroness of France and Patroness of the Missions, appropriate images were added to the book to illustrate these roles, and the number of plates expanded from sixty-eight in 1923 to seventy-seven after the canonisation. The book cemented the visual presentation of Thérèse's life into an instantly-identifiable series, and indeed 'Céline was, in her way, a pioneer of *bande dessinée*'⁸² – here, Thérèse's life story was told with the immediacy and simplicity of the comic strip, pared down to the bare bones of the standard tropes of the saint's Life.⁸³ The images from *Vie en images* would later appear in devotional settings: the frescoes at the chapel built adjacent to the *Maison Natale* in Alençon (see figure 3.28) were copies of images from the book, and watercolour copies by Sœur Marie du Saint-Esprit were hung in the rooms at *Les Buissonnets*, shaping the visitor's conception of the events of Thérèse's life at the very sites of their occurrence (see figure 3.29). This echoing and reuse of images was frequently found in the Carmel's approach to the representations of Thérèse, and it could be argued that this fixed the images that were issuing from Carmel as the authoritative representations through their repetition and ubiquity. We will return to *Vie en images* when we examine its echoing in the form of waxworks in the examination of the Diorama Sainte-Thérèse below.

⁸¹ Chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁸² Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 80.

⁸³ There have in fact been several *bande dessinée* treatments of Thérèse's life. Arnaud De Bie's *La Petite Thérèse! 'Vivre d'Amour!'* (Paris, 2006) used many of the images from *Vie en images*, copying their composition and sequence. See also: Guy Lehideux and Charlie Kieffer, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Étampes, 2000); Raymond Maric, Pierre Frisano and Marie-Paule Alluard, *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux* (Boston, Mass., 1997); Marie-Thérèse Fischer, *La Petite Thérèse* (Strasbourg, 2004); Agnès Richomme and Robert Rigot, *Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Paris, 2006).

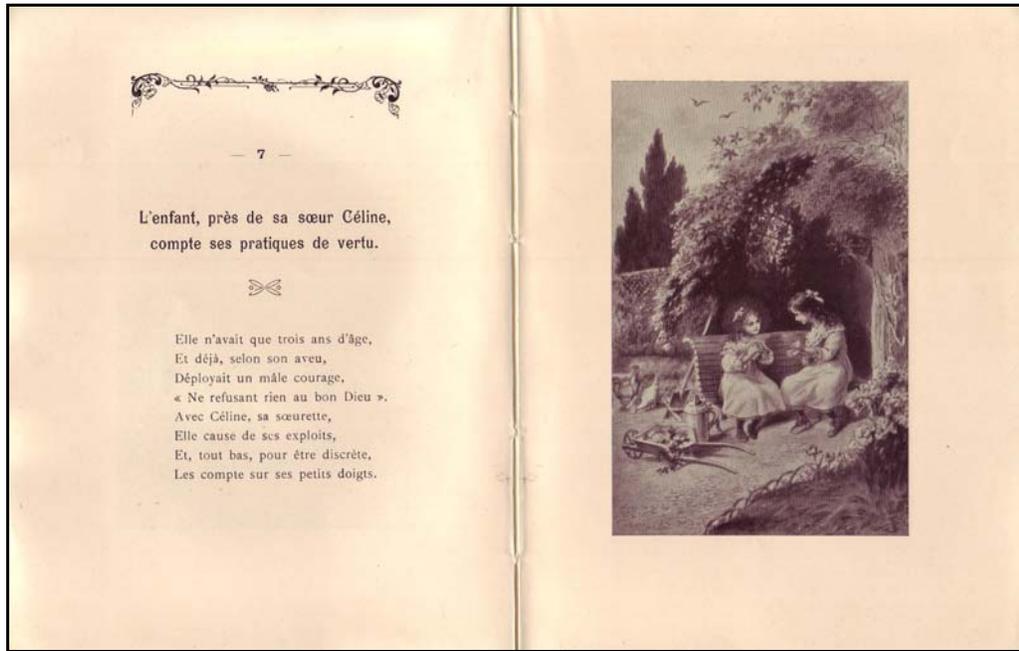


Figure 3.27. Section 7 of *Vie en images*, showing Thérèse and Céline in the garden at their house in Alençon. Source: Carmel of Lisieux, *La Vie en images de la bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus en 68 tableaux, avec couplets et musique pour séances de projections* (Bar-le-Duc, 1923).



Figure 3.28. Fresco at the chapel attached to the *Maison Natale*, Alençon, copying plate 7 of *Vie en images*, 1925. Source: author's collection.



Figure 3.29. Sœur Marie du Saint-Esprit's watercolour rendering of the Thérèse and Céline scene, c. 1925. Source: author's collection.

'L'Esprit' to 'La Mère de Sainte Thérèse': Céline's Works and the Later Years of the Theresian Publication

We have seen that Céline's images were the principal commodity of the Carmel's publishing empire, but her contribution to the Theresian industry was not confined to her images – she also wrote or collaborated on some significant publications.⁸⁴ The first of these was *L'esprit de la bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus d'après ses écrits et les témoins oculaires de sa vie*, first published in 1922 and with various re-editions up to 1946. This was Céline's treatment of Thérèse's spiritual philosophy, but it owed much more to the latent Jansenist influences of the Martin sisters' childhood than Thérèse's later theological innovations, and her philosophy that God was to be treated as a loving father rather than a divine judge. This was a text-heavy volume with full annotations directing readers to the original sources of the material and the book carried some carefully selected, appropriately serious images: a frontispiece of 'Thérèse in meditation' (see figure 3.30), representative of her credentials as spiritual thinker; a plate bearing Céline's favourite, 'Thérèse with harp', which 'showed her interior life';⁸⁵ the iconic, standard representation 'Thérèse aux roses'; and 'Thérèse expirante', showing the classic trope of the death of

⁸⁴ See RTAG, p. 99-100.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

the saint. The book sold 54,600 copies before the canonisation, 91,600 by 1937, and over one hundred thousand by 1946,⁸⁶ and was used as a reference work on Thérèse's spirituality for many years.⁸⁷ Céline's next most significant work would not appear for another twenty years and showed the beginning of a shift towards a greater interest in the history of Thérèse and her family, rather than her saintly, posthumous incarnation. *Histoire d'une famille. Une école de sainteté. Le foyer où s'épanouit Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (1945) was written with Stéphane-Joseph Piat and although it was indeed more rooted in Thérèse's historical reality, it was as hagiographical in its presentation of the Martin family as the title suggests. Indeed Thomas Nevin has stated that 'This book was written in the Vichy years; the urge for atonement of Third Republican sins may have been strong within Catholic France, and the model of rectitude provided by the Martin family must have been irresistible.'⁸⁸ The book made an important contribution to the advancement of the introduction of the cause for beatification of the Martin parents, which occurred in 1957.⁸⁹ The illustrations featured many engravings of places associated with the family and many retouched photographs – the Carmel was still reluctant to present original photographs as late as the mid-1940s.

By the time Céline's next publication appeared, she had lost all her remaining sisters. Marie died in January 1940, aged eighty; Léonie in June 1941, aged seventy-eight; and Pauline (Mère Agnès) in July 1951, aged ninety. In the year after Mère Agnès' death *Conseils et souvenirs* was published. This saw Céline's emergence from obscurity. It was the first of her publications explicitly acknowledged as being authored by her, and was described as 'The ultimate testimony of the last surviving sister of Saint Thérèse.'⁹⁰ A promotional leaflet for the book reproduced a statement in Céline's handwriting in facsimile: 'I attest that these pages, in all truth, conform to what I have seen and heard. S^r Geneviève de la Sainte Face et de S^{te} Thérèse OCD, 9 June 1951',⁹¹ testament to both the move towards a more historical approach to Thérèse's cult and the growing cult of personality surrounding Céline as the last survivor of the Martin family. Some unretouched photographs appeared in the book, a further sign of greater moves towards a more 'documentary' style, but some heavily retouched images also featured, including the 'faked' image of Thérèse

⁸⁶ Chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁸⁷ See Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 140.

⁸⁸ Nevin, *Thérèse of Lisieux*, p. 372.

⁸⁹ On this see Stéphane-Joseph Piat OFM, *Histoire d'une famille. Une école de sainteté. Le foyer où s'épanouit Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Lille, 1945), p. 128.

⁹⁰ March 1953 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 4, ACL.

⁹¹ 1952 advertising flyer, S24B, Tracts, ACL.

with novices and hourglass (figure 2.17).⁹² The frontispiece both confirmed the book as Céline's public debut and the Carmel's continued attachment to the retouching of photographs. A very heavily retouched version of a photograph taken on the day of Céline's profession,⁹³ the frontispiece showed her with Thérèse at the foot of the Carmel's courtyard cross (figure 3.31). The faces had been entirely repainted and both the image of the Holy Face held by Céline and the rose petals falling from Thérèse's hands were added to the original image. 'Thérèse *expirante*' and 'Thérèse *morte*' also appeared. Here, in 1952, the illustrative content of the Carmel's output was still dominated by retouched images and Céline's original portraits and, as with the 1953 edition of *Histoire d'une âme*, a Saint-Sulpician style of representation still characterised this publication.

Céline's final works were *Le père de Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, 1823-1894* (1953) and *La mère de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, 1831-1877* (1954). Both these books also contained some unretouched photographs, as *Conseils et souvenirs* had, but again there was a preponderance of retouched and 'découpage' images. The frontispiece was a hastily engineered portrait of Louis Martin, adapted from Céline's original portrait 'Thérèse and her father', which appeared on the following page. This rather undermined the claim, made by the caption to the frontispiece, that it was a 'photograph from 1881', and the biography of Zélie also contained a heavily retouched photograph of her as a frontispiece. In the earlier publication, a photograph of Céline with her father, Léonie and the Guérin family (see figure 2.3) was used to create a new image of her with her father alone outside the Guérin's country retreat at La Musse (figure 3.32) – here, as late as 1954, was an entirely 'faked' image. Céline's biographies of her parents marked the apogee of the creation of a mythology around the Martin family and confirmed Céline's reluctance to use original photographs right into the last years of her life. Céline's final work was to help with the preparations for François de Sainte-Marie's *Manuscrits Autobiographiques*, which was published in 1956 and which changed the landscape of devotion to Thérèse profoundly. But while Céline actively participated in the textual rediscovery of Thérèse, she never abandoned her 'interpretative' attitude to the photographs and it was not until after her death that François de Sainte-Marie could apply the same ethos to Thérèse's photographs. *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux*

⁹² Mère Agnès remained in the window in the version used in *Conseils et souvenirs*, whereas both she and Mère Marie had been removed in the most commonly-circulated version, showing how Céline adapted images to have different meanings for different purposes.

⁹³ Photograph 26, Appendix 2.

(1961) would mark the end of the Celinian approach to the illustration of the Carmel's books that had persisted for sixty years.

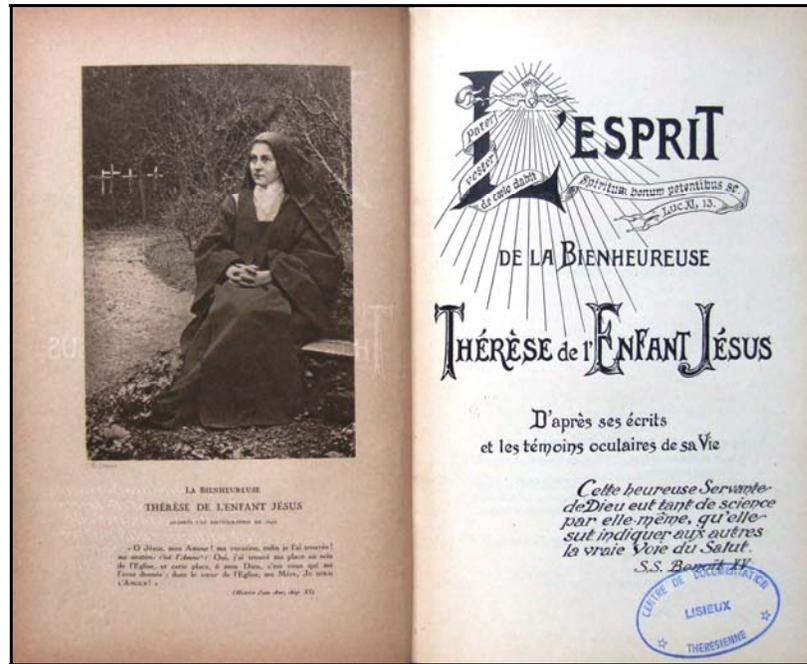


Figure 3.30. Title page of *L'esprit... de la bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, d'après ses écrits et les témoins oculaires de sa vie* (Bar-le-Duc, 1922).

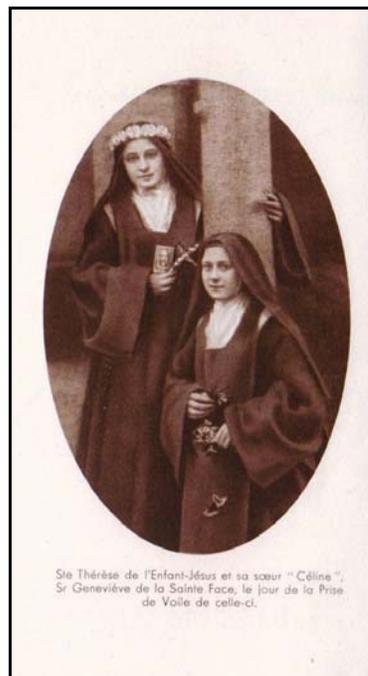


Figure 3.31. The frontispiece to *Conseils et Souvenirs*. Source: Soeur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Conseils et Souvenirs* (Lisieux, 1952).

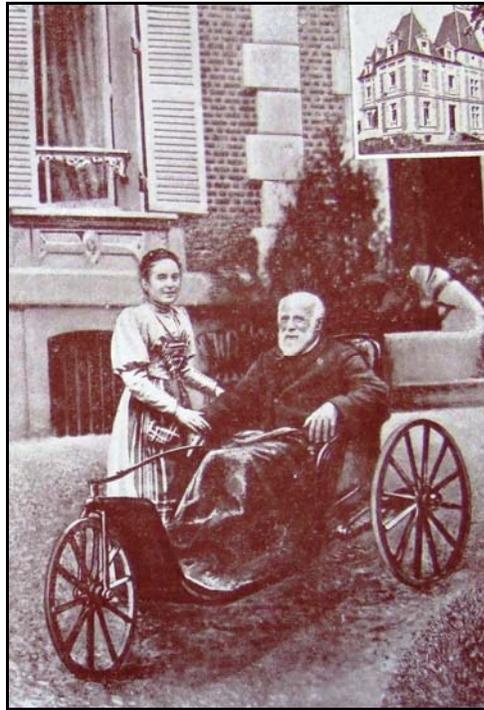


Figure 3.32. The *découpage* image of Céline with her father at La Musse. Source: Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Le père de Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, 1823-1894* (Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1953).

Devotional Ephemera and the Cult of Saint Thérèse

The vast range of publications produced by the Carmel in the early twentieth century run the risk of eclipsing the wealth of devotional ephemera the convent were also circulating in this period and the role this played in the dissemination of the convent's images of Thérèse. The sale of Céline's images as holy cards made them commodities in their own right and the diversity of these on offer rapidly increased. In 1908 only three different pictures were listed for sale in the Imprimerie Saint-Paul's commercial catalogues,⁹⁴ but by 1911 eight versions of the '*buste ovale*' were available, of varying size and quality to suit a range of budgets, as well as ten of Céline's other pictures at 3 francs a piece.⁹⁵ A wealth of other images were soon offered, and the May 1927 Office Central catalogue included an insert with forty-eight different images shown in thumbnail, and available in a range of formats, with text in five languages (figure 3.33). While images such as Sœur Marie du Sainte-Esprit's series of watercolour versions of the plates from *Vie en images* (figure 3.34) made for an even more diverse offering, the '*buste ovale*' and '*Thérèse aux*

⁹⁴ 1908 commercial flyer, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

⁹⁵ August 1911 commercial flyer, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

roses' were still sold as the standard representations of Thérèse and were the mainstay of the Carmel's commercial offering. These classic portraits were available in an array of formats, ranging from high-quality prints, costing up to 25 francs,⁹⁶ to simple holy cards, often with a third-class relic attached (see figure 3.35). The production of these representations as stand-alone images meant that they were not relegated to the position of an illustration for a written narrative, being sanctioned and, to some extent, 'interpreted' by a text – they were without any such textual framing and could, therefore, be far more multivalent in their devotional meaning. The sale of the images as prints or holy cards also meant that the faithful could 'buy into' Thérèse's cult for as little as 5 centimes. Other devotional items also served as cheap and easy ways to observe devotion to the saint, and from 1915 medals bearing 'Thérèse *aux roses*' began to be offered, selling for as little as 10 centimes for an aluminium model.⁹⁷ The Carmel felt that the images could act as a 'form of apostolate'⁹⁸ and in 1921 Céline wrote to Léonie that 'I hope that they will serve God as a means to touch souls.'⁹⁹ Even critic of the cult Lucie Delarue-Mardrus commented on the potential of both holy cards and medals of Thérèse to spread knowledge of her cult:

My first contact with the saint was during the war via her image, sent to me by someone in my family who wished to convert me... Later when I was in Normandy at my summer home, one of the girls on my farm showed me a medal that she kept always in her pocket. 'It is the Carmelite of Lisieux', she said. I recalled the face that had already attracted me in the picture, and I asked questions.¹⁰⁰

Images cheap enough to give away and medals that were affordable even for a farmhand were clearly an important means of the dissemination of the cult and the fact that Delarue-Mardrus recognised the second representation as being the same face as the first demonstrates that the crucifix and roses made Thérèse recognisable even on a medal.

While holy cards and medals were well-established devotional trappings and were well-suited to communicating the iconic nature of the key representations of Thérèse, soon other, more prosaic commercial items were produced bearing images of the future saint. An early success was the *Calendrier de Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, first appearing in 1909. The 1910 re-

⁹⁶ November 1921 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

⁹⁷ July 1916 commercial catalogue medals insert, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

⁹⁸ MMA/T 02/02/1909, ACL.

⁹⁹ C/FTh 21/09/1921, ACL

¹⁰⁰ Delarue-Mardrus, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 16.

edition, the *Calendrier artistique pour 1910, avec portrait de Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et pétales de roses à effeuiller chaque jour* was, judging from the title, clearly a more elaborate piece of devotional merchandise, and it was fairly expensive at 2 francs 50 centimes.¹⁰¹ By 1913 five different types of calendar were available and on the eve of the First World War the items available featuring Céline's images included postcards, souvenir albums, exercise books, writing paper and blotters.¹⁰² Just four years later, the founding of the Office Central saw a huge increase in the cult's commercial offering, and the first OCL catalogue listed, in addition to the above items, lockets, charms, badges, brooches, scarf pins, necklaces and bracelets, most featuring 'Thérèse aux roses', along with the necessary gift boxes to go with these items.¹⁰³ Prices varied between just 15 centimes for a small badge, to a not inconsiderable 30 francs for a gold brooch 'with a fine art portrait of Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus'.¹⁰⁴ The Carmel's approach to the commercial promotion of Thérèse also embraced new technologies. In 1923 the Office Central began to offer a film on loan at 200 francs a day or 300 francs for an eight-day loan period. Called simply *La Petite Sainte de Lisieux*, it included footage of events at both Lisieux and Rome for the beatification and ran for thirty minutes.¹⁰⁵ Later, the May 1927 catalogue advertised two other films alongside this original one: *Fêtes d'Alençon en 1924* (75 francs for eight days and 40 francs for one) and *Fêtes de la Canonisation à Lisieux en 1925* (175 francs for eight days and 100 francs for one).¹⁰⁶ Indeed, Thérèse's official recognition by the Church saw the commercial activities of the Carmel flourish. From 1923 there was a move towards more expensive, glossy, pictorial catalogues with a greater range of devotional items, and a large range of statuettes of the saint became available at this time (see figure 3.36). By the eve of the canonisation there was a sense of the potential commercialism of the cult straining to be unleashed, evident in a notice that the Carmel sent to other French Carmelite convents, stating that 'The *new articles produced for the canonisation* – images, colour postcards etc..., cannot be requested or delivered before the month of May: a catalogue will give details. We will also have, *after the canonisation*, triple-coloured rose petals, in different forms and shades, carrying different sayings of the new Saint on the back. – Price: 40 francs for a thousand; 5

¹⁰¹ 1909 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

¹⁰² August 1913 commercial flyer, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

¹⁰³ July 1917 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Note, Film 'La Petite Sainte de Lisieux', S24B, env. 2a, ACL. In August 1923 the *Journal des Pèlerins* carried an advertisement for the Cinéma Gallien, located right in the centre of Lisieux, showing this film with a full orchestra at every screening. 'Le Film de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus', *Journal des Pèlerins*, 1st year, no. 8 (5-11 August 1923), p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ May 1927 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2b, ACL.

centimes per petal.’¹⁰⁷ The devotional items issuing from the Carmel became even more diverse in the years after the canonisation and ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ would eventually appear on items as prosaic as napkin rings (see figure 3.37), a sign of just how ubiquitous Céline’s classic portrait of her sister became, becoming a part of the landscape of everyday material goods.



Figure 3.33. Insert to the May 1927 Office Central commercial catalogue, showing the large range of images available. Source: S24B, env. 2b, ACL.

¹⁰⁷ Quelques Renseignements relatifs aux Fêtes de la Canonisation, S24D, env. 8, ACL.

3. The Dissemination of the Celinian Image and the Building of a Commercial Cult

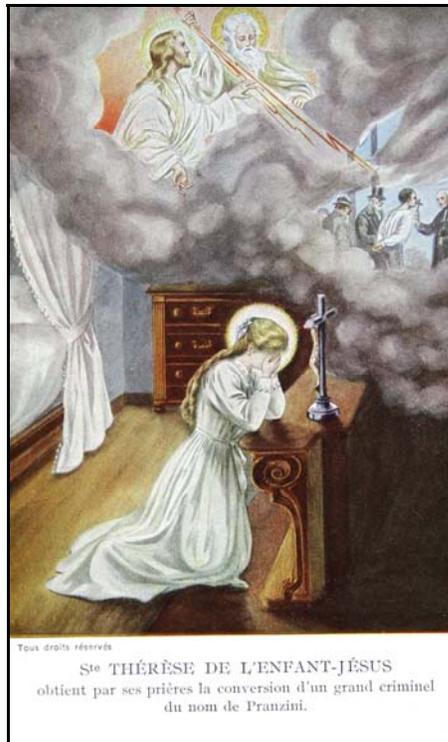


Figure 3.34. Sœur Marie du Sainte-Esprit's watercolour version of Jouvenot's picture of Thérèse praying for the murderer Pranzini, reproduced as a postcard, c. 1930. Source: author's collection.

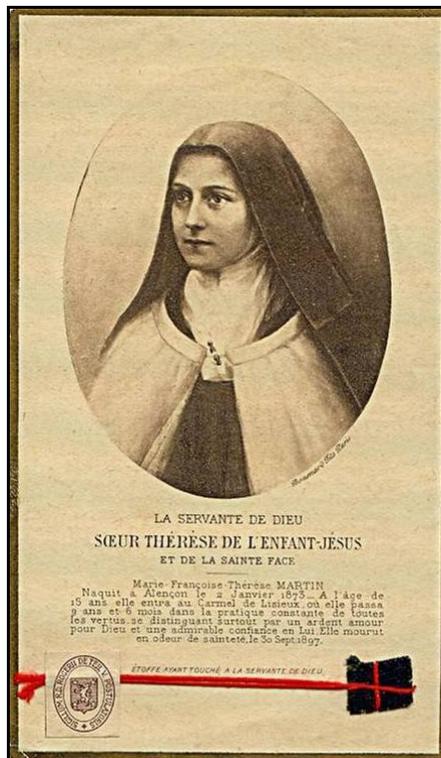


Figure 3.35. Holy card with third-class ('contact') relic, early 1920s. Source: author's collection.



Figure 3.36. Statues on offer after the beatification. Source: S24B, env. 2a, ACL.



Figure 3.37. Commercial items, including napkin rings, carrying Céline's images. Source: April 1930 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2b, ACL.

A Hagiography in Three Dimensions: The Diorama Sainte-Thérèse

In the late twenties, soon after Thérèse's canonisation, the Carmel experimented with a new medium of commercial dissemination of Céline's representations of Thérèse – a waxwork museum.¹⁰⁸ The Diorama Sainte-Thérèse told the story of Thérèse's life in waxwork tableaux and was opened as a private business by an enterprising devotee of the saint, with the full backing of the Carmel, in July 1929. Situated on rue de Livarot, almost next door to the Carmel, the Diorama initially charged an entrance fee of 4 francs¹⁰⁹ and operated for the rest of the period of this study.¹¹⁰ The idea for the Diorama was first raised in April 1928 when Paul Herembrood, a retired air force captain, wrote to Mère Agnès:

Taking Our Lady of Lourdes as an example, I propose to open a religious diorama in Lisieux in honour of Saint Thérèse ... My intention would be to reproduce selected scenes from the brochure *Vie en images de Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus*, approved by Monsignor Thomas [Lemonnier]. So that I may reproduce them, I ask that you give me your permission and intercede in my favour with the diocesan authorities. This little book would then be sold at the entrance as an official guide for the pilgrim during their visit to the diorama.¹¹¹

The Diorama was envisaged as being a copy of a wax museum at Lourdes, the locus of so much innovation in commercial religious attractions at the end of the nineteenth century,¹¹² but it was also directly inspired by Céline's vision of Thérèse, as laid out in *Vie en images*. The Diorama was a striking example of the promotion of Céline's images, and the use of wax, a medium with such a wealth of cultural associations with the fake and the faithful, the frivolous and the edifying, highlights the Carmel's attempt to legitimise Céline's images through their commercial promotion in a range of media.

¹⁰⁸ Wax effigies of holy figures and wax ex-votos have long been used in Christian contexts. See: Pamela Pilbeam, *Madame Tussaud and the History of Waxworks* (London, 2003), p. 1; David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, 1991) [original publication 1989], ch. 7 and 9; Marina Warner, 'Waxworks and Wonderlands', in Lynne Cooke and Peter Wollen (eds), *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances* (Seattle, 1995), pp. 187-8; Taylor, *Bernadette of Lourdes*, p. 316; Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, p. 10. See also Eco, 'Travels in Hyperreality', p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ See entrance ticket, S35 Diorama, env. 2, ACL.

¹¹⁰ The Office Central de Lisieux bought the Diorama in 1973 and in 1993 it closed down. In 1996 the Orphelins Apprentis d'Auteuil, the Catholic social work foundation with strong links to Thérèse's cult, reopened the attraction in new premises, but using the original figures and props from the twenties. This venture failed, but in 2006 the OAA re-established the Diorama inside the Basilique Sainte-Thérèse itself, the attraction was turned over to the ownership of the pilgrimage office, and it remains open to visitors today. See *Thérèse de Lisieux*, 866 (May, 2006), p. 1, 4-5.

¹¹¹ H/MA 28/04/1928, S35, env. 2, ACL.

¹¹² Suzanne Kaufman has shown how, at Lourdes, visiting the various panorama and diorama in the town was framed as a devotional act. See Kaufman, 'Selling Lourdes', pp. 69-70. There is another such religious waxwork museum at Sainte-Anne d'Auray (founded in 1949), and one about the life of the Curé d'Ars was opened by the Musée Grévin in Ars-sur-Formans in 1994.

The original idea to use the plates from *Vie en images* as models for the scenes at the Diorama Sainte-Thérèse was pursued with enthusiasm by both the Carmel and the outside constituencies working on the project. When Paul Herembrood first wrote to the Carmel, he included a letter of support from a relative, a curate in Paris, backing this project ‘conceived with a distinctly religious purpose’ and asking for authorisation to have some of the plates from *Vie en images* copied and blown up so that their details may be reproduced exactly in the Diorama scenes.¹¹³ Writing to Mère Agnès a year later, Herembrood discussed small details of the *Vie en images* plates and suggested making minor changes to some of the scenes in transposing them into three dimensions.¹¹⁴ The level of detail here suggests that the Carmel had stipulated that the plates be copied as precisely as possible.¹¹⁵ When Monsieur Margot, the Parisian waxwork modeller who produced the figures for the Diorama, wrote to the convent to try to convince the sisters to change a significant detail of the scene showing Thérèse’s vision of the Virgin Mary, his beseeching tone suggested that the Carmel was opposed to all but the most minor changes.¹¹⁶ The Carmel were in any case heavily involved in setting up the attraction, sourcing exactly the correct garments for the figures,¹¹⁷ and engaging Herembrood in extensive discussion about the dimensions of the figure of Thérèse as a novice.¹¹⁸ This was a representation that was very much of the Carmel’s creation.

When the Diorama opened in July 1929, the desired faithful copy of *Vie en images* had indeed been achieved, and no expense was spared, with Céline boasting in a letter to Léonie that ‘the decoration is very sumptuous (Leo XIII’s robe cost 4,000 francs)’.¹¹⁹ The photographs of the scenes of 1929, reproduced in a souvenir album, as well as in a set of postcards published by Éditions Sodiord, show that the settings and positioning of the figures in the plates of *Vie en images* had been imitated right down to the smallest details. For example, in plate 7 of the first edition of

¹¹³ J. Heilmann/MA 30/04/1928, S35, env. 2, ACL.

¹¹⁴ H/MA 03/04/1929, S35, env. 2, ACL.

¹¹⁵ The close use of an ‘artist’s impression’ of an event as the template for a waxwork display was not unique. Vanessa Schwartz has discussed the genesis of the tableau at the Musée Grévin showing the ‘crime du Kremlin-Bicêtre’. Here the scenes were directly modelled on a series of illustrations of the crime that had appeared in *Le Petit Journal*, while Nicole Saez-Guerif has also noted the use of the illustrations from French school books of the 1930s and 1950s as templates for the scenes at the Grévin. See Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities*, p. 110 and Nicole Saez-Guerif, ‘Le Musée Grévin 1882-2001: Cire, Histoire et loisir parisien’, unpublished PhD thesis, Université Paris IV, Sorbonne, Paris, 2001, pp. 542-72.

¹¹⁶ M. Margot/MA 02/05/1929, S35, env. 2, ACL.

¹¹⁷ See H/MA 03/04/1929 and 10/04/1929, S35, env. 2, ACL.

¹¹⁸ H/MA 23/04/1929 and 19/04/1929, S35, env. 2, ACL. See also BF/MA 27/11/1928, Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL.

¹¹⁹ C/FTh 27/09/1929, ACL.

the book Thérèse and Céline sit on a bench by a wheelbarrow, spade and watering-can (figure 3.27) – scene 3 of the Diorama reproduced the tableau with exactly the same items (figure 3.38). The unselfconscious copying of the scenes and the treatment of Céline’s pictures as foundational images, more ‘real’ than Thérèse’s own written account of the events that were being depicted, is intriguing. It is this ‘secondary’ source which is referred to, instead of the autobiography, showing how her images had become the authoritative representations of Thérèse’s life. The use of *Vie en images* for the Diorama enacted a perpetuation of the Celinian Thérèse and, for those who had read the book, the presentation of the same scenes in life-size wax tableaux must have had the powerful effect of reconfirming the book’s representations. Not everyone would have been convinced, of course. Writing to the Carmel of Lisieux in August 1929, a month after the Diorama opened, a certain Suzanne Nadia criticised the attraction, saying that after visiting all the Theresian sites of Lisieux she went to ‘the Diorama which retraces the scenes of [Thérèse’s] life without any taste. Christianity is a religion of beauty – one is astonished by this reproduction... one cannot understand this Diorama.’¹²⁰ Eventually, the Carmel and Paul Herembrood clashed over the use of *Vie en images* as a guide book to the Diorama, Herembrood choosing to produce his own publication, and the Carmel apparently had little to do with the museum after it opened.¹²¹ Even so, at the Diorama, the Carmel’s brand, embodied by the images that were its main product, was preserved and extended, promoted in a modern, spectacular way to the market of devotees of Saint Thérèse.

¹²⁰ Suzanne Nadia/MA 22/08/1929, S35, env. 2, ACL.

¹²¹ See the souvenir album: *Lisieux. Diorama de Sainte-Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus* (Lisieux, 1929). An undated note written by de Bercegol explains that Herembrood asserted ‘We have made considerable modifications to all of your subjects to obtain the effects of perspective that a diorama demands. The difference is such that legally these compositions belong to us. It follows that we can reproduce these freely.’ Undated note, S35, env. 2, ACL.



Figure 3.38. Scene showing Thérèse and Céline in the garden at their house in Alençon, Diorama Sainte-Thérèse, 1929. Source: author's collection.

Conclusion: A 'Made To Order' Saint

Céline's images, repeated in so many media and for so long through the market the Carmel built around the saint, became the canonical representations of Thérèse. The promotion of a series of images depicting Thérèse's Life, not just through *Vie en images*, but in the repetition of Céline's representations in the Carmel's commercial output as a whole, gave Thérèse a visual hagiography like those of the great saints of the past. Like the well-known series of prints showing the Life of Teresa of Ávila, published in Antwerp only shortly after her death,¹²² Céline's images of her sister's Life came to influence following representations profoundly and definitively fixed the standard representation of her story. Indeed, *Vie en images* seems to have been partly based on an illustrated life of Claire of Assisi, published in 1898 and illustrated by Charles Jouvenot,¹²³ showing how Céline sought to give her sister the same sort of presence in the marketplace as saints of much longer pedigree. That the commercial market was used to mark out Céline's representations of Thérèse as authentic religious images suggests that commercial activity, far from reducing the perceived religious authenticity of a cult and its representations, could in fact

¹²² See Salinger, 'Representations of Saint Teresa', p. 102.

¹²³ R. P. Léopold de Chérancé OMC, *Ste. Claire d'Assise* (Abbeville, 1898). Contained in S-23LL, env. 1, ACL.

be instrumental to the establishment of such religious images as a part of mainstream devotional culture. Here, we can see that commercial religion could be a productive force in the cult of Thérèse of Lisieux,¹²⁴ imbuing Céline's images with authenticity.

The commercial activity of the Carmel of Lisieux was a means by which the cult was made popular and was legitimised. By giving Thérèse a place in the devotional market, she was marked out as a potential saint and a religious personality to be taken seriously. The use of new technologies, like film, and fashionable popular entertainments, such as waxworks, suggested that she was a saint of the modern age and presented the cult as one up to date with devotional trends. The progressively greater emphasis on Thérèse's role as a miracle-worker, moving away from concern with her earthly life towards her posthumous life, framed her as a saint more than a historical personality, and the production of a range of devotional ephemera allowed the faithful to incorporate Thérèse's cult into their expression of their Catholicism through material culture. The Carmel's quick reaction to wider events, such as the First World War, meant that they capitalised on the spirit of the nation and, particularly in the case of Thérèse's presentation as a soldier's saint in the Carmel's commercial output, we can see how much Thérèse was 'made to order for her century', as suggested by one of the characters in Gilbert Cesbron's rehabilitative play about the saint of the 1950s.¹²⁵ However, even though the Carmel reacted quickly to changing times in the early part of this period of study, we have seen that their overall attitude to the representation of Thérèse in the public sphere, presenting overwhelmingly Saint-Sulpician images and eschewing the photographs, remained the same in the sixty-year period examined here. Substantially the same images and publications were being offered in the 1950s that had been on sale at the turn of the century and the representation of the saint in this way into the second half of the twentieth century, when fashions were beginning to change, would later be criticised many by biographers of the saint. This is the topic of the next chapter.

¹²⁴ This is Suzanne Kaufman's approach to the commercial activity at Lourdes. See Kaufman, *Consuming Visions*.

¹²⁵ Gilbert Cesbron, *Il est minuit, Docteur Schweitzer / Briser la statue* (Paris, 1952), p. 165.

Chapter 4

‘My saint was being spoiled for me’: The Challenging of the Celinian Thérèse

And if the Saints came back... No doubt they would admit they often do not recognise themselves.

Thérèse Martin, quoted in Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte-Face, *Conseils et souvenirs*, 1952.

From the 1920s to the 1950s a succession of publications appeared which made concerted attacks on the Theresian cult, criticising both its commerciality and the images of the saint that dominated it.¹ The marketing project examined in chapter 3 had been wildly successful, making Thérèse widely known and contributing to her official recognition by the Church. But with her popularity also came dissent and in the first half of the twentieth century Thérèse’s representation became contested. The publications that criticised the Theresian cult ranged from novelistic-style biographies, combative polemics and sensational, pulp exposés, to the earnest attempts of curious ecclesiastics, unsatisfied with the Thérèse they were being presented with, to put forward a new representation of the saint. What defined many of these studies was a strong desire to rehabilitate Thérèse, ‘reclaim’ her from her sentimental depiction and reveal the ‘true’ face behind the popular image. Indeed, in this chapter we discover a range of new characterisations of Thérèse, all of them defined in opposition to the Celinian Thérèse, revealing what Suzanne Kaufmann has called a ‘discourse of religious debasement’ – ‘modern anxieties over the appropriate relationship between belief and the market’, and over what constitutes authentic religious practice (see ‘New Approaches’, chapter 1).² The wide availability of some of the original photographs of Thérèse – principally the image known as the ‘*cliché Gombault*’, showing Thérèse as a novice, and the third photograph in the ‘*Thérèse aux images*’ series³ – allowed for a comparison of these originals with the Carmel’s offerings that was not possible for Thérèse’s texts, the unedited versions of which were not publicly available. Accordingly, commentators often used the images as tangible proof that the Carmel was promoting a remodelled version of Thérèse, outlining a conception of authenticity that was very different from the convent’s. The images issued by the Carmel, frequently described as ‘deformed’ in such studies, quickly became a metaphor for the perceived inauthenticity of the cult as a whole. These critics showed a modernising impulse in their work,

¹ On the ‘*ouvrages de controverse*’ see: Guise, ‘Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse’, pp. 13-4; Von Balthasar, *Thérèse of Lisieux*, pp. 275-7; Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, ch. 10; Dowling, ‘The Evolution of a Modern Pilgrimage’, pp. 181-201; Taylor, ‘Images of Sanctity’, pp. 284-5.

² Kaufman, *Consuming Visions*, p. 9.

³ Photographs 6 and 43, Appendix 2.

seeking to find a Thérèse that appealed to new ideas of personalism and a freer spirituality. Meanwhile, the Carmel couched its counter-reaction to these ideas, in a succession of statements, in terms of the dogmatic values of familial and religious authority, using the same arguments about the unreliability of photography and the authority of the sisters over and over again.⁴ Here, Céline's ideas of artistic and spiritual authenticity, examined in chapter 2, were played out in public, and the Carmel strived to depict themselves as the original and only Theresian iconographers, engaging in a process of legitimation of the images by apologetic.

This debate between the authors of these '*ouvrages de controverse*' and the Carmel is one that is often referred to, but which has never been examined in detail. Although some scholars have begun to consider the issue of a paradigm shift in Thérèse's representation in the mid-twentieth century, those who have looked at this have tended to see a rehabilitative approach to Thérèse's representation as only emerging in the 1960s. Thérèse Taylor has stated that in that decade Thérèse was 'quite suddenly seen as cloying and even puerile' after she 'attracted a band of modernist admirers who rebutted the traditional image... and generally presented a pristine, radical, original Thérèse Martin.'⁵ Alana Harris has also asserted that a 'revisionist, positivist fashion' only sprung up around Thérèse following the publication of the facsimile edition of the autobiography in 1956.⁶ We will see in this chapter, however, that the rehabilitative impulse was in existence much earlier – in fact it was strongly in evidence over thirty years before. Furthermore, the still-living sisters of Thérèse, in collaboration with their allies, supplied a robust defence of their vision of the saint in an attempt to rebut this attempted rehabilitation, providing the other side of a long and fraught debate. Here we see new social mores, 'scientific' approaches and a new conception of the authentic shaping the nature of Catholic devotional culture, and we find that the views of religious and secular contributors were not as different as may be expected. Indeed, those within the Church and those very much outside it often shared the same view on the authentic representation of Thérèse. There was no strict polarisation between clerics and anti-Catholic writers, with both groups turning to new ideas, from psychoanalysis to proto-feminist thought, to seek a new, more 'authentic' Thérèse. In these works, the authors always returned to

⁴ These statements are examined by François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage*, pp. 47-50.

⁵ Taylor, *Bernadette of Lourdes*, p. 317.

⁶ Harris, 'Transformations in English Catholic Spirituality', p. 284. See pp. 281-92 on the 'remaking' of Thérèse after the chronological limit of this thesis.

the visual representation of Thérèse as a key issue and a complex series of attacks and counter-attacks were played out in public.

The Religious Art Debate in Twentieth-Century France

The bitter dispute that arose around images of Saint Thérèse was a notable and lengthy episode in the debate in France about the correct form of religious art, but is one that is yet to be explored fully. Saint-Sulpician art was always controversial, as mentioned in chapter 1, and in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries the concerns around commercial kitsch and the threat it posed to ‘France’s aesthetic patrimony’⁷ were twinned with opposition to this particular form of devotional art. In 1872, La Société de Saint-Jean pour l’Encouragement de l’Art Chrétien had been founded to combat Saint-Sulpician art, and almost fifty years of attacks by intellectuals and clergy alike ensued before the founding of the Ateliers d’Art Sacré in 1919 to promote ‘*l’art sacré*’ – a modern, anti-Saint Sulpician form of religious art, later the focus of a journal of the same name.⁸ The full emergence of Modernism had seen a paradigm shift in the visual arts,⁹ but opinion was still divided on Saint-Sulpician art, which still had undoubted popular appeal. While the author François Mauriac wrote with uncomplicated affection of ‘The blue Virgins, the pink Sacré-Cœurs, the brown Saint Josephs [that] for me belonged to the enchanted world of a Catholic childhood, where Heaven commonly visited the Earth’,¹⁰ poet Paul Claudel wrote:

All this infantry of Saint-Sulpice, all these soldiers of Christ who were born of their mothers’ flesh and blood, who were reanimated with the fire of grace, and who are now made out of butter by the manufacturers of the rue Bonaparte; all these coconut Saint Josephs and those standardised Saint Thérèses – how many fervent prayers have they heard, how much piety have they aroused, how much consolation have they given, how much repentance and sacrifice have they caused, how many prayers to God have they carried aloft, and of how many graces have they been the instrument?¹¹

These devotional articles were offensively sentimentalised then, but could accomplish God’s work of grace. This was a tone of debate not only restricted to France, and David Morgan has highlighted critiques of ‘feminised’ representations of Christ in early twentieth-century America,

⁷ Tiersten, *Marianne in the Market*, p. 3.

⁸ On this see McDannell, *Material Christianity*, p. 170, and ch. 6. See also Sarah Wilson, ‘La bataille des “humbles”? Communistes et Catholiques autour de l’art sacré’, in Bruno Foucart (ed.), *Essais et mélanges en l’honneur de Bruno Foucart, 2: Histoires d’art. Mélanges en l’honneur de Bruno Foucart* (Paris, 2008).

⁹ See Sarah Wilson, ‘Art and the Politics of the Left in France, c. 1935-1955’, unpublished PhD thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1992.

¹⁰ Quoted in Madeleine Ochsé, *Un art sacré pour notre temps* (Paris, 1959), p. 14.

¹¹ Claudel, *Positions et propositions*, pp. 199-200.

particularly Bruce Barton's books *A Young Man's Jesus* (1914) and *The Man Nobody Knows* (1925), where a 'realist', masculine Christ was put forward as an alternative to dominant commercial representations.¹²

This was not purely a popular debate, however, and the Church hierarchy came to participate in it too. The 1947 encyclical *Mediator Dei* saw the Vatican comment on the issue of artistic taste for the first time, stating that 'Modern art should be given free scope in the due and reverent service of the Church and the sacred rites', adding 'We cannot help deploring and condemning those works of art, recently introduced by some, which seem to be a distortion and perversion of true art and which at times openly shock Christian taste, modesty and devotion'.¹³ Later, the 1952 'Instruction to Ordinaries on Sacred Art', issued by the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, would make a plainer statement against mass-produced, Saint-Sulpician art, stating that Ordinaries (an officer of the Church who has the power to execute the Church's laws) should 'severely forbid second rate and stereotyped statues and effigies to be multiplied'.¹⁴ The relationship that both the hierarchy and the ordinary faithful had with their religious images was changing. David Morgan has conceptualised the 'covenant with images', by which they may become culturally accepted and come to 'act' on the viewer, and this sheds some light on shifts in aesthetic fashions of this kind. He asserts that 'If for some reason the image fails to live up to the covenant, the viewer reacts by denying its claim to truth and so falls out of trust with the image. This could lead to violence toward the image but most often results in a renegotiation of the contract under which one views it.'¹⁵ In the case of Thérèse, it could be argued that changing fashions, specifically a desire for a more Modernist sacred art, saw the Celinian image fail 'to live up to the covenant'. This chapter looks at both the attempted renegotiation of that covenant and the iconoclastic attacks on the Celinian image by figures outside the Carmel, both groups calling for a new visual representation of the saint for a new age.

¹² See Morgan, *Visual Piety*, ch. 3. Bruce Barton, *A Young Man's Jesus* (Boston, 1914), *Idem.*, *The Man Nobody Knows* (Indianapolis, 1925).

¹³ Pope Pius XII, 'Mediator Dei', *Vatican, The Holy See* <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_20111947_mediator-dei_en.html> [accessed 9 August 2010], section 195.

¹⁴ See Supreme Sacred Congregation, 'Instruction to Ordinaries on Sacred Art', p. 476.

¹⁵ Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze*, p. 81.

Lemonnier, Dubosq and the Early Defences of the Theresian Image

Before any significant published criticism of the Carmel's images of Thérèse appeared, the Carmel and its allies moved to counter any negativity about them, indicative of a general atmosphere of disquiet on the issue of the images. On 12 September 1915, Bishop Lemonnier published a piece in the *Semaine Religieuse de Bayeux et Lisieux* titled 'Les portraits de Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus'. This was a plainly-stated defence of the images, which began by saying:

Certain criticisms have been put forth against the truthful nature of the portraits which appear in *Histoire d'une âme*. In the opinion of many, these drawings are productions of the imagination, offering an idealised composition. As these opinions have been spreading, it appeared opportune to make a careful enquiry into the origins and the merit of the accused portraits.¹⁶

Lemonnier explained that he had carried out an investigation at the Carmel and had examined twelve to fifteen photographs dating from 1895-97 showing groups of nuns of the community, including Thérèse. Examination of these documentary sources led to two conclusions:

1 The Servant of God sometimes lost, at the moment of the pose, the natural calm of her features, thus, one of the documents examined, an unretouched photograph like the rest, certainly does not give the expected resemblance.

2 The half portrait, used as the frontispiece of the deluxe edition of *Histoire d'une âme*, presents a very conscientious synthesis, prepared with the very greatest care, of the best elements of expression given by the aforementioned photographs.¹⁷

Here, the idea of the inadequacy of photography, examined in chapter 2, was again evoked and Céline's 'buste ovale', referred to in point 2, was held up as the ultimate representation of the saint. The piece finished by asserting that 'we do not hesitate to recognise [the *buste ovale*] as a true and authentic portrait of the Servant of God around the age of twenty-three.'¹⁸ This official approval of the Carmel's images was used extensively – it was published in the *Journal des Pèlerins de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (the pilgrimage site's newspaper) in June 1923,¹⁹ appeared in editions of *L'esprit de la bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* between 1923 and 1946, in *La Vie en images* in 1936, 1937 and 1948, and in every edition of the autobiography from 1924 until 1950. Later, a further addition was made to this note, warning of the necessity to 'guard against the

¹⁶ Bishop Thomas Lemonnier, 'Les portraits de Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus', *Semaine Religieuse de Bayeux et Lisieux*, 12 September 1915.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Bishop Thomas Lemonnier, 'Les Portraits de la Servante de Dieu Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus', *Journal des Pèlerins*, 1st year, no. 2 (23-30 June 1923), p. 2.

multiplicity of other portraits, nevertheless presented as authentic, which are not the productions of the Carmel of Lisieux',²⁰ and a physical description of Thérèse was also later added to the note. This described her as the ideal of Céline's portraits: she was tall, blonde, with dark blue-green eyes, with straight, thin eyebrows, a small mouth and delicate, even features. Her face was 'lily-white... [and] always marked with an admirable serenity and heavenly peace.' This version of the statement, with both additions, was also produced as a handbill to ensure the widest possible circulation.²¹

Seven years later, Lemonnier's statement had apparently done little to remedy the situation. Canon Dubosq wrote to the Carmel in March 1923 about the ongoing debate about Thérèse's representation. He asserted:

Believe me, it would be infinite work and trouble without end for you and me, and would be *completely useless*, if we tried to get in the way of all the opinions expressed on this question. You cannot stop people from gossiping, rambling on, opining, judging, pronouncing, suspecting, no more than you could stop a river from flowing down a mountain. For some time now, *on many sides*, the assertion has been cast to the public that the very pretty portraits of Sœur Thérèse, with the large eyes and face in a *perfect oval* are nothing more than compositions which have been corrected, retouched, and idealised by the enthusiastic love of 'her artist sister'. This has been said by relatives, by old 'acquaintances', by this one, and by that one, from Lisieux, from Caen, from Alençon, etc., etc. We cannot stop a question *which is in the air* and we should not be surprised that those who are interested in Sœur Thérèse want to 'be informed' and try to find out the answer. For my part... I try to persuade those who interrogate me, but have had dealings with 'hardliners', who remain 'stuck' in this 'lapidary' concept... I certainly want to continue my plea every time I have the opportunity; but as for preventing people from gossiping... it's like trying to stop washerwomen from bad-mouthing their neighbour.²²

Shortly after this letter was written, a defence of the images was issued from other quarters. The Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* published an article in September 1923, titled 'Le vrai Portrait de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus', which quoted Lemonnier's statement of 1915 in full and stated emphatically that Thérèse had a 'delicate oval face, with soft and regular lines which appeared to be made of the same substance and purity as a lily'.²³ It was explained that while some

²⁰ See Carmel of Lisieux, *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Histoire d'une âme écrite par elle-même*, p. 596.

²¹ Handbill, *Les Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus (Extrait de la 'Semaine Religieuse de Bayeux et Lisieux' du 12 Septembre 1915)*, ACL.

²² D/C 22/03/1923, THER-5, ACL.

²³ 'Le vrai Portrait de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus', *L'Osservatore Romano*, 29 September 1923.

of the photographs were ‘beautiful photographic reproductions... the ingenious instrument [of the camera] cannot capture the reflection of an angelic face – the soul, of which it is the mirror, escapes the work of the lens’²⁴ – this reflects both Céline and Dubosq’s view of photography, examined in chapter 2, precisely. The ‘*buste ovale*’ was referred to here simply as the ‘*true effigy* of the saint.’²⁵ Rome, through the mouthpiece of *L’Osservatore Romano*, was backing up the account the Carmel and its allies were giving of the images exactly.²⁶ But the sanctioning of the Carmel’s apologetic by Rome did not prevent the thirty years of heated debate that followed.

Giloteaux and the Dissemination of the ‘False’ Image

Abbé Paulin Giloteaux, a Parisian priest, was the first person to publish a significant critique of the Carmel’s Theresian iconography, in a book that appeared even before the canonisation. Best known for his study *Les âmes hosties, les âmes victimes* (1923),²⁷ which was heavily influenced by Thérèse’s writings, Giloteaux was a passionate advocate of Thérèse’s approach to God, and this was outlined in his other book of 1923, *La Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus. Physionomie surnaturelle*, where the critique in question appeared. This study of the saint’s spirituality was, Giloteaux stated, ‘neither a severely critical study nor a doctrinal exposition... but a work of edification and piety for devotees of Sister Thérèse’ that, in taking a ‘less vague, less sentimental approach’, would allow ‘souls to strive to resemble [Thérèse] in her virtues.’²⁸ Several pages at the beginning of the book were dedicated to a critique of the conventional visual representation of Thérèse, which failed to conform to Giloteaux’s conception of her personality. While he stated that ‘Thérèse had the luck, in fact, to count among her sisters a true artist who has liked to present her to us in paint, in different aspects and at almost every age’²⁹ and while he praised several of the images that had appeared in *l’Histoire d’une âme*, he went on to assert:

And yet, it must be said, these different tableaux do not give us anything of the Blessed [Thérèse] but a vague and uncertain image, without a very precise individual character. Without doubt, they have something sweet, which pleases sentimental souls but without showing them the little saint

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ 1923 also saw the issuing of another defence of the images of Thérèse, also from a source outside the Carmel. See the pamphlet by Abbé J. Creton, the parish priest of Oignies, Pas-de-Calais: J. Creton, *La Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus. Son âme et son image. Quelques réflexions opportunes* (Arras, 1923).

²⁷ On Giloteaux’s work and the ‘victim soul’, see Paula M. Kane, “‘She Offered Herself up’: The Victim Soul and Victim Spirituality in Catholicism”, *Church History*, 71, 1 (March, 2002), pp. 80-119.

²⁸ Abbé Paulin Giloteaux, *La Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus. Physionomie surnaturelle* (Paris, 1923), p. xii.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

as she was and how she would have been should we have been fortunate enough to meet her during her exile on earth. Besides, these portraits perhaps have the fault of putting the Blessed in a setting that is too ethereal, where perfection appears to require an attitude incompatible with action. Why would one want to overly idealise the saints thus, not allowing them to be known in their true appearance? Are they not themselves works of God? The authentic portrait, that is reproduced here, presents another character. It allows us to discover, through her physiognomy, the great soul of the little Thérèse.³⁰

Indeed, the frontispiece of the book reproduced the third photograph in the ‘Thérèse *aux images*’ series (figure 4.1), labelling it as a ‘portrait authentique’. This photograph was the embodiment of all the qualities of ‘truth’ that Giloteaux prized, and he stated that here there was ‘nothing conventional or artificial’, just the physical traits of a ‘candid soul’, showing ‘perspicacity and sincerity...a resolute character... a tenacious will... perfect command of the self.’³¹ Giloteaux was so enthusiastic about this photograph as a means to make spiritual contact with the saint that he claimed it as his own, marking it ‘Déposé P. Giloteaux, 1923’ on the frontispiece plate. He also included an advertisement in the back of book stating that the image was available for purchase from him in three different formats, costing from 15 centimes to 1 franc, and that monies could be sent directly to his home address. Giloteaux had put forward both an alternative textual and visual Thérèse, and this would soon incur the displeasure of the Carmel.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-3.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

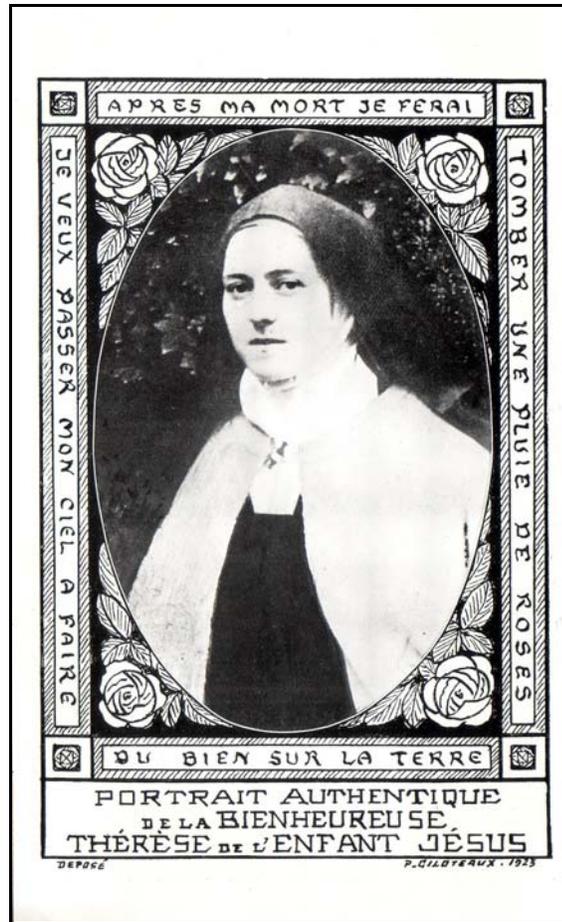


Figure 4.1. Frontispiece to Giloteaux's book. Source: Abbé Paulin Giloteaux, *La Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Physionomie surnaturelle* (Paris, 1923).

The Statements Against Giloteaux

Shortly after the publication of Giloteaux's book another article by Bishop Lemonnier appeared in the *Semaine Religieuse de Bayeux et Lisieux* strongly countering his claims that the frontispiece image was an authentic one. Lemonnier asserted:

He has used for this some copy, poor and without an original, of a photograph taken at the Carmel of Lisieux in 1897 by Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte-Face... The comparison of this figure with the many photographs of Sœur Thérèse taken in Carmel, around ten between 1895 and 1897, do not allow this very defective representation to be called 'AUTHENTIC', neither, in consequence, does it challenge the image produced by the Carmel whose quality we recognised in 1915.³²

³² Bishop Lemonnier, 'Portrait Authentique de la Bse Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus', *Semaine Religieuse de Bayeux et Lisieux*, 28 October 1923.

This was a resounding dismissal of Giloteaux's claims, predicated not only on the authority of the Bishop's office and his previous pronouncement on the images, but on the idea that this was an atypical image when compared with the other photographs. Lemonnier's statement was reproduced in the early November 1923 issue of the *Journal des Pèlerins* and was backed up by an article written by Abbé V. Hardy, former priest of the cathedral of Saint-Pierre, Lisieux.³³ Reactions to the photograph from two unnamed people who had known Thérèse personally were the centrepiece of this article, making use of the device of witness testimony to further discredit the photograph. The first witness stated 'This is not her look. It is not her at all. She has a very severe manner, a sombre expression. She had, on the contrary, a graceful and gentle manner. She has an excessively large mouth – it is a caricature, an enlargement that is not at all successful. It is horrible.'³⁴ The second witness was not named, but was clearly identifiable from the description as Léonie Martin. She was reported as stating:

I don't like the photograph published by M. Giloteaux at all – it is not Thérèse. Oh no, it is not her.

It pains me to look at it. Is it possible to represent her in such a grotesque way? She is corpse-like.

This photograph is also ugly whereas my dear little sister was graceful and pretty.³⁵

The statement 'It is not Thérèse' could not have been a more definitive dismissal of the photograph's credibility, and Hardy concluded that the public should be on their guard against 'certain authentications by the over-fanciful'.³⁶ The efforts of the Carmel and its allies to counter Giloteaux's actions did not stop there, and an undated note from Raymond de Bercegol to the Carmel reveals that they considered legal action against him.³⁷ Canon Dubosq mentioned the Giloteaux controversy in several letters to Mère Agnès,³⁸ while Bishop Lemonnier eventually made representations to Rome itself. The Vatican did in fact eventually intervene and the book was subsequently published without the photograph.³⁹ However, Giloteaux's book would be only the first of a succession of publications that criticised the Celinian image and published such alternative representations.

³³ See his works: V. Hardy, *La cathédrale Saint Pierre de Lisieux* (Paris, 1918); *Idem., Lisieux et ses foules* (Paris, 1926).

³⁴ V. Hardy, 'A propos de ce Portrait', *Journal des Pèlerins*, 1st year, no. 19 (4-17 November 1923), p. 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ 24 billets non-datés, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance d'affaires, ACL.

³⁸ D/MA 23/08/1923, 07/11/1923 and 29/04/1926, THER-5, ACL.

³⁹ See Père Conrad de Meester, 'Le dominicain Hyacinthe Petitot et sainte Thérèse de Lisieux', in Baudry, *Thérèse et ses théologiens*, p. 70, n. 6.

The ‘Cliché Gombault’ and the Circulation of Illicit Images

In December 1923, not long after the Giloteaux controversy was mentioned on its pages, a further statement was made on the Carmel’s images of Thérèse in the *Journal des Pèlerins*. The article published a letter from a devotee of Thérèse, who stated that ‘My great devotion for the Blessed Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus is alarmed by the publicity surrounding a portrait that has been circulating in Belgium for some weeks.’⁴⁰ This was the ‘cliché Gombault’, which had been illicitly circulated by the Guérin family (see chapter 2), and the letter-writer wished to know if the image was ‘unretouched’, as people were describing it. Abbé V. Hardy was again the one to reply to this enquiry. Here, he quoted Mère Agnès directly as saying:

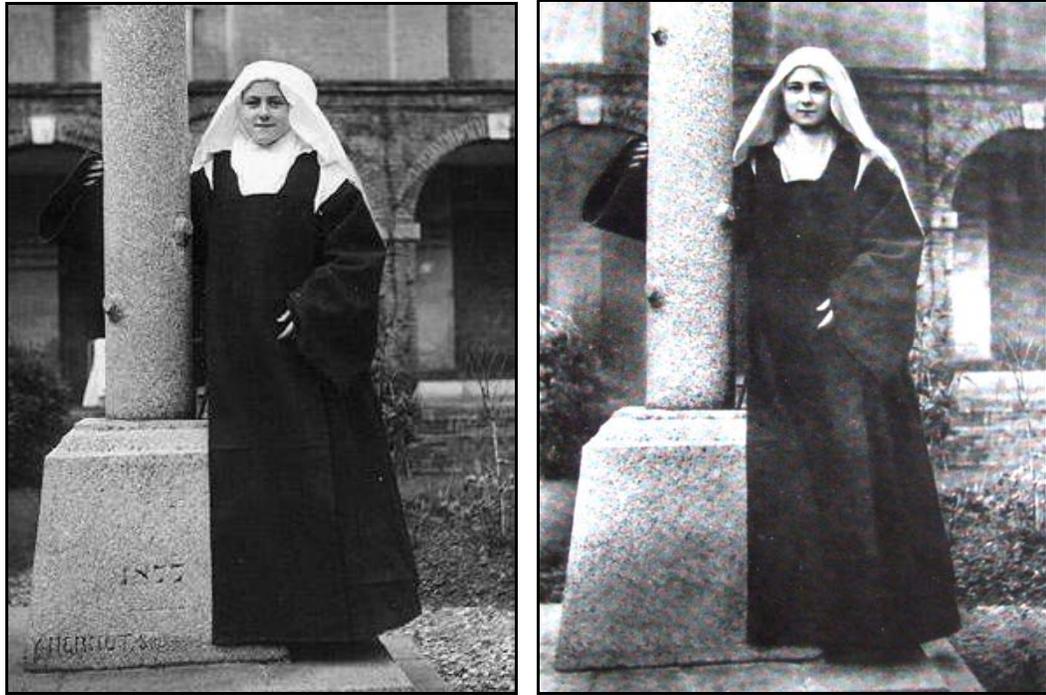
The too brutal daylight of this position bothered the novice as she was posing and, as a result, distorted her features. The Community... rejected the [photograph] as lacking. We believed it had been destroyed when, after the death of the Blessed [Thérèse], the unfaithful photograph was proliferating on all sides. On the advice of the Bishop, Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte-Face, with the medium of an enlargement, established the truth, to the point that one believes one is really seeing the Servant of God at sixteen years old. These were the words of all the nuns who had known her, above all of her Mistress of Novices who could not stop looking at it.⁴¹

The use of a direct quote from Mère Agnès made full use of her authoritative position to discredit the photograph, and Céline’s modified version was strongly marked out as a superior representation – indeed, ‘the truth’. Further, there was a call to the authority of the nuns who had lived alongside Thérèse, a source of legitimation that the Carmel would come to call on regularly. When this article was printed on handbills to increase its circulation, the retouched version of the image was reproduced on one side, showing a radically different, much slimmer face to the original (see figures 4.2-4.3). The statement was not particularly successful, as in 1928 Canon Dubosq wrote to the Carmel to say he had received a number of illicitly-circulated examples of the image.⁴² Later, several authors used the ‘cliché Gombault’ in their iconoclastic examinations of the saint and the authority of Céline’s retouched version of the image would be severely threatened.

⁴⁰ Reproduced in *A propos d’un portrait de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus (Extrait du “JOURNAL DES PÈLERINS”, numéro du 2 décembre 1923)*, ACL.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² D/MA 17/03/1928, THER-5, ACL. See also D/C 14/12/1917, THER-5, ACL.



Figures 4.2-4.3. Left: The original ‘*cliché Gombault*’, 1889. Source: OCL. Right: The retouched version circulated by the Carmel. Source: *A propos d’un portrait de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus* (Extrait du “*JOURNAL DES PÈLERINS*”, numéro du 2 décembre 1923), ACL.

Père Ubald: The Original Theresian Iconoclast

In January 1926 an even more controversial critique of the Carmel’s Thérèse appeared than Abbé Giloteaux’s, and this also came from a priest. Père Ubald d’Alençon’s article ‘Sainte Tèreèse [sic] de l’Enfant Jésus comme je la connais’ (‘Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus as I knew her’) appeared in the journal *Estudis Franciscans* exactly a year after Thérèse’s canonisation.⁴³ Père Ubald (Léon-Louis Berson) (1872-1927), a Capuchin friar, was born in Alençon, and although he never met Thérèse, he remembered her father well and had acquaintances who had gone to Rome on the same diocesan pilgrimage as the Martins in 1887.⁴⁴ In this article Ubald gave the first history of the Martin family which had not come from the Martin sisters themselves. It was a highly critical assessment, and he made a number of allegations that would be used by other authors for decades to come. Ubald described Thérèse as a proud and badly brought-up child, who improved little in adolescence, reporting that the fourteen year old Thérèse had behaved like a ‘*petit cheval échappé*’ (a wild youth) during her time in Italy. His revelation of Louis Martin’s dementia was the first

⁴³ Père Ubald d’Alençon, ‘Sainte Tèreèse de l’Enfant Jésus comme je la connais’, *Estudis Franciscans*, 37, 220 (January, 1926), pp. 14-28.

⁴⁴ See P. Gratien, ‘Le Père Ubald d’Alençon’, *Revue d’histoire de l’Église de France*, 13, 61, (1927), pp. 545-7.

time this had been discussed in print,⁴⁵ and Ubald also made a number of sensational accusations about Mère Marie de Gonzague, calling her a jealous egoist who was prone to strange behaviour. He said that Mère Marie hated the Martin sisters and had persecuted Thérèse particularly, even denying her proper care in her final illness.⁴⁶ Although the chief import of Ubald's article is its status as the root of the twin controversies of Louis Martin's mental health problems and Mère Marie's actions, later to be expanded upon by critics such as Pierre Mabile, Maxence Van der Meersch and Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, it was also the first sustained piece of iconoclasm of the Carmel's Thérèse. Ubald was overtly critical of the popular representation of Thérèse, stating that in her story:

There are not just roses, flowers and goodness. There are thorns, brambles and struggle. There is the fact that the life of Saint Thérèse is full of heroism. There is the impetuosity of her character and her sufferings in the cloister. This has not been explored. One can assert that the text of *Histoire d'une âme* is quite modified, that it does not always conform to the original, that it was subjected to too many retouches, all just like the portrait that is given of her today, which hardly matches the photographs that we have of her.⁴⁷

Indeed, this was not a piece intended to discredit Thérèse, rather the critical description of her younger self was in the service of showing how Thérèse overcame her innate failings to achieve holiness. But as with Giloteaux's book, Ubald's efforts to uncover the Thérèse of the thorns, rather than of the roses, would not go unnoticed by the Carmel.

Dubosq and the Response to Ubald

The response to Père Ubald's article was a lengthy one. In the May after the piece appeared Dubosq published his own article in *Estudis Franciscans*, which the Martin sisters had played a large role in drafting,⁴⁸ entirely rejecting Ubald's assertions.⁴⁹ Its title, 'Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus comme elle était' ('Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus as she was'), indicated the forceful, authoritative approach of the piece. Dubosq painstakingly deconstructed Ubald's assertions about Thérèse's family background, behaviour and time in the cloister point by point

⁴⁵ Père Ubald d'Alençon, 'Sainte Térése', p. 15.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19-21.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-6.

⁴⁸ In two letters Dubosq discusses changes to the drafted text extensively and also mentions an edit suggested by Marie. D/MA 01/06/1926 and 03/06/1926, THER-5, ACL.

⁴⁹ Canon P. Th. Dubosq, 'Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus comme elle était', *Estudis Franciscans*, 38, 226 (July, 1926), pp. 9-20. He had already written the Carmel a reassuring letter about the Ubald article. See D/MA 12/05/1926, THER-5, ACL.

and the tone of the article was one of great indignation. Dubosq asserted of Ubald's presentation of the saint 'The contrast is violent with the ideal apparition of a being all of light and angelic purity' that Thérèse in fact had been.⁵⁰ As in the attack on Giloteaux in the *Journal des Pèlerins*, the testimony of several people who had known Thérèse was used to reinforce this point, including the Martins' maid Victoire Pasquier, who had featured significantly in *Histoire d'une âme* as a foil to several of Thérèse's childhood mishaps,⁵¹ and Félicité Saffrey, another domestic to the family.⁵² This was just a preamble to the testimony of the sisters themselves however, and Céline personally explained the episode, used by Ubald as an example of Thérèse's undignified behaviour during their trip to Rome, when a male student lifted her from the train on their arrival in Bologna, saying this was an event of 'a matter of an instant', which was never remarked on again.⁵³ Not content with this call to the authority of Thérèse's family and acquaintances, Dubosq contacted one of Ubald's sources who had been on the Rome pilgrimage, a certain Abbé Lebrech, and Dubosq asserted that he had denied ever describing Thérèse's actions during the trip to Italy as Ubald had reported them.⁵⁴ In conclusion, Dubosq asserted that Ubald 'should have called his article: "Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus as I imagine her".'⁵⁵

Dubosq's refutation of the Ubald article was produced as a pamphlet by the Imprimerie Saint-Paul to ensure it got a larger readership than this specialist Franciscan journal could offer,⁵⁶ and the Carmel also acknowledged Ubald's attack in a notice sent to other Carmels in the month Dubosq's article appeared.⁵⁷ Clearly, they were willing to put considerable resources into countering the Ubald piece. Some two decades later, in a volume edited by the Carmel's great ally André Combes, Ubald was marked out as the root of all subsequent controversy about Thérèse's biography and representation, and the fact that later writers made such extensive use of the assertions of this 'mystificateur' ('hoaxer') was lamented.⁵⁸ One of these writers, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, reproduced Ubald's article in its entirety in her 1937 work *La petite Thérèse de*

⁵⁰ Dubosq, 'Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus comme elle était', p. 9.

⁵¹ See, for example, HA, Ms. A, 15v^o-16v^o, pp. 39-40.

⁵² Dubosq, 'Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus comme elle était', pp. 12-3.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁵⁶ Canon P. Th. Dubosq, *Ste Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus comme elle était. Réponse à l'article du R. P. Ubald d'Alençon dans les 'Estudis Franciscans' de Barcelone* (Bar-le-Duc, 1926).

⁵⁷ Renseignements et réponses, 2 July 1926, THER-5, Dossier Ubald d'Alençon, ACL.

⁵⁸ André Noché S. J., 'La réponse des textes et des archives', in Combes et al, *La Petite Sainte Thérèse de Maxence Van der Meersch*, pp. 281-3.

Lisieux, appending a defence of it in the face of Dubosq's article.⁵⁹ Ubald died the year after the article appeared, but he retracted it before his death and suffered censure from the Pope himself, being forced to go on a penitential retreat.⁶⁰ But the genie was out of the bottle and Ubald had set a precedent for a raft of studies that sought to unearth the 'real' Thérèse from the limited sources issuing from the Carmel, beginning a process of scrutiny and criticism of the Carmel of Lisieux's representation of Saint Thérèse that would last into the twenty-first century.

Lucie Delarue-Mardrus: The Novelist and the Nun

When Lucie Delarue-Mardrus reprinted Père Ubald d'Alençon's article in her 1937 book on Thérèse she had already produced a book-length study of the saint, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, published in the year after the canonisation. Born in Honfleur, only twenty miles from Lisieux, Delarue-Mardrus (1880-1945) was well-known in her time as a prolific poet and novelist, producing over seventy full-length novels during her career,⁶¹ and her work has recently become the focus of serious academic study.⁶² In her first book on Thérèse, Delarue-Mardrus was clear about her affection for the saint from the outset, stating 'This book is a... passionate tribute of an unbeliever to the Carmelite-phantom who has miraculously appeared, with roses in her hands, in the middle of an age which causes despair and terror to poets.'⁶³ However, Delarue-Mardrus believed, like Ubald, that the cult and its images misrepresented the saint and distorted her true nature, and that it was also far too commercialised. She offers a compelling critical portrait of the pilgrimage site of Lisieux in the mid-twenties:

Facing the Carmel, a large poster encourages us to drink *Thérèsette*, a table liqueur. Moreover, at Caen, they sell Saint Thérèse paté and Saint Thérèse *boudin* in the delicatessens... No one at Lisieux seems disturbed over anything. A general cheerfulness hovers about Carmel, and in the shops, where Saint-Sulpician statuettes, medals, pictures (sorry! postcards) are sold in their thousands. An expression of satisfied vanity is on all faces, an atmosphere of commerce in full swing is in every street, replacing the reverence that one searches for in vain in what is already called a 'holy town'.

⁵⁹ Delarue-Mardrus, *La Petite Thérèse de Lisieux*, pp. 16-54.

⁶⁰ Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 256.

⁶¹ See Hélène Plat, *Lucie Delarue-Mardrus. Une femme de lettres des années folles* (Paris, 1994) and Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, *Mes mémoires* (Paris, 1938).

⁶² See Tama Lea Engelking, 'L'Ange Et Les Pervers: Lucie Delarue-Mardrus's Ambivalent Poetic Identity', *Romance Quarterly*, 39, 4, (1992), pp. 451-66 and Rachel L. Mesch, 'The Sex of Science: Medicine, Naturalism, and Feminism in Lucie Delarue-Mardrus's *Marie, fille-mère*', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 31, 3 & 4 (Spring-Summer 2003), pp. 324-40. See also Sophia Deboick, 'Lucie Delarue-Mardrus', *The Literary Encyclopedia* <<http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=12780>> [accessed 11 November 2010].

⁶³ Delarue-Mardrus, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 5.

One can easily imagine that after the chapels and basilicas are finished, all who will come will do so to build hotels and start new industries.⁶⁴

But Delarue-Mardrus was not just concerned with these commercial ventures outside of the power of the Church, and criticised the Carmel directly:

Other things were reported. I was astonished to find that it was often the devout who related this gossip. The portraits of Thérèse were forged. Thousand franc bank-notes were thrown at the foot of her reliquary in the chapel. A nun goes to collect them one by one, like a croupier at a gaming table... Then one day someone told me that in the chapel of the Carmel of Lisieux, one can see this little Thérèse in wax, like in the Musée Grévin, life-size, lying on blue pillows in a Sarah Bernhardt pose, and clothed in a Carmelite robe made of velvet and gold lace and a mantle embroidered with precious stones. Ah! Decidedly, my saint was being spoiled for me.⁶⁵

The cult is outlined as being entirely debased by its commerciality, and here the ‘forging’ of the portraits is twinned with the description of the shrine (see figure 4.4) to suggest that the result of this commerciality is a distorted representation of the saint. It was not just the commerciality of the cult that concerned Delarue-Mardrus, but also its modernity. Discovering that electric lights had been substituted for candles at the chapel of the Carmel of Lisieux, she writes ‘Candles, for a thousand years the beautiful symbol of the soul in prayer, forbidden at the feet of the poetic little saint? Impossible. Even the heresy of electricity could not kill the candle’, also reporting that an attendant told her ‘If you wish you can give one franc fifty centimes and we will light another bulb’, to which her response was ‘And if there is a power failure? A short circuit?.. A bulb? (O holy Bulb!) A bulb like in a shop window?’⁶⁶ The light bulb is used as a metaphor for both the commerciality and the modernity of the cult, and earlier she used the symbol of the car in the same way, writing of the canonisation in Rome: ‘People who were there told me that the relics were carried in a car! I was glad not have gone to the celebration. I have never liked motor cars. I like them even less for a saint...’⁶⁷

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-20.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-9

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

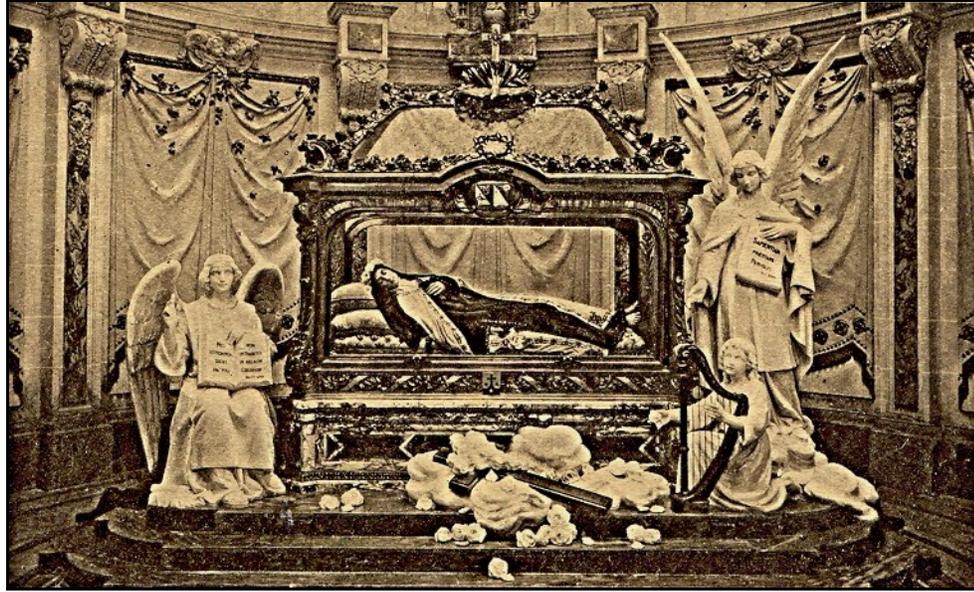


Figure 4.4. The *chapelle de la Chasse*, Carmel of Lisieux, c. 1925, as described by Lucie Delarue-Mardrus.
Source: author's collection.

Delarue-Mardrus outlines a strong view of the commerciality and modernity of the cult making it in some sense inauthentic then, but she was equally concerned with the inauthenticity of the Carmel's images of Thérèse. The cover of her first book reproduced a substantially original version of the 'Thérèse *aux images*' photograph, which had also been used by Giloteaux, and she said of this image:

A portrait opens these pages. This portrait is not an insulting 'correction'. It is the one from our Saint Thérèse to us. An authentic photograph, it was given to me by a nun among my friends who was herself given it by a personal friend of the little Martin girl. It is infinitely more beautiful, in its starkness, than the beautiful *houri* officially charged with representing this pure nun of Normandy to the masses. The new Saint Thérèse does not need to be 'arranged' like this.⁶⁸

The common representation of Thérèse, then, was asserted to be a fundamentally false one – a confection that shared nothing of the documentary quality of the photograph, whose authenticity was proven by the fact that it had come from one of Thérèse's own friends. Delarue-Mardrus was the first commentator to speak of the activities of the Martin sisters publicly, stating plainly that 'When all is said and done, it was her sisters who brought about her canonisation'.⁶⁹ But while her attitude to the sisters' work on the cult is sympathetic in the first book, where she says 'It is quite

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-9.

natural that the glory of the ‘little last one’ should occupy the spirit of older sisters’,⁷⁰ when her second book on Thérèse was published eleven years later, she saw the Martin sisters as fully responsible for the distortion of Thérèse’s representation that she so loathed:

The loving sisters of the little Thérèse, who idealised her face, desired also that her life as a Carmelite would resemble, stroke for stroke, the smiling images produced by the Office Central de Lisieux. They can’t understand that the truth, cruel as it may be, has more appeal for contemporary spirits than the sweetness of the hymns amongst which their baby would have lived in the cloister.⁷¹

Here the Carmel was figured as out of touch with the intellectual spirit of the times. Delarue-Mardrus then went on to give a powerful alternative physical description of the saint, describing her as having a ‘long and solid chin which is the mark of Normandy... the nobility of the forehead and nose... this equilibrium which reveals a spirit of order and measure, [the Norman’s] particular privilege. So much character, in a word, that cannot be sensed in the image given to posterity.’⁷² This honest earthiness was mirrored the ‘*cliché* Gombault’, used on the cover of the book (figure 4.5). Across Delarue-Mardrus’ two studies of Thérèse we find a strong assertion of the value of traditional religion over the commercialised, airbrushed piety of the modern age and the positing, both in image and text, of an alternative vision of Thérèse.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁷¹ Delarue-Mardrus, *La Petite Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 59.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 89.

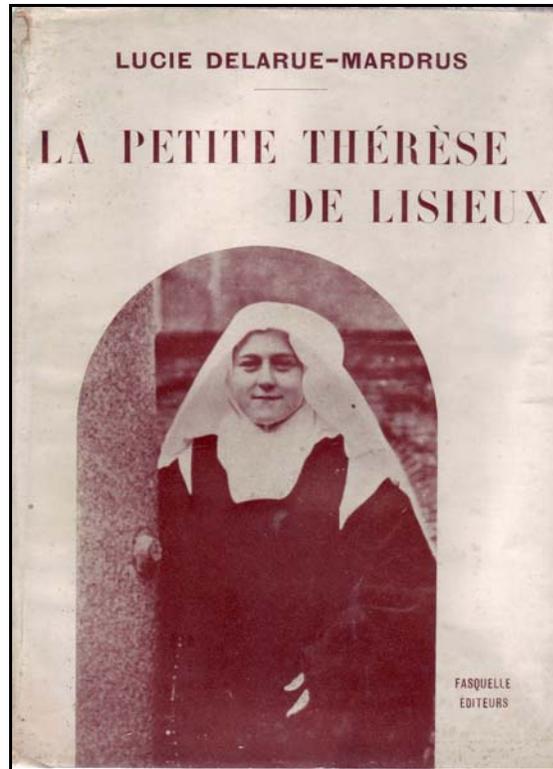


Figure. 4.5. The cover of Lucie Delarue-Mardrus' second book, using the 'cliché Gombault'. Source: Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, *La Petite Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1937).

The Carmel and the Response to Delarue-Mardrus

The Carmel and their allies did not make the same sort of public pronouncements on Delarue-Mardrus' writings as they had on Giloteaux's and Ubald's, but they were still extremely displeased about the criticisms she had made. Dubosq wrote of the two books in a private document that Delarue-Mardrus had 'distorted [Thérèse's] moral physiognomy' and had 'indulged in veritable diatribes against the Carmel's productions: the chapel, publications etc, and indeed about their mercantilism, with an insulting flippancy', emphasising the 'upset that she has caused to the sisters of the saint.'⁷³ The Carmel did consider taking things further and the Office Central was asked to consult a solicitor about the possibility of launching a legal case against Delarue-Mardrus, but the outcome of the consultation was apparently negative.⁷⁴ However, other parties did speak publicly about Delarue-Mardrus' first book, and journalist R. P. Roupain wrote an article in *La Croix* titled 'Blasphemy and Histrionics', stating that that *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* was 'a

⁷³ Diverses Réponses, THER-5, Dossier Ubald d'Alençon, ACL.

⁷⁴ See undated note on the Korda affair, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

slap to the lovable face of a saint delivered by a woman' and the 'enterprise of a novelist known for her dirty novels, who dares in 160 pages (9 francs) to insolently exploit all the resentment and all the deafening rage stored up through conscious and militant unbelief against a religious glory without precedent.'⁷⁵ Delarue-Mardrus was being marked out as a typical anti-clerical polemicist. In response, she wrote a long letter to the editor, published in the paper a few weeks later, where she explained her rehabilitative approach to Thérèse and said that far from the book being a slap in Thérèse's face, she had sought to reveal that face in its true aspect. She stated that:

In the artistic and literary world that I frequent... the 'Little Thérèse' is completely unknown because of everything that surrounds her to distort her true physiognomy... for a long time I took her to be a little sugar-saint, a smiling first communicant who, apart from her miracle-working, had nothing going for her but her youth and beauty... I have discovered finally that my radiant fellow Norman was not the pink bon bon that we have been led to believe, but a tough and tragic soul, a true hero of renouncement and courage, a formidable warrior, [engaged in] an incessant struggle with the 'little everyday dragons', more difficult to fight than the wild monster that Saint George defeated only once.⁷⁶

Such alimentary metaphors were a device that would later be used by several other Theresian commentators in reference to the Celinian Thérèse. Delarue-Mardrus put forth a strongly rehabilitative dialogue here, evoking a 'realist' saint over the dominant sentimentalist one. It was this Thérèse that Delarue-Mardrus portrayed when she produced her own alternative artistic representation of the saint to complement her written one – a statue produced in 1927 in collaboration with the great French monumental sculptor Carlo Sarrabezolles (figure 4.6).⁷⁷ Showing the saint with toys lying discarded at her feet, this statue, Delarue-Mardrus later explained, 'represented the saint leaving childhood behind to turn towards God'⁷⁸ – a clear rebuttal of the Celinian Thérèse, so often seen as infantile. *La Croix* maintained that Delarue-Mardrus was guilty of 'the poisoning of ideas and morals',⁷⁹ and Delarue-Mardrus' work would remain controversial throughout the early to mid-twentieth century, with Theresian theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar describing her books as 'bilious' as late as the early fifties.⁸⁰ In her

⁷⁵ R. P. Roupain, 'Blasphème et cabotinage', *La Croix*, 17 January 1926, p. 4.

⁷⁶ R. P. Roupain, 'A propos de la "Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux" de Mme Delarue-Mardrus', *La Croix*, 28 February -1 March 1926, p. 4.

⁷⁷ In 1928 Sarrabezolles was commissioned by the Carmel of Lisieux to complete a sculpture of Thérèse for the baptistery at the Cathedral de Notre-Dame, Alençon. See Appendix 2.

⁷⁸ Delarue-Mardrus, *Mes mémoires*, p. 276.

⁷⁹ Roupain, 'A propos de la "Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux" de Mme Delarue-Mardrus', p. 4.

⁸⁰ Von Balthasar, *Thérèse of Lisieux*, p. 275.

sustained and thoughtful interest in Thérèse, writing two books and even producing this statue, which she later donated to a church in Le Havre, Delarue-Mardrus presented a powerful alternative vision of her fellow Norman.



Figure 4.6. Lucie Delarue-Mardrus' statue of Saint Thérèse. Source: S24D, env. 6a, D, ACL.

A propos des Portraits: A Sustained Apologetic

Following the critiques of Giloteaux, Ubald and Delarue-Mardrus, the Carmel and its allies launched a concerted attempt to lay the controversy about the images to rest. 'Note sur les Portraits divers de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus' appeared in the *Annales de Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (the publication that took over from the *Journal des Pèlerins* after the canonisation) in May 1926, and was subsequently produced as a booklet, *A propos des Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, which ran to at least four editions.⁸¹ The publication, supposedly written by Canon

⁸¹ Canon P. Th. Dubosq, *A propos des Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Lisieux, 1926).

Dubosq but in fact written by the Carmel,⁸² gave the impression of a move towards transparency on the issue of the images, but was in fact more complex in its approach. The ‘*buste ovale*’ opened the piece, captioned as the ‘authentic portrait’, and it was explained that while Lemonnier’s statement of 1915 had ‘exonerated the Carmel of the accusation of having substituted fanciful compositions and faked photographs for the true portrait of Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus... This malicious criticism has not been laid to rest by this attestation by the authorities’, with the continued publication of ‘two or three photographs, surreptitiously and illegally reproduced, that the Carmel had judged to be defective’.⁸³ The works where these had appeared were mocked for exclaiming ‘*Voilà* – the true portrait! And how different from the “sweetened” models that have been made fashionable by the nuns of Lisieux!’⁸⁴ The time had come, it stated, for devotees of the saint to be offered the chance to judge for themselves, and *A propos des Portraits* published six portraits of Saint Thérèse, some of which were ‘without a hint of retouching!’, while others were ‘lightly retouched by [Céline] in order to produce a more accurate expression’.⁸⁵ There was a concerted effort to assert the historical authenticity of the images reproduced here, giving dates and the circumstances in which the images were taken, and the inclusion of a plate showing the detail of seven group photographs in which Thérèse appeared, which were unretouched and previously unreleased, was a major concession to curiosity about the images (figure 4.9). However, in fact several heavily retouched photographs appeared here, including the photograph of Thérèse aged three and half, which was not so much retouched as almost entirely painted over (see figures 4.7-4.8). Etienne Robo would later comment on the fact that the reader was invited to compare these images with ‘the uncorrected and unauthorized prints’, to see which ‘give us the better average resemblance to the saint’, exclaiming ‘What a question!...What is an *average* resemblance to an original we have never seen?’⁸⁶ Here the Carmel revealed again that, in their view, Céline’s retouched photographs were more authoritative than the originals. In the same month that this piece appeared, Mère Agnès commented on the pressure from many quarters to release as much of Thérèse’s original writings as possible and said ‘We must excuse this need to say *everything*. It’s a sickness, a mania... we must protect ourselves from people who have this

⁸² See D/MA 26/05/1926 and 31/05/1926, THER-5, ACL.

⁸³ Canon P. Th Dubosq, ‘Note sur les Portraits divers de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus’, *Annales de Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, 15 May 1926, p. 1.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Etienne Robo, *Two Portraits of St Teresa of Lisieux* (London, 1957) 2nd edition [original publication 1955], p. 37.

sickness as we would from a fire.⁸⁷ *A propos des Portraits* showed that the Carmel took the same approach to the images of Thérèse, which they would only produce under pressure and even then in a slow trickle of compromised images.

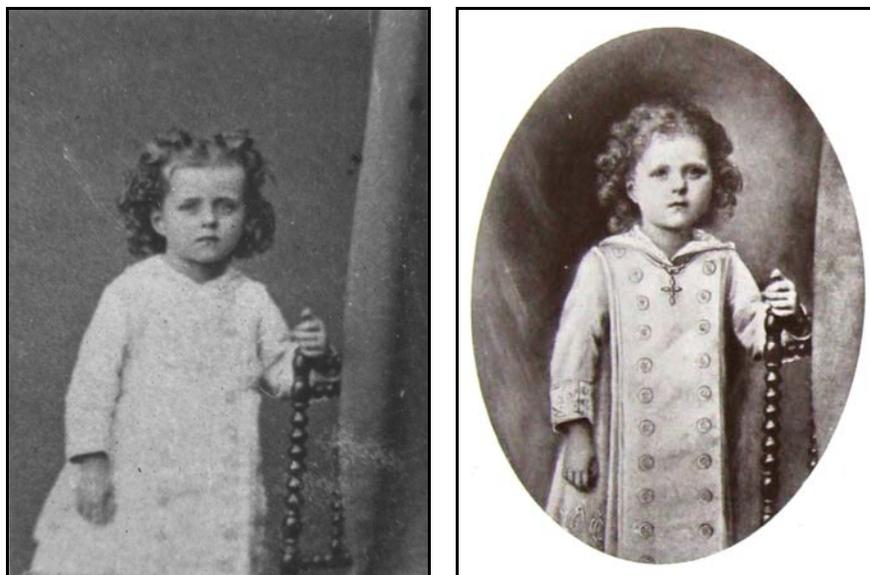


Figure 4.7-4.8. Left: Original photograph of Thérèse aged three and a half, 1876. Source: OCL. Right: The retouched photograph that appeared in *A propos des Portraits*. Source: Canon P. Th. Dubosq, *A propos des Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Lisieux, 1926), p. 4.



Figure 4.9. Plate showing unretouched photographs of Thérèse which appeared in *A propos des Portraits*. Source: Canon P. Th. Dubosq, *A propos des Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Lisieux, 1926), p. 14.

⁸⁷ MA/FTh 16/05/1926, ACL.

Maurice Privat and Anti-Clerical Polemic

While the critics of the cult and its images had thus far been essentially pro-Thérèse, seeking to reveal an ultimately more heroic figure, in 1932 a book appeared in which the tone was rather different. In *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (see figure 4.10), Maurice Privat (1889-1949) put forward the most overt criticism the Martins sisters had faced so far, blaming the alleged immoderation of the cult squarely on them and depicting Thérèse herself as stupid and egotistical. Privat was a journalist and writer specialising in books on popular scandals, and his book on Saint Thérèse was part of a series of sensational exposés. *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* was undoubtedly opportunistic, but it has some value for containing the first substantial examination of the history of the growth of the cult, in a sixty-page section entitled ‘The Glory of Sœur Thérèse’.⁸⁸ Privat began his book by stating plainly the central problem with the standard presentation of Thérèse’s meteoric rise to fame: ‘One can’t create a cult out of nothing.’⁸⁹ His task was clear – to illuminate how it was that this hidden figure had become so well known in such a short time. Privat believed that Norman society was fertile ground for the rise of such a cult, seeing it as riddled with superstitious belief in ‘charms, talismans and spells’,⁹⁰ but he also saw the rapid rise of the cult of Thérèse as something of a conspiracy, arguing that the Vatican felt they could make money from the cult, and that the Jesuits gave it their special approbation for mysterious, but undoubtedly selfish reasons.⁹¹ He also saw the Carmel as being particularly keen on the financial benefits of the cult, saying that they ‘wanted to possess, in their chapel, the remains [of Thérèse] which brought the benedictions of Heaven and human offerings, not to mention other profits.’⁹² Indeed, a sign of the Carmel’s commercial exploitation of devotion to Thérèse was the fact that at the convent chapel ‘The *troncs* are not forgotten.’⁹³ While anti-clerical polemic dominated the book, Privat was also concerned with the commerciality in Lisieux, outside of the Church’s control, giving chapter nine the title ‘The Merchants in the Temple’, and mentioning the patés, sausages and liqueurs that Delarue-Mardrus had also bemoaned, commenting on the ‘practical sense of the Lexovians’ in renaming their products so.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ Privat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 122-87.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 123-4.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-2.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

Privat was also unhappy with the representations of Thérèse offered by the Carmel. He said of the *gisant* in the *chapelle de la Châsse* that had also so upset Delarue-Mardrus, '[Thérèse] poses like an actress of the Comédie-Française'.⁹⁵ Privat was in little doubt who was responsible for all this, and outlined the allegedly Machiavellian operations of the Martin sisters, seeing Mère Agnès as the ringleader – the one who 'directed the propaganda in honour of Thérèse... Entrepreneurial, audacious, she believed in her darling sister and wanted to impose her faith on the world. She also proliferated the images and the medals that would win her souls. They were distributed in their millions.'⁹⁶ However, Privat was aware that Céline had a role here too, explaining how she brought her camera into the convent with her when she entered in 1894 and asserting that '[Céline's] tiny laboratory of the old days has become as big as the *atelier* of a Parisian portrait artist.'⁹⁷ Privat stated:

Céline, the amiable Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, retouched the photographs, printed them, fussed over them, tidied and drew the portrait of her father, or her mother, of Thérèse as a child or as a first communicant. She prefers perfect prettiness. The result is that these products, contrived, fiddled with, are idealised so that they should not displease believers. It is not the truth that they seek, but the image of Thérèse, which fits her incredible work.⁹⁸

Céline's images did not reflect the 'truth' then, but were a confection that suited the flights of fancy contained in the autobiography. Here he also mentioned the official approbation of the '*buste ovale*' by Bishop Lemonnier, stating that 'the faithful... were amazed by the authorisation accorded it'.⁹⁹ Privat said of this image that 'The cinematic taste has corrupted even the cloisters – in this picture Thérèse gives the idea of a star more than a saint'.¹⁰⁰ The use of the idea of the cinema idol is a powerful one – Privat suggests that Thérèse was represented by the Carmel in a mode that was defined by artifice. Privat emphasised that 'Céline recommended always like her prioress: *Make her pretty...* A saint, to whom one attaches the powers of a goddess, cannot be too magnificent',¹⁰¹ and demonstrated that even the images commissioned by the Carmel from other artists followed the same pattern, asserting that 'A tableaux by Roybet represents her – beautiful,

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-1.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

idealised.’¹⁰² Privat had made a sustained condemnation of the sisters’ promotional work, and on the last page of the book he asked, writing of the new Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux who had just taken office ‘But is the new Bishop... not obliged to tell Pauline and Céline Martin... that they are in the cloister to pray and to honour God, not to mix themselves up in business? This warning comes too late; Rome has already intervened in favour of its *zelatrices*.’¹⁰³ The Carmel did not respond to this book in any official way whatsoever, and neither are there any references in private papers held in the Archives. Perhaps, in its focus on the Martin sisters and uncomplimentary account of Thérèse herself, its contents were beyond the pale and could not be dignified with recognition by the convent or the wider Church.

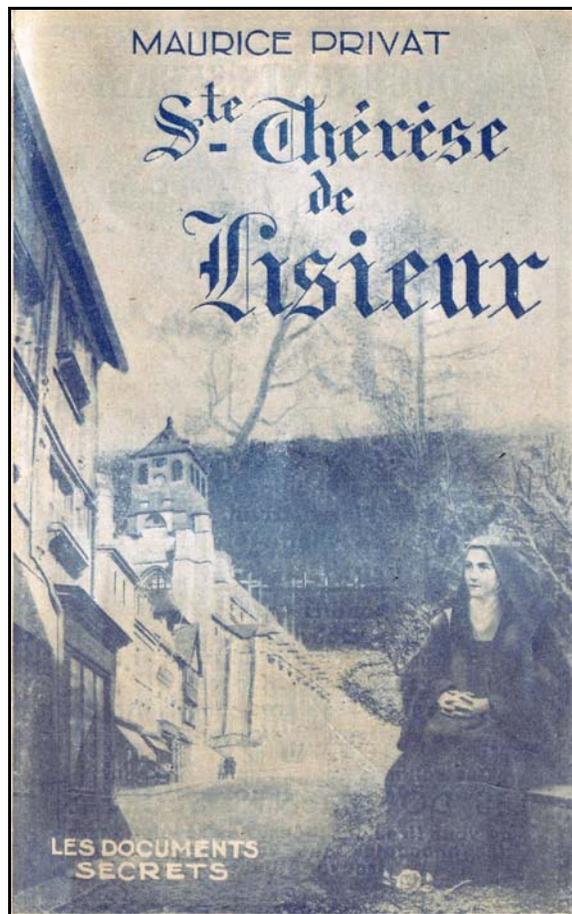


Figure 4.10. The cover of Maurice Privat’s book, showing a view of the church of Saint-Jacques, Lisieux and Céline’s ‘Thérèse in meditation’ composite image. Source: Maurice Privat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1932).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

Henri Ghéon: A Convert Counters the Images

Two years after the appearance of Privat's book, Henri Ghéon (1875-1944), a medical doctor, playwright and poet, would produce a new biography that was more expansive in its criticism of the images of Saint Thérèse. A close friend (and possibly lover) of André Gide, he was one of the founders of the literary journal the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. When serving as a doctor on the battlefields of the First World War he regained the Catholic faith of his upbringing, severed his ties with Gide and became part of the ultra-Catholic circle around fellow converts, philosophers Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, as well as a supporter of Action Française.¹⁰⁴ He was the most serious writer that had examined the Theresian phenomenon thus far, and his book on the saint was in the rehabilitative mould that had begun with Ubald – he was a believer who felt that Thérèse was being done a disservice by her popular image and the commercial cult around her. His assessment of the Martin family was not completely sympathetic and, like Ubald, Ghéon saw Thérèse as having been a spoilt child.¹⁰⁵ But he stated that he wanted to reveal the real psychology of the Thérèse behind the mask and wrote at the beginning of the book 'I am writing this book above all for all those, Catholics or not, who put up some resistance to devotion to her, as I once did',¹⁰⁶ explaining:

I first knew Sœur Thérèse by the statues of her. The sight of tasteless and vacuously coloured plaster was indeed incapable... of bewitching a new convert... I demanded not only truth, but also beauty from the Church then. I had yet to learn that the truth is essential but that, on the earth, beauty is not, however helpful it is to prayer... Then I read *Histoire d'une âme*.¹⁰⁷

Here the image is strongly contrasted with the text as binary opposites representing falsehood and truth. He explained further 'The tinselled and sugary appearance of the devotion to the "little saint" (the abuse of this diminutive drove me mad) had earlier concealed from me the definite greatness in this case and perhaps her originality. Too many roses! Too many flowers! I could see nothing but flowers and roses.'¹⁰⁸ Here was a powerfully-put rehabilitationist argument then, and like earlier commentators, Ghéon quickly turned to the *chapelle de la Châsse* as the centre of all he disliked about Thérèse's representation. He criticised the 'brocade and velvet' in which the *gisant* was dressed, suggesting it should be dressed in 'wool and a habit', and he took great exception to

¹⁰⁴ See Catherine Boschian-Campaner, *Henri Ghéon, camarade de Gide: biographie d'un homme de désirs* (Paris, 2008).

¹⁰⁵ Ghéon, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, pp. 61-3

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-4.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-6.

the angels that surrounded the effigy ‘carved so sloppily in marble so white, so soft, that they seem to melt under your gaze like sugar’¹⁰⁹ (see figure 4.4), concluding ‘One feels the spirit of the iconoclast.’¹¹⁰ He finally exclaimed ‘By what revenge of the Devil, with the permission of God, has this sacred place come to be at the forefront of the monstrosities of the Catholic art of the twentieth century?’¹¹¹

Despite his hatred for Thérèse’s popular representation, Ghéon made a connection between Thérèse’s popular representation and the benefits of a pilgrimage to Lisieux, making a similar point as Paul Claudel had about the possibility of Saint-Sulpician art doing God’s work. Ghéon wrote ‘We are given saints whose outward appearances are the most capable of attracting us’, saying that, having been drawn to Lisieux by Thérèse’s glitzy image, pilgrims will find:

Under the sugar roses and the lard clouds, behind the florets and pet names which make the most heroic story in the world bland, they discover the real Sœur Thérèse... To make this bitter, tragic potion drinkable for the masses, it is indeed necessary that some syrup be added to the cup... The convent of Lisieux has added too much perhaps.¹¹²

Ghéon saw himself as part of an elite who didn’t need such analgesics to take the pain of the real Theresian story: ‘I speak for the others, for those nauseated by the syrup, turned away by the bogus art, scared off by the shower of roses. For them I reject... the retouches done piously or involuntarily to the photographs “in order to give a more correct expression.”’¹¹³ Ghéon, in much the same spirit as previous commentators, saw the ‘real’ Thérèse as represented by the photographs of her, while the productions of the Carmel were inherently false:

Carefully consider a photograph [of Saint Thérèse] that has not been retouched, toned down, chosen amongst the most soft or the most ‘ecstatic’... One of these snapshots, for example, where her image has been captured unexpectedly, seized in the cloister among her sisters. Or even better, the most suffering and most characteristic of the three shots of 1897 in which she is holding images of the Holy Face and the Child Jesus to her chest. The reserved smile, the gentleness, the serenity cast only a thin veil over a face that is strong and powerful, tough and stubborn, imperious and triumphant, which knows what it wants, what it will want until death, who will not yield from having her own way. *Fiat!*¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

By the mid-1930s, with its reproduction and discussion in so many of the above volumes, the ‘Thérèse *aux images*’ photograph that Ghéon refers to here had gained as many culturally specific meanings as the Celinian images – it had come to stand for the ‘realist’ Thérèse that the intellectual critics were putting forward. Ghéon also referred to the photograph of Thérèse aged fifteen (figure 4) in a similar vein,¹¹⁵ relating her to less sentimental, more serious female saints, writing that it ‘revealed a clear face, well-framed and with a determined expression, with a frankness that is even brutal, and of a disconcerting purity: this is how Joan of Arc and the great Teresa [of Ávila] are represented.’¹¹⁶ In Ghéon’s work we find a Thérèse who was an ‘ascetic of continuous sacrifice, with a wasted body and a broken heart and an inflexible will’.¹¹⁷ This figure is asserted to be represented accurately only by the photographs, and is depicted as being the very antithesis of the face that dominated Thérèse’s popular representation in the mid-1930s.

Ghéon’s Book and the Carmel’s Reaction

Even before his book was published, Ghéon was censured by the Carmel. He had tried to gain permission to include some of the Carmel’s images of Thérèse in the book, enclosing examples of some passages when he wrote to the OCL. This resulted in Mère Agnès writing to Ghéon’s publisher, Flammarion, to protest about the book’s contents. In February 1934, Ghéon responded to Mère Agnès personally and was robust in his defence of his work. He asked for further details on the ‘historical errors’ she stated he had made, explaining that he had drawn his information from the official biography by Mgr. Laveille.¹¹⁸ He said he would change any factual errors, but stated strongly that ‘*As for the interpretation of material, aesthetic and psychological matters, you perhaps understand that I have full and complete freedom*’.¹¹⁹ The changes (if any) in the final book did not satisfy the Carmel and a rebuttal of its assertions was published in *Semaine religieuse de Bayeux et Lisieux*, which Dubosq later said ‘burnt the bridges between Carmel and its friends and Ghéon.’¹²⁰ He added that the book was extensively critiqued in the Catholic media – indeed, in her 1937 book on the saint, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus commented on the reaction to Ghéon’s book, stating ‘Without any of the ferocity of my first book, Henri Ghéon, for having tried with all his

¹¹⁵ Photograph 4, Appendix 2.

¹¹⁶ Ghéon, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 101.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹¹⁸ Henri Ghéon/MA 17/02/1934, Diverses Réponses, THER-5, Dossier Ubald d’Alençon, ACL. Laveille, *Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus*.

¹¹⁹ Henri Ghéon/MA 17/02/1934, Diverses Réponses, THER-5, Dossier Ubald d’Alençon, ACL.

¹²⁰ Diverses Réponses, THER-5, Dossier Ubald d’Alençon, ACL.

faith, with all his talent, to give a more vigorous portrait of the saint, knows what wrath has descended upon him.’¹²¹ In April 1934 a piece appeared in the *Annales de Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* which may have been partially a reaction to Ghéon’s book. *Sur la vraie physionomie morale de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus, dans son enfance* was also published by the Imprimerie Saint-Paul as a booklet, and it sought to address the fact that ‘Many have been mistaken about the true moral physiognomy of Saint Thérèse... and have distorted it in their writings’.¹²² There was an additional statement of defence in 1934 – one directly from the Martin sisters. ‘Le vrai caractère de Ste Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus’ was very similar to *Sur la vraie physionomie morale* in its content and was signed by all four of the sisters.¹²³ It was apparently never circulated, but rather was intended as a private statement that made their position clear to Rome. This was followed in April the following year by two statements on the images from Mère Agnès, which were also sent to Rome.¹²⁴ *Sur la vraie physionomie morale* went into a second edition in 1937, and while the first edition had ignored the visual portraits of the saint almost completely in favour of addressing the issue of her true character, the second tried to hastily include the issue of Thérèse’s visual representation, including Lemonnier’s statement of 1915 in the booklet and putting forward the Carmel’s position on this issue once again. The reason for this may have been the publication we will now go on to examine.

Pierre Mabille: The Surrealist’s Assessment

In 1937 Pierre Mabille (1904-52), author of surrealist classic *Le Miroir du merveilleux* (1940) and friend of surrealist theorist André Breton,¹²⁵ published the most forthright attack on Thérèse thus far. An avowed atheist who spoke of Catholicism as ‘an organised myth’,¹²⁶ Mabille’s book on Thérèse has been described as ‘caustic’.¹²⁷ It certainly targeted the saint herself in a way that had not been done before. A short work of only 102 pages, the book tries to explain Thérèse’s psychology as a result of her social and religious milieu, and the saint is portrayed ‘as an

¹²¹ Delarue-Mardrus, *La Petite Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 122.

¹²² *Sur la vraie physionomie morale de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus, dans son enfance* (Bar-le-Duc, 1934), p. 1.

¹²³ Published in Alvarez, ‘Retrato y carácter’, pp. 139-43.

¹²⁴ Note K79, *Ibid.*, pp. 143-5.

¹²⁵ See Rémy Laville, *Pierre Mabille, Un compagnon du surréalisme* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1983). Already, another surrealist pioneer, Max Ernst, had made an oblique attack on Thérèse through his collage novel *Rêve d’une petite fille qui voulut entrer au Carmel* (Paris, 1930), which was inspired by her story.

¹²⁶ Mabille, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 14.

¹²⁷ Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 264. On the book see also: Wilson, *Saints and Their Cults*, p. 337; Six, *Lumière de la nuit*, pp. 247-54.

extremely pitiful victim of the social order and of imposed religious ideas'.¹²⁸ Mabille states that Thérèse was a schizophrenic, guilty of 'heightened masochism' and 'minor sadism'.¹²⁹ The many illnesses and premature deaths in the Martin family are ascribed to congenital syphilis,¹³⁰ and the family are portrayed as psychologically fixated on death, despising 'the earth, the vale of tears, where everything is bad.'¹³¹ Ultimately, Mabille asserts that Thérèse was an example of how religion perverts romantic love for its own gain, encouraging the projection of sexual impulses onto religious figures, and Mabille asserts that 'The dead body of Jesus must stop being put in the way in relations between men and women.'¹³² Indeed, Richard D. E. Burton has asserted that the book 'is best read in the context of the Surrealists' promotion of the erotic as a subversive revolutionary force, as exemplified in Breton's *Amour fou*, another key text of 1937.'¹³³ This was a book that was deliberately outrageous in its assertions, and sure to cause controversy.

For Mabille, Thérèse was important because she 'marked the last step, the latest position of the Catholic Church',¹³⁴ and he had direct comments to make on the cult itself. He stated that 'the incredible commercial exploitation of our young national saint... has reached a degree of intensity unknown before now'.¹³⁵ Mabille felt that Thérèse's success indicated that she must reveal something profound about French society in the early twentieth century, and he put forward a more sophisticated analysis of her popularity than had appeared before:

Everyone knows that one cannot set up a myth like that of Thérèse without massive promotion and skilful direction. One cannot ignore that for centuries the Church has had the skill of managing the masses and managing souls... However, the experience of modern publicity has taught us that the most clever promotion has been proved to be incapable of an enduring success if the object it is in support of does not correspond to an unconscious need of the masses... If millions of creatures have turned towards Thérèse, have felt the desire to go to Lisieux or to possess effigies of the saint, the reason is that this figure thus made available to them corresponds to a real anxiety on their part.¹³⁶

¹²⁸ Mabille, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 15.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24, 26.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 134.

¹³³ Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*, p. 57.

¹³⁴ Mabille, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, pp. 9-10.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

It was this ‘real anxiety’, an ‘immense contemporary sentimental malaise’ in France, that Mabille felt could be examined through the prism of Thérèse.¹³⁷ But just as Mabille presented an alternative textual Thérèse – the violent schizophrenic – he also presented an alternative visual one. The first edition of the book contained a single plate reproducing ten portraits in total, including three of Thérèse and seven of her sisters (see figure 4.11). These were all extremely poor copies and crudely retouched, and Mabille also misidentified the figures in several of the images, with the famous photograph of Thérèse aged fifteen (figure 4) captioned as being a portrait of Céline. But the photograph of Thérèse aged thirteen reproduced here was Mabille’s *pièce de résistance*.¹³⁸ At some point this image had been tampered with and Thérèse’s eyes and mouth were narrowed, producing an expression that fitted in with Mabille’s diagnosis of acute neurosis. Mabille’s caption here explained: ‘The photographs and portraits [of Thérèse], which are widespread in commerce, reproduce the features of a dancer who posed for the Carmel and not those of Thérèse that one sees here.’ Mabille was not simply making an aesthetic judgement on the images issuing from the Carmel, as previous critics had done, but was asserting that an actual hoax was being perpetrated. This was a significant turning point in the debate surrounding the Carmel’s images. Even so, as in the case of Privat, the Carmel made no public refutation of the book, perhaps because its contents, and particularly the portrayal of the Martin family, was deeply offensive to them.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Photograph 3, Appendix 2.



Figure 4.11. Plate from Pierre Mabille's biography of Saint Thérèse. Source: Pierre Mabille, *Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1937).

Maxence Van der Meersch: A Catholic Against the Cult

In 1947 Maxence Van der Meersch (1907-51), a Catholic lawyer, journalist and novelist, produced the most sustained attack on the Carmel's activities and the Celinian Thérèse since the two works of Lucie Delarue-Mardrus in his book *La Petite sainte Thérèse*. Like Delarue-Mardrus, Van der Meersch was a successful author who has since been largely forgotten. Known in his time for his best-selling novel *Corps et âmes*, he was both a Prix Goncourt and Prix de l'Académie Française winner.¹³⁹ Published on the fiftieth anniversary of Thérèse's death, *La Petite sainte Thérèse* 'had the effect of a bomb' in the controversy it stirred up,¹⁴⁰ and it sold 120,000 copies in the first four years after its publication alone.¹⁴¹ The book was the first to reassess Thérèse after the Second World War, and Van der Meersch emphasised her experience of suffering throughout, presenting her as a saint that the post-war masses could relate to.¹⁴² Like many critics who had written on the saint before him, Van der Meersch wanted to reveal the 'true' Thérèse – a much stronger, more

¹³⁹ On Van der Meersch see Paul Renard et al., *Maxence Van der Meersch, auteur et témoin* (Villeneuve-d'Ascq, 2007).

¹⁴⁰ Gouley et al., *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 257.

¹⁴¹ Maxence Van der Meersch and Jacques Maître, *La Petite sainte Thérèse* (Paris, 1997), 2nd edition, p. ii.

¹⁴² On this, see also Maxence Van der Meersch, 'Il y a cinquante ans, Thérèse Martin', *Carrefour*, 1 October 1947.

original character than she was portrayed as, so that her real religious significance may be fully understood. In the book Van der Meersch not only took Père Ubald's accusations about the physical and emotional mistreatment of Thérèse by Mère Marie de Gonzague to new lengths, but he was also the first to speak at length about the crisis of faith Thérèse suffered before her death and to suggest that she had all but killed herself through her physical privations. Most importantly, he made sustained accusations about Mère Agnès' editing of Thérèse's writings and a lengthy attack on the Carmel's images of Thérèse. Indeed, Van der Meersch was concerned with the visual idealisation of Thérèse in a way no author had been before, engaging with specific images that appeared in the popular publications, and directly dismissing Bishop Lemonnier's 1915 statement on the images.¹⁴³ Van der Meersch stated that his aim was 'to clean this sacred face of all the Saint-Sulpician filth'¹⁴⁴ and, making a powerful link between the 'deformed' images of Thérèse and the misrepresentation of her character, he wrote 'in throwing into relief this foolhardy distortion that the face and features of the saint has been subjected to, we will better understand the unwitting distortion that has been inflicted on her mental persona.'¹⁴⁵ As with other detractors of the standard Theresian image, the images became the symbol of the wider 'fabrication' for Van der Meersch. The productions of the Carmel were presented as being the very antithesis of the woman Thérèse had really been:

It is very necessary to dispel the tasteless legend of this docile little saint of the 'shower of roses', of sickly sweet, sheeplike virtues, amazingly liable to give rise to Saint Sulpician art and imagery in the 'First Communion' style. Although this rehabilitation may sometimes astonish, it is necessary to emphasise the formidable energy, the leonine virtue, the superhuman will of this virgin warrior, this robust Norman girl, full of life, whose epic sanctity has been so often disastrously distorted into a vapid and languid existence, into a passive decline.¹⁴⁶

Ideas are revealed here about the moral superiority of the provincial and the humble, and the essential inauthenticity of the Carmel's representations, with Van der Meersch showing himself to have a very different conception of the authentic to the Carmel.

In *La Petite sainte Thérèse*, Van der Meersch made a detailed comparison of what he believed to be original photographs of Thérèse with the Carmel's productions. First he contrasts the Celinian images with the photograph of Thérèse at thirteen, that had been published in

¹⁴³ Van der Meersch, *La Petite sainte Thérèse*, p. 248.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

retouched form in Piat's *Histoire d'une famille* two years earlier.¹⁴⁷ He sets in opposition the 'effeminate, round chin, a languid and dreamy look' of the former and the 'firm line of the mouth, the mass of the chin already singularly wilful and obstinate' of the latter, saying that 'to offer the public an agreeable image, appropriate to this style of saintliness... this is what has become of the energetic physiognomy, so engaging, of the vivacious child of a moment ago.'¹⁴⁸ Comparing the 'cliché Gombault' to the Carmel's retouched version (figures 4.2-4.3), he asserted 'Here we have the case of a robust little *Normande*, solidly attached to reality and to life, with her feet certainly on the ground...' while the retouched image was one 'bordering on the Raphaelite virgins... what man in love with truth would not prefer to this insipidness the brutal and eloquent realism of the first photograph?'¹⁴⁹ Here there is almost a fetishisation of the earthy, casting the Carmel's images as pretentious confections, devoid of any sense of reality. Finally, he directed readers to the image used as a frontispiece to the book – an illicitly reproduced photograph of Thérèse on her deathbed (figure 4.12) – contrasting it with Céline's rendering of it, 'Thérèse morte' (figure 7). Whereas in the former 'death accentuates the character of strength and formidable will', in the drawing based on it 'clearly the aim has been to make it look pretty'.¹⁵⁰ For Van der Meersch there is no question of the reason for all this:

The naïve good intentions of a family circle style-consciously making this difficult figure 'lovable' have created a picture that is perfectly impersonal and conventional – it remains, thirty years on, in perfect conformity to the idea one has of a smiling and gracious saintliness, easy, and such, one thinks, that is essential so as not to frighten the public... But we, the men of today, we need saints who will no longer be made of multicoloured plaster of sky-blue and pink, but of sweaty and bloody flesh. Is it profanation to have wanted to demonstrate that Thérèse Martin is one of these?¹⁵¹

Here was yet another call for a realist Thérèse for the modern age, the contrast of plaster and flesh being highly evocative of the fake/real dichotomy Van der Meersch invokes throughout this work. Here, in the mid-forties, well-before the supposed period of change in Thérèse's popular representation, Thérèse was being reclaimed as a subversive and innovative figure, who threatened the complacency of the old religion with original ideas for a new century.

¹⁴⁷ Piat, *Histoire d'une famille*, p. 272.

¹⁴⁸ Van der Meersch, *La Petite sainte Thérèse*, p. 249.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 250

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 250-1. These are the images that Céline discussed in *Conseils and souvenirs* and that are mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis.

¹⁵¹ Van der Meersch, *La Petite sainte Thérèse*, pp. 250-1.

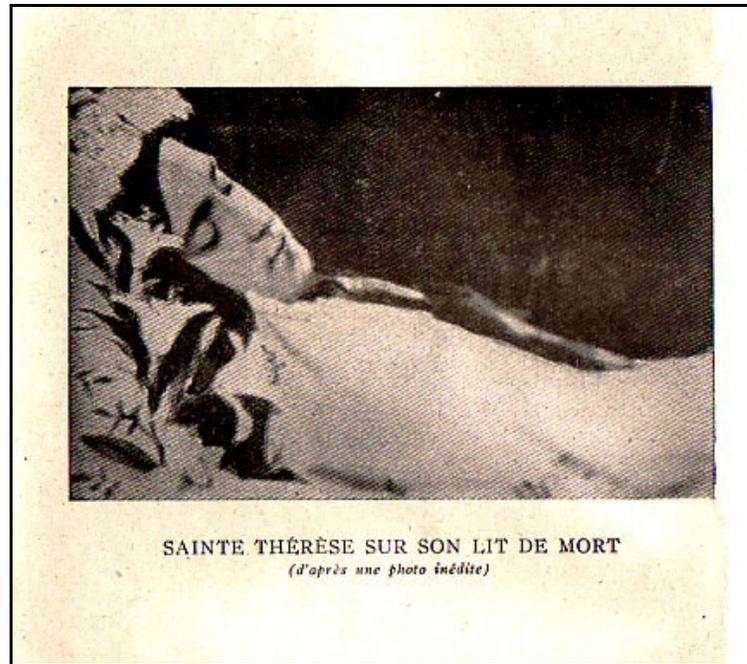


Figure 4.12. Frontispiece to Maxence Van der Meersch's *La Petite sainte Thérèse*. Source: Maxence Van der Meersch, *La Petite sainte Thérèse* (Paris, 1947).

The Reaction to Van der Meersch: The Last Great Controversy

Although Van der Meersch was far from an orthodox adherent of the Catholic faith, being a strident social reformer, whose co-habitation with a working-class woman had caused something of a scandal, he was a major literary figure and a far more formidable foe than the Carmel had faced before.¹⁵² Van der Meersch's book was to face the most sustained refutations from the Carmel and its allies of any of the studies which criticised Thérèse's cult and popular image in this period, a sign of how seriously they took the threat his book represented. The book made an instant impression and the Carmel's friends were soon writing to them to state their opposition to it. Père Marie-Bernard called the book 'stupid and really false',¹⁵³ while André Combes also criticised it.¹⁵⁴ Combes was in fact the first to attack the book publicly. Heavily involved with the Carmel at this time, as he was preparing his volume of Thérèse's letters in the year Van der Meersch's book appeared, he acted as the Carmel's mouthpiece and wrote several refutations of

¹⁵² In fact, Catholic novelist Georges Bernanos had dedicated a chapter of his 1938 novel *Les grands cimetières sous la lune* to the Theresian phenomenon, discussing 'a photograph naively doctored by the good sisters and conforming absolutely to the style of standard beauty, popularised by the cinema'. The Carmel is not known to have issued any response to this. See Georges Bernanos, *Les grands cimetières sous la lune* (Paris, 1938), p. 296. See also Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*, pp. 58-61 on Bernanos and Thérèse.

¹⁵³ MB/C 20/11/1947, THER-14 F, boîte 1, ACL.

¹⁵⁴ C/AC 11/09/1947, IIIa Boite 3a, ACL.

La Petite sainte Thérèse in the following years. The first of these was a scathing review in *La vie spirituelle*, where he stated that the instinct of the novelist had taken over and questioned whether ‘the celebrated novelist... has taken the time to inform himself of the historical requirements or to introduce himself to the essential ideas of spiritual theology.’¹⁵⁵ Combes called it ‘perhaps the most dangerous [book] that has ever been published on Saint Thérèse’,¹⁵⁶ and invited Van der Meersch to ‘without delay, make reparation to the honour of his two noble victims – Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and the holy Catholic Church.’¹⁵⁷ Combes also wrote a review of the book in the *Revue d’histoire de l’Église de France* in the same year, and he accused Van der Meersch of ‘presenting, in the place of the real saint, the product of a vivid and uncontrolled imagination.’¹⁵⁸ In his book of the following year, *Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus et la Souffrance*, Combes discredited the allegedly unretouched photograph used for Van der Meersch’s frontispiece, saying that ‘the Carmel of Lisieux had not hidden [it] in any way, but had rectified [it] notably, using a paintbrush on the negative.’¹⁵⁹ However, these three strongly-put refutations of Van der Meersch’s presentation of Thérèse, published over a two-year period, were as nothing compared to Combes’ edited publication of 1950.

La Petite Sainte Thérèse de Maxence Van der Meersch devant la critique et devant les textes was an examination of Van der Meersch’s book running to over 560 pages – the work to which it reacted was less than half as long. This work that Combes had earlier dismissed as the fantastical imaginings of a mere novelist now became the object of sustained study by some leading Churchmen, and three years after its publication, *La Petite sainte Thérèse* was still a thorn in the side of the Carmel. This long apologetic edited by Combes contained material from ten contributors, reproducing eleven reviews of the book (including Combes’ two articles), and combining this with an extremely in depth, point by point, refutation of the book by a Jesuit called André Noché. He had been given exclusive access to documents in the Carmel’s archives, and the book was

¹⁵⁵ André Combes, ‘Maxence van der Meersch, *La Petite Sainte Thérèse*’, *La vie spirituelle* (November, 1947), p. 106.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹⁵⁸ André Combes, ‘Maxence Van der Meersch. *La petite sainte Thérèse*’, *Revue d’histoire de l’Église de France*, 33, 123 (July-December, 1947), pp. 298-9.

¹⁵⁹ Combes, *Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus et la Souffrance*, p. 17, n. 1. Also in 1948, *La Petite sainte Thérèse* was countered in an article in *L’Osservatore Romano*. See R. P. M. Cordovani OP, ‘La prétendue restauration d’un portrait divin’, *L’Osservatore Romano*, 22 October 1948. This was also printed as a pamphlet by the publisher to the Bishop of Bayeux. Earlier, Abbé Larose, priest of the newly-formed parish of Saint Thérèse in Nantes, also wrote a refutation of the book. See L. Larose, ‘Vrai visage de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus’, *La Cloche Sainte-Thérèse*, no. 23/24 (November/ December 1947), pp. 1-4.

published by the Imprimerie Saint-Paul – this work was very much an enterprise of the Carmel. Combes' preface hints at the reason for such a sustained attack on Van der Meersch's book:

A bestselling author gets hold of 'the greatest saint of modern times'. He reconstructs her life. He remodels her face. He reinterprets her message. With a nervous pen, he rapidly covers the pages. Pressed by time, he dashes off his work. Fervour is substituted for erudition. 'I have written this book on my knees', he says. Boldly, he unleashes this work on the general public. The book, in fact, is full of explosives. A strange thing – the book does not self-destruct. It triumphs... its author is given a halo.¹⁶⁰

La Petite sainte Thérèse had had huge popular success, and this was the reason for the Carmel going to such efforts to counter its claims. In Combes' book the popular credence given to Van der Meersch's 'entirely new image' of Thérèse was referred to as being nothing less than 'dangerous' and a threat to 'the doctrinal message that it has pleased the Divine Wisdom to entrust [Saint Thérèse] with.'¹⁶¹ Later, Etienne Robo would attack Combes' book as written 'in order to confute, pulverize and annihilate a very brilliant and extremely successful novel', and called the writers 'exasperated apologists of St. Teresa... religious controversies often lack the most important and the sweetest element of Religion, which is Charity.'¹⁶² Robo was himself to later take up Van der Meersch's mantle as a Theresian rehabilitationist. The effects of Van der Meersch's book were to rumble on for the next decade, influencing several apologist pieces that appeared in the late forties.

Combes, the Photographs and the Statements of the 1940s

While Combes' refutations of Van der Meersch's book were as severely condemnatory as any of the earlier ripostes of the Carmel and its allies, we find a more nuanced approach to Thérèse's representation in his later work. Combes' *Introduction à la spiritualité de Sainte Thérèse* first appeared in 1946, but it was not until the second edition of 1948 that it came to comment on the images, and here we find Combes promoting a visual image of Thérèse that fitted his idea of the saint as a theologian – a characterisation that Céline's images were not well-suited to. The book contained four photographs: Thérèse aged eight with Céline; Thérèse at fifteen; Thérèse and Céline at the foot of the cloister courtyard cross; and the second pose of the 'Thérèse aux images'

¹⁶⁰ Combes et al, *La Petite Sainte Thérèse de Maxence Van der Meersch*, p. 9.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁶² Robo, *Two Portraits*, pp. 11-2.

series.¹⁶³ Combes thanked the Carmel for their ‘benevolent generosity’ in permitting these to be reproduced, and stated that ‘after verifying these photographs, I can guarantee that the faces are not retouched.’¹⁶⁴ In fact, all but the final image were quite heavily retouched, and it seems likely that Combes was aware of this, as it is the final image that he put the most emphasis on. He said of this photograph ‘one can say without any exaggeration that it is priceless.’¹⁶⁵ The disparity between the different faces presented here is striking, and the presentation of the substantially sanitised Thérèse alongside an unretouched photograph is perhaps indicative of Combes trying to pull the Carmel away from their entrenched position on the images. The appearance of this unretouched photograph was a small but very significant concession to change and Thérèse’s appearance here – looking strong and resolute – was an appropriate visual counterpart to the saint he depicted in the text. But while Combes’ attitude to the photographs was a more progressive one in *Introduction à la spiritualité* than he had exhibited in his refutations of Van der Meersch’s work, his defence of Céline’s images remained highly orthodox.

In *Introduction à la spiritualité*, Combes vigorously defended the ‘*buste ovale*’ and ‘*Thérèse aux roses*’, asserting their authority by stating that they were ‘the direct result of a prolonged contemplation of the subject during her life by an artist who wanted to show her spirit through the physical features... to give the dominant expression of her appearance and reveal her soul... she did not seek to make her “more pretty” but only “more accurately represented”.’¹⁶⁶ Here there is an implication that Céline’s work was not only superior because she had had so much contact with her sisters and knew her physical appearance very well, but because she had a unique understanding of her sister’s holy soul, and argument that will also be encountered in chapter 5. Combes also asserted that ‘*all the nuns who knew [Thérèse] have been unanimous in recognising her better in Céline’s portraits than in the photographs.*’¹⁶⁷ The authority of these holy women was contrasted with the detractors’ complete lack of special knowledge of the saint’s appearance:

Between the opinions of Henri Ghéon, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus and Maxence Van der Meersch, who never saw Thérèse except in imagination, and those of Sœur Thérèse de Saint-Augustin, on whom Thérèse lavished ‘the most gracious smiles’, or her former novice, Sœur Marie-Madeleine who, before Céline’s picture [of Thérèse], said in tears ‘Oh, my Sœur Geneviève, it is such a fine

¹⁶³ Photographs 2, 4, 26, 42, Appendix 2.

¹⁶⁴ Combes, *Introduction à la spiritualité*, p. 16.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-9.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

resemblance this time! Oh, do not touch it further – it is perfect! It is as if I am seeing her again!', I am perhaps being uncharitable, but I would favour [the opinion of] Sœur Marie-Madeleine and Sœur Thérèse de Saint-Augustin.¹⁶⁸

Finally, Combes cautiously stated that the approval of the portraits from those who had lived and prayed alongside Thérèse was 'why the photographs reproduced here are not at all intended to replace the classic portraits but, on the contrary, in complementing them will enable their merit to be better appreciated.'¹⁶⁹ While Combes was completely *parti pris* with the Carmel and his defence of Céline's images mirrored her own arguments, examined in chapter 2, his interest in the photographs showed a new attitude towards Thérèse's representation. In his emphasis on the 'Thérèse *aux images*' plate, in particular, he was championing a new face for Thérèse that was in harmony with his wish to prove that 'Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus is not at all a saint who is charming but devoid of doctrine'.¹⁷⁰ Ultimately, he hoped the book would 'inspire the desire [in the reader] to return to the Theresian texts themselves'.¹⁷¹ It was in essentially the same spirit of the return to documentary sources that Combes approached the images here, and this was an approach which would continue in his other book of the same year.

Combes' 'Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et la Souffrance' and the Images

Combes' interest in the 'Thérèse *aux images*' series, shown in his *Introduction à la spiritualité de Sainte Thérèse* found a fuller manifestation in his next book, *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et la Souffrance*. Examining the theme of suffering in Thérèse's life, the book reproduced all three of the images in the 'Thérèse *aux images*' series, taken when Thérèse was very ill, all in substantially original form, again providing a visual counterpart to his textual presentation of Thérèse. Combes also reproduced a plate showing four of the illicitly circulated versions of the last image of the series (figure 4.13), and his examination of the photographs here stands as a very significant contribution to the debate about Thérèse's representation. He contrasted these 'degraded' images with the original third photograph of the 'Thérèse *aux images*' series (figure 4.13):

[This] shows in full light the fanciful character of the 'realist' descriptions ('large, grinning mouth, prominent cheekbones, powerful jaw, strong and prominent chin, irregular line of the face...')...

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

unless examined through distorting glasses, it is absolutely impossible to discover anything of this in the authentic image taken on 7 June 1897... Without doubt, it is indeed the Theresian peace which dominates this so expressive figure.¹⁷²

Combes explained away the retouching of the image by Céline as an attempt to ‘combine all the merits of the successive poses [in the ‘Thérèse *aux images*’ series] and eschew the drawbacks of each.’¹⁷³ However, a clear sign of a new attitude to the images, Combes said that this retouched image could ‘perhaps be called synthetic’ and commented on the ‘contradiction established between the mouth, which registers a smile, and the eyes which do not smile.’¹⁷⁴ The original photograph was presented as the perfect representation of a suffering Thérèse, a few weeks from death, very different from the saint the Carmel had presented thus far, and Combes thanked the Carmel for ‘allowing me to offer to the world the photograph of the heroic martyr of merciful love’.¹⁷⁵

While he had a more open attitude to the photographs, Combes remained steadfastly against the detractors of Céline’s images, including a long footnote on Delarue-Mardrus, Van der Meersch and Ghéon in this book,¹⁷⁶ and attacking them in another statement of the same year, *A Propos d’Iconographie Thérésienne*. Here Combes asserted that the detractors were basing their assertions on images that the ‘eye witnesses of Thérèse’s life have disowned’,¹⁷⁷ but he also tried to discredit them in another way. He wrote:

An astonishing thing: to remedy the lack of their resources, these zealous defenders of the truth were driven by the spirit of independence to treat the photographs according to their themes, offering very impudent variations. Each wanted to emphasise the physical trait that would support the psychological or aesthetic thesis that they had decided to defend... and without worrying about the original, retouched, blew up, darkened or inverted [the photograph] over and over again. This is the origin of this large gallery of ‘authentic’ images of an extreme diversity, obtained by the most incredible metamorphoses of one and the same model.¹⁷⁸

The idea here is that diversity compromises authenticity, and this was in harmony with the Carmel’s approach to their iconographical output, with Céline trying to produce images that were as similar to the ‘*buste ovale*’ as possible, as we saw in chapter 2. The pirated photographs are never

¹⁷² Combes, *Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus et la Souffrance*, p. 11.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17, n. 1.

¹⁷⁷ André Combes, *A Propos d’Iconographie Thérésienne*, ACL.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

alike and thus all are suggested to be inauthentic. Here, also, the accusations of the Carmel's images being false was countered by making the same accusation against the detractor's images, made all the worse for their claims to be 'defenders of the truth'. Combes had provided a sustained apologetic for the Carmel in the wake of the Van der Meersch controversy, but the Carmel would publish one final pamphlet on the issue of the photographs and the portraits themselves.

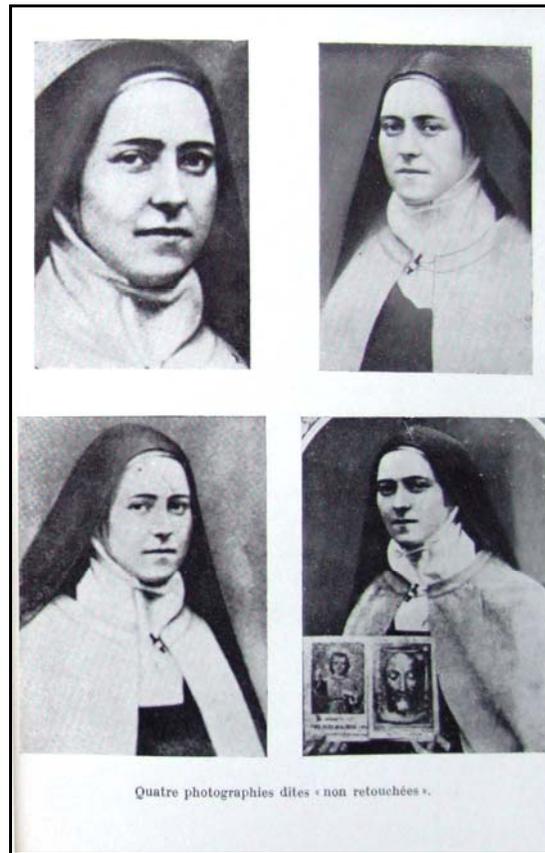


Figure 4.13. Plate from Combes' *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et la Souffrance*, showing the illicitly-circulated versions of the third pose of the 'Thérèse aux images' series. Source: André Combes, *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et la Souffrance* (Paris, 1948).



Figure 4.14. Plate from Combes' *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et la Souffrance*, showing the third pose in the 'Thérèse aux images' series. Source: André Combes, *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et la Souffrance* (Paris, 1948).

'Sur l'authenticité des Portraits': The Last Apologetic

The 1949 pamphlet, *Sur l'authenticité des Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, was heavily based on the exploration of the images of Thérèse in *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et la Souffrance*, but was aimed at more of a mass audience than Combes' somewhat weighty study had been. The pamphlet reproduced all three of the images in the 'Thérèse aux images' series, also directly contrasting the third with the 'buste ovale' (see figure 4.15), along with a number of images of Thérèse taken from group photographs of the community (the same plate had appeared in *A propos des Portraits* in 1926 – see figure 4.9), and a selection of the illicitly-circulated versions of the 'Thérèse aux images' third pose. The booklet gave the most straightforward explanation of the history of the images yet, reacting to the 'numerous people among the post that daily floods

into the Carmel of Lisieux asking for ‘an authentic portrait’ of Saint Thérèse’.¹⁷⁹ It was explained that ‘the Carmel has very few *direct* photographs’, most of the photographs featuring Thérèse being group compositions that were unsuitable for reproduction.¹⁸⁰ While it was admitted that the third ‘Thérèse *aux images*’ photograph had been presented in retouched form by the Carmel thus far, the principal line of defence in the pamphlet was to mark out the illicitly-circulated images as far worse. It was explained that ‘Re-photographed, enlarged, retouched excessively, [the original image] gave rise to a multitude of clandestine “portraits”, as fanciful as varied and defective.’¹⁸¹ These images claimed to ‘give Thérèse’s face a very accentuated note of strength and energy, but [they], on the contrary, disfigured that the force of the soul lit up [her face] in sweetness, in unalterable serenity.’¹⁸² Here the accusations of the Carmel’s images being false was countered by simply making the same accusation against the detractor’s images, a strategy that had also been used by Combes. The ‘*cliché* Gombault’ image was mentioned in a footnote as having been ‘the object of similar falsifications.’¹⁸³ Finally, Van der Meersch’s frontispiece was briefly alluded to (he was described only as a ‘recent author’), and it was discredited as in fact already published by the Carmel and, in any case, not a good likeness. *Sur l’authenticité des Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus* was the last major attempt by the Carmel to deal with the controversy surrounding the images before Céline’s death, yet the debate had by no means been halted.

¹⁷⁹ *Sur l’authenticité des Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus* (Lisieux, 1949), p. 1.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 4, n. 1.



Figure 4.15. Plate from *Sur l'authenticité des Portraits*, contrasting 'Thérèse aux images' with the 'buste ovale'.
Source: *Sur l'authenticité des Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Lisieux, 1949).

'The Hidden Face': The Landmark Rehabilitationist Study

While all the studies examined thus far had a negative reception from the Carmel and the wider Church, when Ida Friederike Görres (1901-71) produced another ostensibly similar book it was seen in a rather different light. A member of the Bohemian nobility, Görres had briefly become a nun, later becoming involved in the German Youth Movement and acting as a member of the Würzburg synod. A leading figure in German Catholic life, the eulogy at her requiem mass was given by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the current Pope.¹⁸⁴ Her long work on Thérèse originally appeared in German as *Das verborgene Antlitz. Eine Studie über Thérèse von Lisieux* (1944), with a second edition appearing fourteen years later, incorporating new insights gained from the release of the unedited autobiography in 1956.¹⁸⁵ The book appeared in English in 1959 as *The Hidden*

¹⁸⁴ On Görres see Eva Maria Faber, 'Un plaidoyer pour la Petite Voie: Ida Friederike Görres', in Baudry, *Thérèse et ses théologiens*, pp. 109-10, and Ida Friederike Görres, *Broken lights: diaries and letters, 1951-1959* (London, 1964), trans. Barbara Waldstein-Wartenberg.

¹⁸⁵ Ida Friederike Görres, *Das Senfkorn von Lisieux. Das verborgene Antlitz. Neue Deutung* (Freiburg, 1958).

Face: A Study of St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1959), and has yet to appear in French. It was only really with this English edition that the book made an impact¹⁸⁶ (indeed, Dorothy Day wrote her own book on Thérèse without seeking out this obscure German volume of which she had heard distant reports)¹⁸⁷ and, released as it was in the year of Céline's death, it marked a decisive turn towards a rehabilitative approach being accepted by pro-Thérèse factions, opening a new period in the discussion of Thérèse's popular image. In the book, Görres did not glorify the life of the saint, rather criticising the very mediocrity of her life and limited nature of her achievements. This was much in the vein of preceding studies, but while these had often mentioned Thérèse's weaknesses only in the service of showing the extent of her achievement in becoming a saint, Görres' innovation was to fully relate Thérèse's ordinariness to her philosophy of the 'little way.' Thérèse was the proof of what the individual could achieve by recognising their own littleness and putting trust in the action of God's grace. However, she severely criticised 'the endless *kitsch* surrounding the figure of Thérèse',¹⁸⁸ and was forthright in her criticism of the sisters' promotion of the saint.¹⁸⁹ She spoke emotively of seeing an illicit photograph of the saint, reproduced as her frontispiece (figure 4.16): 'In stunned silence we gazed at the familiar and yet so alien features, and someone said: "Almost like the face of a female Christ." From that August morning I was determined to pursue the riddle of her look and her smile – so different from the honeyed insipidity of the usual representations of her.'¹⁹⁰ But Görres' work marked the beginning of a new age in the controversy this chapter examines, creating a third strand in the debate by commenting on the critical works as themselves creating a false Thérèse:

Once the rosy, saccharine glaze of sentimental bad taste and moralism had been pierced, every effort was made to show Thérèse in as strong a possible contrast to that sort of "distortion". Thérèse was now presented as a psychological problem, a misunderstood woman of great importance, a repressed artistic nature, and so on. An effort was made to introduce some drama into the, alas, so gentle and monotonous outlines of her character and life, to throw in a few wild,

¹⁸⁶ A number of other English-language works appeared in this period which formed a parallel debate in Britain. This began with the appearance of translations of Delarue-Mardrus and Ghéon's books: Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, *Sainte Thérèse of Lisieux* (London, 1929), trans. Helen Younger Chase; Henri Ghéon, *The Secret of the Little Flower* (London, 1934), trans. Donald Attwater. These were followed by: Eric Gill, 'St Teresa of Lisieux, A.D. 1873-97', in *Sacred and Secular etc* (London, 1940), pp. 125-40; Reverend C. C. Martindale SJ, *What the Saints Looked Like* (London, 1947); John Beevers, *Storm of Glory. St. Thérèse of Lisieux* (London, 1949); Robo, *Two Portraits*; Michael O'Carroll, 'The Truth about Ste Thérèse', *The Furrow*, 7, 11 (November, 1956), pp. 655-62.

¹⁸⁷ Day, *Thérèse*, p. x.

¹⁸⁸ Görres, *The Hidden Face*, p. 15.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

discordant notes that would convey an element of adventurousness, and thus suit the changed tastes of the contemporary public. This trend is still growing. So there arose the image of a modern Thérèse, a philosophical, conscious reformer, even a revolutionary; a tormented, defiant fighter; and finally a Titanic figure beset by daemonic impulses.¹⁹¹

This was a dramatic turn away from the two-sided dialogue of the past – a critic of the cult also taking a critical view of the rehabilitationists – and Thérèse Taylor has remarked how Görres ‘while joining in the modern project of revising Thérèse’s image, shrewdly observed the creation of a new myth’.¹⁹² Senior Churchmen would come to approve of Görres’ book, accepting it into the list of canonical works on the saint, and while the theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar bemoaned the fact that Görres ‘resort[ed] to depth psychology in order to bring out her heroine’s greatness’ he praised the fact that ‘Thérèse seems to spring to life in the midst of it’.¹⁹³ Görres had achieved what the other critics had found impossible – articulating the disquiet that so many felt about Thérèse’s image without being blacklisted for it by the dominant voices of the Catholic world.



Figure 4.16. Frontispiece to Ida Friederike Görres’ book, *The Hidden Face*. Source: Ida Friederike Görres, *Das verborgene Antlitz. Eine Studie über Thérèse von Lisieux* (Basel, 1944).

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² Taylor, ‘Images of Sanctity’, p. 284.

¹⁹³ Von Balthasar, *Thérèse of Lisieux*, p. 276-7.

Conclusion: 'Recognising' the Saint

Here we have seen how the Carmel used the occasion of the challenging of the Celinian Thérèse by several biographers to issue a series of apologetics, where a number of arguments about the authenticity of Céline's images were publicly articulated, attempting a legitimisation of the Carmel's Theresian iconography. Here, the convent engaged in an extended public debate for the first time – with the Martin sisters publicly 'outed' as the creators of the cult, they were forced to emerge from obscurity to defend their actions. Meanwhile, in the critics' studies of Saint Thérèse, changing fashions in devotional culture were revealed, with a new paradigm for the representation of the saint slowly emerging. Here we can see the historical contingency of concepts of the authentic, with the critics investing in new ideas of realism and 'genuine' spirituality, while the Carmel continued to hold on to the concept of the 'ideal' representation being the most authentic representation. One result of this new investment in the 'genuine' on the part of the critics was a deep anxiety about authentic religious practice, and the impact of both the commercial and the modern on devotional culture. Where they commented on the pilgrimage site of Lisieux, we have seen them rejecting the Carmel's essentially nineteenth-century devotionalism in favour of an allegedly more heartfelt and personal brand of religiosity where the pilgrim's franc and the devotional souvenir were no longer valid considerations. The critics' new concepts of the authentic saw a variety of new personalities for Saint Thérèse explored, in an effort to find a representation that fitted these concepts, and although the representations they put forward were often informed by very different values, as is demonstrated by the distance between Mabille's broken schizophrenic and Delarue-Mardrus' robust, intelligent Norman, all the commentators explored here, whether Catholic or not, appealed to a similar concept of authenticity. By looking at these critical studies in greater detail than has been done previously, the idea that the rehabilitationist attitude towards Thérèse's representation only began in the 1960s has been clearly disapproved, revealing a much more complex picture of a diverse group of intellectuals and writers, often coming from very different backgrounds and perspectives, challenging the Carmel's characterisation of the saint from as early as the mid-1920s, and in Giloteaux's case, even before the canonisation.

The clear shift in religious values that has been revealed in this debate meant that Thérèse, as the Carmel had depicted her, was no longer recognised, in the cultural sense rather than the visual sense, by these commentators. The rhetorical tools that the Carmel used to defend their

images were not enough to make the critics sanction their version of Thérèse – each side had entirely divergent concepts of authentic religious practice and the genuine representation of the holy person, and there was little common ground. In these divergent attitudes to the representation of the saint we are reminded of Thérèse’s strangely prescient comments on the refashioning of the saint, repeated in Céline’s published memoirs. She is quoted as saying ‘And if the Saints came back... No doubt they would admit they often do not recognise themselves.’¹⁹⁴ Indeed, the many ‘Thérèses’ the critics created, based on a whole new set of values and a strong sense of prizing earthy realism over the falsely perfect, would probably not have been recognised by Thérèse herself, with her late nineteenth-century conception of the authentic representation of the saint – the same that was also shared by her sisters. David Morgan’s concept of the ‘covenant with images’ indeed seems to be a useful way to think about this change in ideas, where the saint who was created to fit into the existing devotional culture at the very beginning of the twentieth century, as we saw in chapter 2, has by the end of that century’s first quarter become diametrically opposed to the values of the intellectual elite. Having ‘fall[en] out of trust with the image’, it could no longer ‘act upon them’ and, such was the extent of this loss of trust, that instead of ‘renegotiat[ing]...the contract’,¹⁹⁵ entirely new images had to be found. The critics’ creation of a range of new faces for Thérèse would also be mirrored in the devotional marketplace, the motivation being not an intellectual imperative, but profit, and this would again offer the Carmel an opportunity for self-fashioning as the sole genuine Theresian iconographers. This is the topic of the next chapter.

¹⁹⁴ Sœur Geneviève, *Conseils et Souvenirs*, p. 166.

¹⁹⁵ Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze*, p. 81.

Chapter 5

Droit d'auteur: Artistic Property, Authenticity and the Legal Cases

A whole paradise of polychrome plaster saints... Little Sœur Thérèse, in a hundred copies of different sizes, clutching a crucifix to her Carmelite uniform...

Michel Tournier, *La jeune fille et la mort* (1978).

This chapter examines a controversy which ran in parallel to that examined in chapter 4, and which was put to similar purposes of self-fashioning by the Carmel. In chapter 3 we saw how Céline's images were promoted commercially, and such was the success of this marketing programme that by the late 1920s many manufacturers of devotional items had begun to copy Céline's representations of Thérèse, with greater or lesser degrees of faithfulness to the originals, flooding the market with alternative images of the saint. While we saw in chapter 4 how a variety of different faces for Thérèse were put forward textually, sometimes supplemented with an illicitly reproduced photograph of the saint, here a variety of alternative creative visual representations appeared. The Office Central de Lisieux launched a number of legal cases against the makers of these *contrefaçon* (counterfeit) images and, it will be shown here, the legal process was used as an opportunity to again articulate the Carmel's views on the authenticity of their images in public. In their engagement with the legal regulation of the reproduction of the image, the Carmel had recourse to a whole new set of concepts about the genuine, the fake and the act of artistic production, their codification in law providing a solid basis for the legitimation of their images. While the superior knowledge of Thérèse's real physical appearance possessed by the Carmel and their allies, an argument frequently encountered in the apologetics of chapter 4, was invoked in some of the cases examined in this chapter, it was the legal ownership of the saint's image, and of her iconographical attributes in particular, that was principally at issue. The Carmel, and the OCL as its representative, used the law as an instrument of cultural authority here, using it to attempt to further embed the Celinian Thérèse in the economy of popular piety. We will see here that Céline's concept of artistic authenticity was fully supported by the centrality of the idea of the author's unique artistic creativity to French copyright law.

The Carmel's prosecution of counterfeiters is an issue that has hardly been mentioned in the secondary sources. Maurice Privat wrote briefly on the issue in his sensational, anti-clerical book on the saint of 1932, asserting that 'Only the Carmel has the right to rent out Thérèse, to

glorify her, to retail her',¹ with the OCL's statues being 'The official model, provided with a seal of approval, the only authorised ones, which pay royalties'.² Privat's partial and, in any case, only oblique references to the Carmel's legal activities are all that has been published on the *contrefaçon* cases. In this chapter the archival documents which tell the stories of the *contrefacteurs* and the convent's attempts to censure them are used for the first time. This chapter is also significant for its examination of a religious constituency making use of the law of the secular state to further their own religious aims. Indeed, here we find the Carmel using copyright law to make points about religious authenticity and to define their images not only as the sole genuine representations of Thérèse, but the only spiritually valuable ones. The use of copyright law by religious groups in this way has been explored in some specific contexts previously. Suzanne Kaufman has highlighted the cases the Grotto Fathers at Lourdes brought against the producers of commercial items seeking to profit from the shrine in the late nineteenth century.³ In January 1904 a Paris court ruled that images of the Virgin of Lourdes and the town's basilica were in the public domain, and could no longer be claimed as trademarks by the pilgrimage authorities – the Carmel's cases would have a similar outcome.⁴ Such use of copyright legislation by religious organisations can expose the relationship between state and faith groups – a valuable function in such contexts as the fraught Church-state relationship of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France. It can also reveal something about ideas of aesthetic and spiritual authenticity and how these may be variously understood by secular and religious constituencies. In the case of the Carmel of Lisieux, we find a religious community using the law to assert the legal rights of the founders of the cult and to establish greater control over their religious 'brand', fighting back against the appropriation of their devotion by secular business. But it was not only secular entities that the Carmel launched cases against – they also became embroiled in legal battles with other religious groups, seeing the secular law become an instrument for the assertion of authority in the purely religious sphere. Robert Orsi has commented, in a twentieth-century North American context, that 'Catholic devotions were jealously guarded by their founders and promoters', mentioning in particular the

¹ Privat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 135.

² *Ibid.*, p. 157. He also mentioned the Œuvre Familiale de Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, a foundation with no connection to the Carmel, set up in Lisieux to care for the orphans of the First World War. It faced censure from Bishop Lemonnier (allegedly at Mère Agnès' behest) for using Thérèse's name without the Carmel's permission. See *Ibid.*, pp. 175-6. A postcard showing the organisation's Lisieux premises can be found in Album cartes postales diverses, ACL.

³ Kaufman, *Consuming Visions*, p. 67-8.

⁴ See Aaron J. Segal, 'The Republic of Goods: Advertising and National Identity, 1875-1918', unpublished PhD thesis, University of California, 1995, p. 191.

Chicago Claretians who, in 1961, tried to copyright the devotional material they produced when another religious order began to use it to raise funds for their own projects.⁵ Common to the cases the Carmel pursued against both religious and secular groups was their use of the authority of the law to stipulate the religious and aesthetic primacy of their images and to assert the Carmel's ownership of certain modes of representation. The protection of Céline's legal rights as 'author' of the original images, although ostensibly the aim of these cases, was merely what the letter of the law offered, and in these cases we find the Carmel using the opportunity for self-fashioning that legal redress offered to style themselves as the sole legitimate Theresian iconographers. In these legal cases, the Carmel's articulation of its concept of the authentic representation of Saint Thérèse reached its fullest form.

'Propriété littéraire et artistique': Copyright Law, Canon Law and International Treaties

As a case study of the operation of copyright law in early twentieth-century Europe, examining its use by a religious organisation under the Third Republic, this chapter makes a contribution to the emerging field of copyright history. French copyright law has been dominated by the idea of the '*droit d'auteur*', a much more slippery concept than the Anglo-Saxon concept of 'copyright', which is focussed on economic rights.⁶ The Literary and Artistic Property Act of July 1793 established intellectual property rights, in relation to literary and artistic works, in French national law for the first time.⁷ The Act granted the same rights to the author's heirs for a period of ten years after their death (extended in 1866 to fifty years), and specified financial penalties both for the original counterfeiters and the vendors of any *contrefaçons*. While the powers of the Act seemed sweeping and generous to the author, it in fact left many issues unclear and case law came to be essential to the operation of French copyright law. But case law is by its very nature subjective and subject to change, and while, for example, the Court of Paris had ruled on 3 December 1831 that the property right to a painting did not extend to 'preventing the imitation or reproduction of the original work by techniques of another, essentially distinct art, such as

⁵ Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude*, p. 8.

⁶ For a study of the formation of the '*droit d'auteur*' in France until 1957, see Pfister, 'L'auteur, propriétaire de son œuvre?'. His chapter 'Author and Work in the French Print Privileges System: Some Milestones', in Deazley et al, *Privilege and Property*, pp. 115-36, gives an account up until the late eighteenth century.

⁷ 'French Literary and Artistic Property Act, Paris (1793)', *Primary Sources on Copyright (1450-1900)* <http://www.copyrighthistory.org/cgi-bin/kleioc/0010/exec/showTranslation/%22f_1793%22/start/%22yes%22> [accessed 9 March 2009].

sculpture’, later rulings (such as that of the same court on 16 February 1843) would open the way to the protection of works reproduced in any artistic medium.⁸

The central emphasis of the 1793 Act, as stated in Article 7, was on the ‘production of the mind or of genius within the domain of the fine arts’ – the author’s unique artistic creation was the protected article under the law. So, for example, in a case of 1834, Napoleon’s death mask was ruled as not being protected under the Act due to its mechanical means of production, which had involved no creative artistic endeavour.⁹ But a precise definition of evidence of the ‘talent’ and ‘personal labour’ of the artist, and their creation of a ‘*œuvre de l’esprit*’ (‘a work of the spirit’), bearing ‘the imprint of his or her personality’,¹⁰ was lacking and the lower courts were left with a great deal of autonomy. The February 1857 case of a counterfeit sculpture, where the Court of Cassation ruled that ‘however well-known the features of a commonplace article may be, and in spite of the fact that tradition requires any copy to respect those features, this... still leaves space for the talent of the artist, allowing him to create a work that bears a *special* character, and which becomes as such a property protected by law’,¹¹ signalled the subjectivity of the judgements the courts were required to make. Such delicate judgements would continue to characterise the application of the law in France throughout the early twentieth century.

The operation of copyright law in Belgium, Germany and Hungary is also important to this chapter, as this is where the Carmel pursued the legal cases examined here. In the early nineteenth century Belgium pursued a protectionist policy in its copyright relations with its larger neighbour, France, and after a decree of 23 September 1814, which repealed all French laws on the book trade in Belgium, there were a series of battles over copyright piracy between the two countries.¹² Eventually a copyright treaty was negotiated between Belgium and France, granting reciprocal rights within each others’ borders, and the Franco-Belgian Copyright Convention of 1861 was followed by the Franco-Belgian Copyright Treaty of 1882. Crucial to the relationship between France and the three other countries in question in this chapter is the Berne Convention of 1886, an international copyright treaty which required its signatories to recognise the copyright

⁸ See Frédéric Rideau, ‘Nineteenth Century Controversies Relating to the Protection of Artistic Property in France’, in Deazley et al, *Privilege and Property*, p. 252.

⁹ Correctional Tribunal of the Seine, 10 December 1834, discussed in Rideau, ‘Nineteenth Century Controversies’, p. 246.

¹⁰ Rideau, ‘Nineteenth Century Controversies’, p. 246, 254.

¹¹ ‘Court of Cassation on Originality, (1857)’, *Primary Sources on Copyright (1450-1900)* < *Primary Sources on Copyright (1450-1900)* < http://www.copyrighthistory.org/cgi-bin/kleioc/0010/exec/ausgabe/%22f_1857%22 > [accessed 9 December 2010].

¹² On copyright relations between Belgium and France, see Goldstein, *Copyright’s Highway*, pp. 180-1.

of works of authors from other signatory countries in the same way as they recognised the copyright of their own nationals.¹³ Belgium signed the Convention in the year of its origin, and this meant that a French national suing for copyright infringement in Belgium would get the same protection Belgium gave its own nationals. Meanwhile, Germany had long shared with France the idea of author's rights ('*Urheberrecht*' in German), rather than copyright,¹⁴ formalising this in a copyright law of 1870, and as a founder-member of the Berne Convention, it was an original signatory in 1886. Photography became protected under a further piece of legislation of 1876, and this would later be important for the cases the Carmel pursued in Germany.¹⁵ In Hungary, copyright had been codified in law in an Act of 1884, but Hungary didn't ratify the Berne Convention until 1922. In all the copyright cases that the Carmel pursued, it was the Berne Convention that permitted them to do so, and they were acting within a well-developed system of international copyright legislation that offered the promise of a high degree of protection for authors.

For the Carmel of Lisieux, as for any other Catholic foundation, canon law was as significant, if not more so, as the civil law. The restrictions on the use of images in canon law were not concerned with copyright, but rather religious propriety and images in books was the main concern.¹⁶ Canon 1279 did explore the issue of stand-alone images and statues, but only stated that 'No one is without the approval of the Ordinary allowed to place, or cause to be placed, in any church... or in any other sacred places, an unusual picture' – in other words an image that is 'dogmatically incorrect'.¹⁷ The emphasis here was on erroneous images in sacred spaces, and this clearly did not impact on statues and images sold for domestic use. Indeed, in early 1929 the Office Central de Lisieux sought the advice of Alfons Van Hove (1872-1947), one of the leading canon lawyers of the twentieth century, about the Church's view on religious *contrefaçons*. He confirmed that Canon 1279 meant that in the matter of statues displayed in unconsecrated buildings, 'the Church gives the faithful complete freedom', as long as they did not contradict any

¹³ On the Berne Convention, see Ricketson and Ginsburg, *International Copyright and Neighbouring Rights*.

¹⁴ Goldstein, *Copyright's Highway*, p. 168.

¹⁵ 'Copyright Acts for the German Empire Regarding Works of Art, Photography, and Designs, Berlin (1876)', *Primary Sources on Copyright (1450-1900)* <http://www.copyrighthistory.org/cgi-bin/kleioc/0010/exec/ausgabe/%22d_1876%22> [accessed 27 December 2010].

¹⁶ See Stanislaus Woywod OFM, *The New Canon Law: A Commentary and Summary of the New Code of Canon Law* (New York, 1918), p. 134, 136.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

point of faith.¹⁸ He also confirmed that the Church imposed no restrictions on the attributes used for a saint – any attribute could be used as long as it ‘respected the general character of the saint’s life’ – emphasising that while the Church was intimately involved in the sanctioning of the cults of saints, it allowed considerable freedom in the matter of the ‘material representation of the saint.’¹⁹ Crucially for the Carmel, Van Hove stated that the Church ‘did not intend at all to interfere with the artistic property right that the author might have to a statue or given emblem.’²⁰ In the eyes of the Church, therefore, the Carmel were free to pursue their rights.

‘Stopping the birds from eating the cherries’: Statements of Rights and the First Legal Case

The Carmel was alive to the potential for the pirating of their representations of Thérèse even before the canonisation. As early as 1911 they sought the advice of Canon Dubosq in the matter of unauthorised images of Thérèse. His thoughts on mass produced devotional ephemera give a privileged insight into the views of the senior men of the Church on issues of good taste in popular religious art. Striking a similar note to his views on the debate surrounding Thérèse’s representation, examined in the previous chapter, he wrote to Céline about some images of the saint, that he called ‘Italian horrors’:

What can one do?... Nothing... As the love and the cult of Our Dear Little One spreads, one will see appear in the shop windows attempts at portraits which will be horrible caricatures. One will see ... *images d’Épinal*, daubed in canary yellow and Russian blue... Believe indeed that Sœur Thérèse *rejects them* with all her heart, but as for considering stopping this tide, you might as well put a padlock on the garden gate to stop the birds from eating the cherries.²¹

While Dubosq was not speaking directly of *contrefaçons* here, he clearly felt that any attempt to try to control the trade in images of Thérèse would be pointless, the metaphor used strongly suggesting a view of the world of religious commerce as particularly rapacious. By late 1923, Dubosq was directly discouraging the Carmel from pursuing companies who ‘violate your *artistic property* by *copying* or *plagiarising* works composed by you’,²² emphasising that it ‘is practically *impossible* to sustain cases in I don’t know how many places and several countries to try to curb the frenzy of production which has taken hold of these artists.’ Père Marie-Bernard was of much the

¹⁸ Declaration by A. Van Hove 06/01/1929, Jurisprudence Farde 10, S24D, env. 2, ACL.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ D/C 30/04/1911, THER-5, ACL.

²² D/MA 23/08/1923, THER-5, ACL.

same opinion, writing pessimistically in a letter of late 1920 on the prospect of preventing copies of his statues, saying, like Dubosq, that defending the Carmel's rights would be 'practically impossible' and suggesting to Céline that 'despite your rights, you close your eyes', urging her not to get involved in any litigation.²³

The temperate attitude of both Canon Dubosq and Père Marie-Bernard would have little impact on the Carmel's actions. Understandably, they had taken steps from the early years of the cult to protect their images. In 1912 they were negotiating contracts with manufacturers of their devotional items, naming Céline Martin (using her secular name, not her name in religion) as the absolute rights holder of the images.²⁴ Later they would write to the publisher Boumard fils for advice about the use of the copyright symbol as a means of protecting their images,²⁵ and in the year of the beatification Céline would write them an irate letter, demanding that they destroy an image that she insisted only the OCL had the right to reproduce.²⁶ But during the last months of the First World War the Carmel would go beyond these reasonable attempts to safeguard their authorial rights and would, in a pre-emptive strike, try to claim the right to control not only their own representations of Thérèse, but all representations of her. In an official statement about the ownership of images issued by the OCL in July 1917, potential *contrefacteurs* were warned off in no uncertain terms. It stated:

It is reiterated that no-one may, if it is not authorised by the Artist, reproduce the portraits of Sœur Thérèse and that, more generally speaking, the creation of new images, which *cannot*, for that matter, be truthful without being more or less disguised copies of the prototype portraits, harms *the rights of the author and of the family* and cannot be tolerated. All unauthorised production of objects of this type will be pursued in accordance with the law.²⁷

The implication that all 'truthful' original images would always be *contrefaçons*, as they would have to derive something from Céline's originals, far overstepped the Carmel's legal rights. Some years later, a handbill titled *Droits d'Auteur, Droits de Famille* appeared, probably in early 1923, making a similar assertion, but this time regarding statues of Thérèse. It stated that 'No sculptor may exhibit or sell a sculpted work representing Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus without the permission of the

²³ MB/C 26/11/1920, THER-14 F, boîte 1, ACL.

²⁴ See Bouasse-Jeune/MA 12/10/1912, Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL.

²⁵ BF/MA 02/03/1921, Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL. See also BF/MA 22/04/1921 and 14/05/1921.

²⁶ C/BF 12/04/1923, Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL.

²⁷ July 1917 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

Carmel of Lisieux’, emphasising that such works ‘might be pursued as a forgery’.²⁸ Here, just as in the statement of 1917, the Carmel were seeking to assert summary rights over Thérèse’s representation in any context, not just protect their rights to images of their own creation. In these statements it becomes clear that even before any legal cases were launched, the aim was not simply to ensure that the Carmel’s legal rights were not infringed and to reclaim any lost revenue, but to concentrate control over Thérèse’s representation in the hands of the Carmel as much as possible.

The OCL and the Contrefacteurs

With Thérèse’s official recognition by the Church, widespread counterfeiting of the Carmel’s representations of her became even more likely, and another statement about *contrefaçons* was issued in 1926. Ten thousand copies of this four-page leaflet, titled *A propos des contrefaçons des Statues, Images et Médailles de S^{te} Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus*, were printed ‘to be sent to all the merchants of devotional objects’.²⁹ It warned them that ‘The Office Central... finds itself obliged to stop the more and more numerous forgeries of works of which it is the franchise holder’.³⁰ Indeed, all the *contrefaçon* cases were in fact brought by the OCL, not the Carmel, and the relationship between the two in these legal cases needs to be explained. The OCL had the rights to produce devotional items carrying Thérèse’s image in France transferred to them in 1917, and Raymond de Bercegol also successfully registered himself in November 1924 as the sole franchise holder in Belgium for the production statues, drawings, medals, books and engravings representing Thérèse.³¹ But while the OCL was the plaintiff in all the legal cases that are examined in this chapter, they worked very closely with the Carmel on the cases. The Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux holds numerous undated, casual notes from de Bercegol to the Carmel, showing that the convent was consulted on even the smallest details of the cases as they were going on.³² Further, the OCL’s legal argument always focussed on Céline’s original authorial rights as the key issue – in practice, the cases were about protecting her rights, not those of the OCL. In a

²⁸ Droits d’Auteur, Droits de Famille, S24D, env. 1, ACL.

²⁹ Note attached to *A propos des contrefaçons des Statues, Images et Médailles de S^{te} Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus*, S24D, env. 7, ACL.

³⁰ *A propos des contrefaçons*, S24D, env. 1, ACL.

³¹ See Cailliau declaration, S24D, env. 5, ACL.

³² With the OCL’s offices just yards from the Carmel, depositing a note in the convent’s ‘turn’ seems to have been the most efficient method of communication with those inside the cloister. See the notes in Raymond de Bercegol, *correspondance d’affaires*, ACL, and S24D, env. 9, ACL. See in particular the various notes on Weisz Frigyes and the Korda case, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

witnessed declaration of 2 November 1924, Père Marie-Bernard had passed on his authorial rights to six of his sculptured works to Céline, including the much-pirated ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’.³³ His giving up of his rights left the way clear for the cases to be focussed solely on Céline as author of the original ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ drawing, on which the statues were based. It is clear that the Carmel was driving the initiative to prosecute *contrefacteurs*, wishing to maintain control of the representations they felt so strongly about. When a company prosecuted by the OCL, Vitalie et Fontana, asserted that the proceedings were not being carried out with the approval of the Carmel, de Bercegol produced a letter from Mère Agnès, underlining the degree to which the Carmel were indeed behind the actions launched by the OCL.³⁴ The OCL and the Carmel should be thought of as one entity in these cases, and de Bercegol’s deep investment in the Carmel’s view of Céline’s work, examined later in this chapter, shows how much they were of the same mind. It can certainly be suggested that the OCL was a convenient ‘front’ for the Carmel – the involvement of a religious community in the secular judicial system could be controversial, as we will see later, and the OCL put the convent at a safe distance from the baser realities of bitter court battles by taking control of these cases.

‘Monsieur X, éditeur de statues’: The First Case and the Crucifix and Roses as Religious Trademark

The leaflet *A propos des contrefaçons* reveals details of a case the OCL launched in May 1925 against a company based in Brussels that was making unauthorised statues of Thérèse, and this appears to be the very first legal case that the company brought against a maker of devotional objects. The original documents relating to this case do not survive in the Archives of the Carmel, but what is revealed in this second-hand account is that the case enacted a staging of ownership of certain modes of Thérèse’s representation – the crucifix and roses device in particular, and this was to become a recurring theme in the legal cases. The text makes a detailed comparison between a statue manufactured and sold by a businessman referred to only as Monsieur X and the OCL’s ‘model no. 5’ – copies of Père Marie-Bernard’s ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’, sold for domestic use (see figure 5.1), and concludes that although there are some small differences between the two statues, there was a key point of similarity – the crucifix covered with roses held by both figures. This is described as ‘a completely new conception and consequently unseen in sacred

³³ Declaration of Louis Richomme, S24D, env. 5, ACL.

³⁴ Note sur l’Audience d’Appel Jurisprudence, S24D, env. 2, ACL, p. 4.

iconography'.³⁵ It is then stated clearly that 'this idea is down to Sœur Geneviève (Céline Martin)'³⁶ and that the iconographical device originates from her 'Thérèse *aux roses*' of 1912. It is described as a 'new and original idea, belonging particularly to Sœur Geneviève', a 'characteristic mark founded by Sœur Geneviève and reprised by [Père Marie Bernard]'.³⁷ Here, then, it is suggested that the crucifix and roses is the part of the work that shows evidence of the '*œuvre de l'esprit*' – the mark of unique artistic creation that makes it deserving of legal protection. But in fact the discussion of the emblem here goes beyond this assertion to a right to legal protection, making claims to religious authenticity too – a matter well outside the law. The OCL's statement asserts that the crucifix and roses emblem is 'attached closely to the cult of Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus' and, further, 'corresponds with the sayings of Little Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, and it defines admirably the mentality of this Saint'.³⁸ This was being figured as not simply a meaningless decorative touch but, as we saw in chapter 2, an expression of Thérèse's spiritual life.³⁹ Indeed, Céline explained in an official declaration made in October 1926 for the purpose of the cases that she had wanted to represent 'the love that our Little Saint had lavished on the good God'.⁴⁰ She went on, 'Also, wanting to represent *her mission*, which is "to teach her way to souls", I placed a rose in her right hand, with the gesture of showing and presenting it to the spectator'.⁴¹ The crucifix and roses was not just a symbol, but a message, and the claim to ownership of this artistic motif was being justified by reference to a specific intention to represent a religious quality of the subject. The emblem is marked out here not only as the artistic brainchild of Céline, but the production of a witness to and disciple of Thérèse's 'little way', and there is an implicit suggestion that only she is fit to manage it. Here the crucifix and roses emblem is given a history and legitimacy through a mythologising of the new, a framing of the religious significance of the emblem which enacts the creation of a new devotional tradition. This would be developed in greater depth through later legal cases.

The emphasis placed on the crucifix and roses emblem may not have been driven by purely religious motives, however. The motif certainly had a commercial value, having become the key identifying symbol of the saint well before the canonisation. It would have been expedient

³⁵ A propos des contrefaçons, S24D, env. 1, ACL.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ On the symbolism of the emblem see Jean de la Croix, 'La rose effeuillée', pp. 223-33.

⁴⁰ Historique du Portrait de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus de Lisieux, 21 October 1926, S24D, env. 5, ACL.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

for the Carmel to retain sole rights to the symbol, ensuring that their products would be favoured over those produced by their competitors. Indeed, in this first legal case we find the Carmel making this ‘famous emblem’ the focus of the proceedings, stating plainly that were it not for the inclusion of the crucifix and roses, the statue in question ‘would not be the subject of incrimination.’⁴² Here, this emblem is not just argued to be Céline’s property and a religiously important symbol, but is marked out by the OCL as a kind of trademark – the distinctive mark of authentic Theresian devotional items. The OCL was already stamping the statues it produced with its registered trademark, but this was an attempt to go further and make the much more obvious iconographical attribute a mode of representation that was exclusive to the OCL. In the explanation of the case in *A propos des contrefaçons* there was a rather laboured explanation of the implications of this, with the leaflet finishing:

Finally, it is fitting to remark that neither Mademoiselle Céline Martin, nor Monsieur Raymond de Bercegol have ever had the intention of monopolising devotion to Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus, who may inspire other artists; only they both feel that it is their strict right to defend their ownership of artistic compositions which belong to them.⁴³

As the crucifix and roses was the only clear mark distinguishing representations of Thérèse from those of other Carmelite saints, most notably Teresa of Ávila, the OCL and the Carmel alike must have appreciated that a statue of Thérèse without this crucial symbol would probably be taken as a statue of Teresa of Ávila by the faithful, and thus would be commercially ineffective. The attempt to try to control the usage of Thérèse’s iconographical attributes in this first case and, therefore, interfere in the production of all recognisable images of the saint, would be echoed in later cases, where the attempt to establish the crucifix and roses motif as the trademark of the Theresian brand would be articulated further.

⁴² *A propos des contrefaçons*, S24D, env. 1, ACL.

⁴³ *Ibid.* In an undated note to the Carmel, de Bercegol also spoke of the idea of the Carmel having ‘a ‘monopoly’ on the crucifix and roses. Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance d’affaires, ACL.



Figure 5.1. Cover of the September 1925 Office Central commercial catalogue, with a warning about the production of *contrefaçons* and an image of model no. 5 (left). Source: S24B, env. 2b, ACL.

Statuary and Property: The Belgian *Contrefacteurs* and the Vitalie et Fontana Case

In 1926 the Carmel and OCL became aware of several other manufacturers in Belgium who were making statues which they felt to be copies of model no. 5. On the 25 October 1926 the OCL's solicitor requested a *saisie-description* – a warrant permitting the prosecuting party to gather evidence from the defendant on their alleged counterfeiting activities before the case was launched.⁴⁴ Four alleged Belgian *contrefacteurs* were indicted, all based in Ghent: Victor Pretel of rue aux Ours and rue de la Carpe, Philibert Vitalie and Ermido Fontana of rue des Gardes-Couches, Clément Pierruccini of rue Van Wetttenberghe and Jean François Debeer of rue du Strop. On 12 November the seizures took place against these four producers and also against Georges Dubrûlle, who was under suspicion for having commissioned a statue from Pierruccini, with hundreds of individual statues being taken away in total.⁴⁵ All the seized items were then

⁴⁴ Autorisation et saisie description, S24D, env. 3, ACL.

⁴⁵ On these seizures, see Rapport d'expert, S24D, env. 6b, ACL, pp. 1-3.

examined by an expert in statuary, Hippolyte Le Roy, employed by the OCL. He produced a report on them in February 1927, and here the focus was squarely on the crucifix and roses motif.

Le Roy wrote:

This part of the artwork unquestionably constitutes the essential feature on which we must particularly place our attention... This Christ covered in roses constitutes the symbolic attribute particularly associated with the representation of the blessed little Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, whether in sculpture, or painting, or otherwise... this unquestionably new idea has been, from its advent, sanctioned by a universal popularity without precedent.⁴⁶

Here Le Roy echoes the OCL's assertions in the original case of some two years earlier, also using the exact words that appeared in *A propos des contrefaçons* elsewhere in the report. But the report made a particularly fulsome and enthusiastic assessment of the motif, comparing it to the symbolic attributes of well-established saints, and stating:

How much more pleasing and more romantic is this idea for issuing from the talent and the heart of Sœur Geneviève, explaining so poetically the life of sacrifice to the cult of the Infant Jesus of this young virgin, dead in the springtime of life; a life as fleeting as those of roses in the space of a morning, but a universal idea which has been accepted across the world with the rapidity of a radio wave.⁴⁷

This emblem was above merely commercial concerns, and was being figured as an artistic conception of deep, unassailable spiritual importance. Le Roy admitted that 'a statue of Saint Thérèse without this sentimental attribute would never be understood by the public', but concluded that with any representation featuring a crucifix covered in roses the 'authorship must unquestionably return to the authors', and also that, in the case of Vitalie et Fontana's statues, they 'present no original features'⁴⁸ – the presence of the iconographical attribute made this a *contrefaçon*, but in fact any representation of Thérèse would have to have this attribute to be commercially successful. The result of the Carmel gaining sole control of the emblem would effectively be a cornering of the market in *all* representations of Thérèse. Of these Belgian *contrefacteurs*, only Vitalie et Fontana were subject to further legal proceedings, the situation with the other four companies being less clear-cut, with many selling a number of statues between them, making it difficult to place blame. In any case, Vitalie et Fontana's statues were the most visually similar to those of the Carmel, as testified to by the photographs of three models of their

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

creation that Le Roy included in his report (figure 5.2). It is to the details of that case that we will now turn.



Figure 5.2. Model no. 5 (A) compared to the statues produced by Vitalie et Fontana (C, D and E). Annotations by Hippolyte Le Roy, the OCL's statuary expert, 1927. Source: Rapport d'expert, S24D, env. 6b, ACL.

The Vitalie et Fontana Case Begins

The case the OCL brought against Vitalie et Fontana was heard at the Petit Palais de Justice, Ghent, between March 1927 and July 1928. The OCL sought a number of compensatory measures for the violation of their authorial rights and the OCL's solicitor outlined that the company must: not make any more statues of Saint Thérèse; provide all existing statues and moulds used to make them for destruction; pay 10,000 francs in damages; cover the cost of the publication of the judgement in ten Belgian newspapers; and meet all other costs.⁴⁹ The OCL had already managed to negotiate extremely favourable terms with some other makers of devotional art, including Mauméjean Frères, a maker of stained glass windows and mosaics, who requested the permission of the OCL every time they made a window or panel depicting Thérèse. They paid the OCL royalties of 10% on the net price of any windows sold reproducing an image owned by them and, incredibly, 5% 'on all the windows and mosaics incorporating a composition created by [Mauméjean] and relating to Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, even if this composition is not

⁴⁹ Sommaton et Assignation, S24D, env. 3, ACL.

inspired by the works made by the Office Central.’⁵⁰ This arrangement may have unduly raised the Carmel’s expectations in their dealings with other makers of representations of Thérèse. During the Vitalie et Fontana case the OCL’s representatives would use a number of legal arguments to try to secure the desired penalties, however the central issue in this case was the crucifix and roses motif. In this case we see the OCL trying to establish a legal precedent which would leave them effectively as the sole rights holder to the crucifix and roses device, one that, according to the original summons delivered on Vitalie et Fontana, was ‘intended to distinguish this work of art amongst those that represent other saints of the Order of Carmel.’⁵¹ Vitalie et Fontana had a number of arguments to make in their defence, however, and the way the OCL’s legal representatives dealt with these are indicative of the Carmel’s attitude to the representation of Thérèse. Here, each of these arguments and the response to them from the OCL will be examined, tracing how Céline’s authority and the alleged artistic originality of her creation was articulated through this legal process.

‘Inversements’ and Fooling the Buyer

There were a number of subsidiary arguments made by Vitalie et Fontana during this case which highlight issues of artistic originality and the complexities of copyright in the commercial selling of images. The defence stated that, quite simply, there were differences between their statutes and model no. 5, meaning they could not be *contrefaçons*. However, the case law on this issue was largely in favour of the OCL. The Court of Paris concluded in 1886 that ‘The right of the author is absolute – imitations which, without copying the work slavishly, reproduce it as a whole *or in its essential and characteristic parts* may be complained about.’⁵² Further, in July 1925, the First Chamber of the Court of Colmar had stated that ‘The *contrefaçon*... can consist of an imitation or a reproduction of [a work’s] essential features and characteristics or the distinct details which are part of its originality, and indeed this is the same when the additional features have been more or less cleverly changed.’⁵³ Indeed, the plaintiffs asserted that in Vitalie et Fontana’s case,

⁵⁰ DB/ML 14/05/1928, Jurisprudence Farde 9, S24D, env. 2, ACL. See also: Note sur l’Audience d’Appel Jurisprudence, S24D, env. 2, ACL, p. 4; Mauméjean/DB 09/08/1928, Jurisprudence Farde 12, S24D, env. 2, ACL; note dated 06/03/1926, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance d’affaires, ACL.

⁵¹ Sommaton et Assignation, S24D, env. 3, ACL.

⁵² Jurisprudence Farde 3, S24D, env. 2, ACL. Emphasis author’s own.

⁵³ Jurisprudence et Doctrine, S24D, env. 4, 3, ACL.

‘the “inversions” are proof of the intention to counterfeit’⁵⁴ – they knew they could not produce straightforward copies of the OCL’s products and carried out small changes, including changing the direction in which the head was tilting, and the side on which the crucifix and roses were held, to permit them to do so. The degree of difference that would make an original composition, and would avoid legal censure, was clearly a highly subjective area, but the plaintiffs asserted that ‘the statues of the defendants have the same gesture, the same pose, the same general attitude’.⁵⁵ The matter of ‘inversions’ was also linked to a further issue – that of fooling the buyer.

The OCL felt that Vitalie et Fontana’s statues were so similar to its own that confusion was possible, and the consumer could mistake a product made by this company for one sanctioned by the Carmel.⁵⁶ The possible confusion had grave commercial implications and was a good basis on which to argue damages were due to the plaintiff. This was also a big issue in the case law, particularly in Belgium. In 1912 the Belgian periodical *L’Ingénieur-Conseil: Revue technique et juridique des Droits Intellectuels* reported on several cases of similar trademarks, where the risk of fooling the buyer was the central issue in the legal cases brought, including one of 1904 which centred on the use of similar lion motifs by two companies, and concluded that here the few ‘differences in detail are insufficient to avoid confusion’.⁵⁷ Similar judgements had been made even more recently, and these were also reported on in *L’Ingénieur-Conseil*. The case of Beernaert vs. Dumeunier, makers of funerary monuments, heard in Brussels in November 1926, confirmed that ‘a work that has been conceived and executed in such a way that the untrained, uninformed eye would form the same impression as given by a previous work and, in consequence, attribute to the two objects a common origin’, making them appear to be ‘the work of the same author’ was a *contrefaçon*.⁵⁸ In the case of two tobacco manufacturers, Fournier-Delacroix and Haas, also heard in Brussels in May 1927, the plaintiff ultimately lost the case on the basis that the images of a soldier used as a trademark by each company (see figure 5.3), although they had similar profiles, were sufficiently different in their ‘attitude’ that they were unlikely to be confused by the buyer.⁵⁹ This shows how delicate the aesthetic judgements the courts were required to make in such cases were.

⁵⁴ Note sur l’Audience d’Appel Jurisprudence, S24D, env. 2, ACL, p. 3.

⁵⁵ Note sur le litige, S24D, env. 4, ACL, p. 2.

⁵⁶ Note sur l’Audience d’Appel Jurisprudence, S24D, env. 2, ACL, p. 3-4,

⁵⁷ *L’Ingénieur-Conseil: Revue technique et juridique des Droits Intellectuels*, 2, 9 (September, 1912), also quoted in Jurisprudence et Doctrine, S24D, env. 4, 4, ACL.

⁵⁸ *L’Ingénieur-Conseil*, 18, 3 (March, 1928), pp. 38-9.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.



Figure 5.3. The trademarks of Fournier-Delacroix and Haas cigarettes. Source: *L'Ingénieur-Conseil: Revue technique et juridique des Droits Intellectuels*, 18, 3 (March, 1928), pp. 36-7.

Religious Iconography and the 'Public Domain'

The principal argument of the defence in the *Vitalie et Fontana* case was that model no. 5 was in the public domain, as analogous representations had been used during the ceremonies of beatification and canonisation, and thus it had taken on some sort of official status within the Church.⁶⁰ This seemed a powerful statement, religious iconography surely being freely available for use by all the faithful. However, the case law stated otherwise, and there was a precedent for recognising the rights of the author in the case of religious iconography, even where very well-established motifs and modes of representation were used. The case of *De Bondt vs. Verrebout*, heard by the Correctional Tribunal of the Seine in June 1883, revolved around the ownership by Verrebout of several statues representing Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Saint Madeleine, Saint Anthony of Padua, Saint Giles and a full Nativity, complete with two shepherds. These were ruled to have been illegally copied by the defendant, condemned as a *contrefacteur*, resulting in a 3,500 franc payout to the plaintiff. The court concluded that:

Reproductions of religious images, representing legendary or hieratic figures, are obliged to follow certain conventional attributes which personify each figure; Without doubt, the attributes belonging to each of these figures are in the public domain. But, outside of their common property, representations of the same figure can be private property, when the personal work of the artist clearly individualises them.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Note sur l'Audience d'Appel Jurisprudence, S24D, env. 2, ACL, p. 1. On the images used during the beatification and canonisation ceremonies see also DB/ML 14/05/1928, Jurisprudence Farde 9, S24D, env. 2, ACL. On the public domain see also Note sur le litige, S24D, env. 4, ACL, pp. 6-7.

⁶¹ Jurisprudence et Doctrine, S24D, env. 4, 2, ACL.

Despite the use of religious signifiers with a long history, these statues were recognised as originals belonging to the company since they showed evidence of the unique work of the artist required by the Literary and Artistic Property Act of 1793. Accordingly, the OCL's representatives rejected the assertion that the crucifix and roses device was in the public domain fulsomely, asserting that the principal representations of Thérèse used in the beatification and the canonisation ceremonies (the 'Gloire du Bernin', produced by the Vatican, and the two 'Apotheoses' produced by Céline and reproduced on banners for the ceremonies) were substantially different representations from model no. 5, showing Thérèse in different poses and in substantially different moods. In all three cases Thérèse was 'in an ecstatic pose', rather than in the act of offering a rose to the viewer, as in the original 'Thérèse *aux roses*' and model no. 5 itself (see figures 5.4-5.6).⁶² In a note to one of the OCL's solicitors, de Bercegol commented that should this part of case for the defence be accepted 'How dangerous Saint Peter's Basilica would be for artists in this case!'⁶³



Figure 5.4. The Vatican's 'Gloire du Bernin'. Source: S24D, env. 2, Jurisprudence Farde 9, ACL.

⁶² Note sur l'Audience d'Appel Jurisprudence, S24D, env. 2, ACL, p. 2. See also the notes from de Bercegol, emphasising that the 'Gloire du Bernin' was '*a work specially commissioned by Rome*' and did not 'represent the saint with a crucifix covered in roses in her arms'. See undated notes, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance d'affaires, ACL.

⁶³ Note to de Busschere, S24D, env. 4, ACL.



Figure 5.5-5.6. Left: Céline's 'Little apotheosis for the beatification' (1921). Source: ACL. Right: Céline's 'Little apotheosis for the canonisation' (1924). Source: ACL.

The issue of the public domain was not yet exhausted, however, and the defendants went on to assert that the crucifix and roses could be defined as in the public domain as it was in fact an emblem present in *Histoire d'une âme* and therefore created by Thérèse herself. The accusation was that, 'Notably, when she was lying in bed in the infirmary, she unpetalled roses on her crucifix.'⁶⁴ Céline had indeed been inspired by her sister's real-life gesture,⁶⁵ but the plaintiffs asserted baldly that model no. 5 showed Thérèse standing, not lying in bed and holding a crucifix and roses, and not unpetalling roses on a crucifix.⁶⁶ Indeed, elsewhere de Bercegol exclaimed that 'To read their claims, one would believe that Saint Thérèse was born with a crucifix covered in roses in her arms, and could not be represented otherwise!'⁶⁷ The OCL's representatives further asserted that the model 'is not a representation of something that happened in Saint Thérèse's life. She was never seen like this. This statue is intended to symbolise the mysticism of Saint Thérèse, her 'little way'.⁶⁸ Raymond de Bercegol would later point out that the defendants' comparison with the case of Joan of Arc and her common attribute of a standard was 'unhelpful' and 'unfortunate',

⁶⁴ Note sur l'Audience d'Appel Jurisprudence, S24D, env. 2, ACL, p. 2.

⁶⁵ RTAG, p. 45.

⁶⁶ Note sur l'Audience d'Appel Jurisprudence, S24D, env. 2, ACL, p. 2.

⁶⁷ DB/ML 18/11/1927, S24D, env. 4, ACL.

⁶⁸ Note sur l'Audience d'Appel Jurisprudence, S24D, env. 2, ACL, p. 2.

since ‘Joan of Arc really did hold a standard, whereas Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus never held a crucifix covered in roses in her arms... this is an allegory invented by the artist – an allegory which clearly characterises her work.’⁶⁹ The OCL maintained that the ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ charcoal of 1912 was the original manifestation of this representation, which belonged, undeniably, to Céline.⁷⁰ Here, then, the right of Céline’s conception to be protected by the law was again asserted by a claim to artistic innovation. The emblem and general mood of model no. 5 had not appeared in the beatification and canonisation images, and had never existed in real time, but was the result of the expending of artistic energies, resulting in a *tour de force* of religious iconography – an original piece of art that was in no sense in the public domain.

The Attribute as Personal Property and the Possibility of Original Compositions

As in the case outlined in *A propos des contrefaçons*, the crucifix and roses attribute was fast becoming the focus of the Vitalie et Fontana case. The defendants were well aware of the centrality of the emblem to the case, and explicitly asserted that ‘the plaintiff claims to have the sole right to use the crucifix and roses, put together in this common way, as an emblem’,⁷¹ also protesting that ‘it is not possible to make a statue that represents a saint without making parallels with other statues or images that represent the same saint.’⁷² They asked:

Given that the only popular representation of Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus consists of a statue representing a Carmelite nun with a crucifix and roses as an attribute, are the authors of model no. 5 justifying claiming protection of their work to the point that statues of Saint Thérèse can no longer be produced with the crucifix and roses?⁷³

The OCL strongly asserted that ‘M. de Bercegol has never dreamed of claiming a monopoly on the making of statues of Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus with a crucifix and roses’,⁷⁴ and additionally protested that there were many representations of Saint Thérèse which included the attributes, but which were not copies of their own work.⁷⁵ This rather contradicted their insistence, when

⁶⁹ Jurisprudence Farde 10, S24D, env. 2, ACL.

⁷⁰ Note sur l’Audience d’Appel Jurisprudence, S24D, env. 2, ACL, p. 1.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷³ Note sur le litige, S24D, env. 4, ACL, p. 1.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Note sur l’Audience d’Appel Jurisprudence, S24D, env. 2, ACL, p. 3. The Correctional Tribunal of Tours, in a judgement of 27 July 1912, had used the example of representations of Joan of Arc to point to the infinite possibilities for unique representations of the saint, but still incorporating her attribute of the standard. See Jurisprudence et Doctrine, S24D, env. 4, 2, ACL.

countering the assertion that these attributes were in the public domain, that the symbol was the unique artistic creation of Céline Martin and her personal authorial property. The OCL certainly accepted that representations of Thérèse with other attributes were not *contrefaçons*, and that she could be represented with any number of symbols, as canon lawyer Alfons Van Hove had earlier made clear to them, and indeed Céline herself asserted that ‘the ideas inspired by the life of a saint can vary infinitely. The official emblem is not obligatory, and each artist may depict the saint according to their personal inspiration’.⁷⁶ For example, they found the statue of Thérèse in the Beguinage church in Brussels, where she holds a book (figure 5.7), wholly acceptable and argued that this statue showed that it was not the case that ‘an iconographical representation [of Thérèse] must necessarily include the crucifix and roses’.⁷⁷ But while this might suggest that the OCL and Carmel felt that other artists should represent Thérèse with attributes of their own conception, rather than the crucifix and roses, which should only be used by them, they did in fact permit some representations of Thérèse with this emblem to be produced by other artists during this period.

In their attitude to images by other artists that included the crucifix and roses, we find the Carmel and the OCL making a more subtle interpretation of artistic originality than was apparent in their comments about the public domain in the *Vitalie et Fontana* case. The OCL permitted the Catholic, Symbolist painter Edgar Maxence (1871-1954) to have a painting of Thérèse he had completed for a church in Warsaw reproduced commercially by the publishers Maison Braun (figure 5.8).⁷⁸ His fame was no doubt something of a motivation (we are reminded of the enthusiasm the Carmel had for collaborating with Roybet, another successful professional painter), but the fact that the image showed Thérèse holding a crucifix and roses frontally, and that it was very different in style from the Carmel’s Saint-Sulpician offerings may have been a deciding factor too. The then well-known sculptor Berthe Girardet (1861-1948) also wrote to the OCL to ask for permission for a bas relief she had made to be reproduced by Braun (see figure 5.9).⁷⁹ This showed Thérèse holding the cross and roses separately, and the OCL responded that ‘This work, although it has some similarities with one of those that we have exclusive rights to, does not appear to be one of a nature that would mislead our clientele, and we are happy to tell you that we have no

⁷⁶ *Historique du Portrait*, S24D, env. 5, ACL.

⁷⁷ *Note sur le litige*, S24D, env. 4, ACL, p. 7.

⁷⁸ *Edgar Maxence/DB 17/04/1927*, S24D, env. 6a, A3, ACL. See also *DB/ML 18/11/1927*, S24D, env. 4, A3, ACL.

⁷⁹ *Berthe Girardet/DB 27/11/1927*, S24D, env. 6a, A4, ACL.

opposition to your plan to publish it.’⁸⁰ Other images incorporating the crucifix and roses, but which had not been sanctioned in advance in this way, were also deemed acceptable by the OCL. Two undated images, one printed by Bouasse-Lebel, showing the emblem as part of a floral border, while Thérèse herself joined her hands in prayer (figure 5.10), and the other printed by Boumard, showing the crucifix held in one hand and the roses in the other (figure 5.11), were not viewed as *contrefaçons* by the Carmel.⁸¹ The acceptance of all these images suggests that it was not just the emblem itself, but the very specific pose with which they were held that counted, suggesting that it was indeed Céline’s specific original artistic expression that the Carmel valued. Images like this were not much of a threat to the very identifiable silhouette and gesture of the hands of model no. 5 and the ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ of 1912. These examples demonstrate that it was the characteristic gesture of the holding of the crucifix and roses, presented as one emblem, high up on the body, and the offering of a rose in the right hand that was key to the Carmel-owned representation, although it should also be noted that these were all representations to be reproduced as two-dimensional images – the Carmel’s attitude to the sculptures, as we have seen, was less forgiving, and they still deemed the Vitalie et Fontana statues in particular to be clear *contrefaçons* that required legal redress.

⁸⁰ DB/Berthe Girardet 29/11/1927, S24D, env. 6a, A4, ACL.

⁸¹ S24D, env. 6a, A1 and A2, ACL.



Figure 5.7. Statue of Thérèse without crucifix and roses in the Beguinage church, Brussels. Source: Appendix 3 to Note sur le litige, S24D, env. 4, ACL.



Figure 5.8. Edgar Maxence's portrait of Thérèse, c. 1927. Source: author's collection.



Figure 5.9. Berthe Girardet's relief of Saint Thérèse, c. 1927. Source: S24D, env. 6a, A4, ACL.

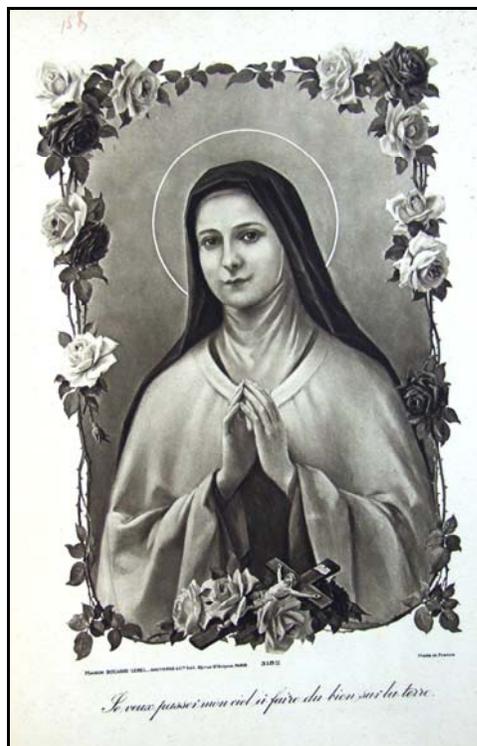


Figure 5.10. Image by Bouasse-Lebel, Paris, c. 1925. Source: S24D, env. 6a, A1, ACL.



Figure 5.11. Image by Boumard, Paris, c. 1925. Source: S24D, env. 6a, A2, ACL.

The Result of the Vitalie et Fontana Case and the Claiming of Authenticity

In July 1928 the Vitalie et Fontana case was concluded. Despite the OCL's strong appeals to the originality of Céline's work and its attendant right to legal protection, they lost the case. The principal conclusion of the court was that:

There have been two Saint Thérèses: the founder of the Carmelites and Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. To distinguish this one from the first, it is essential that she is represented with a crucifix covered in roses – therefore it is not counterfeiting to imitate the statues produced by M. de Bercegol.⁸²

This was a devastating judgement. The crucifix and roses were found to be wholly in the public domain and the issue of Céline's authorship of the original 'Thérèse aux roses' was completely dismissed. The representation had been a victim of its own success, becoming so well-recognised that it was virtually impossible for the court to set a precedent which would allow it to be used by only one organisation. In a seven page refutation of the result of the case, which is replete with frustration, de Bercegol exclaimed 'one can dispossess an artist of their rights because their work is a success!!! This defies good sense and is a decision diametrically opposed to the legislators'

⁸² Réfutation du jugement du Gand, Jurisprudence Farde 10, S24D, env. 2, ACL, p. 1.

intention.⁸³ He listed the jurisprudence that he felt proved the OCL's case, before exclaiming 'How then was there no conviction?!?!'⁸⁴ and asserted that 'it must be concluded that such a judgement dispossesses us entirely of our rights.'⁸⁵ The OCL believed it had suffered grave financial losses, and de Bercegol bemoaned the fact that 'The art pirates are always ready to profit from the work of others'.⁸⁶ The OCL calculated that between 1 April and 1 November 1926 Vitalie et Fontana had sold 5,749 statues at 6 francs 50 centimes each, and they concluded that the company owed them a provisional amount of 20,121 francs and 50 centimes for their putative loss in sales.⁸⁷ They also felt that the company had committed a serious offence in misleading 'the faithful, wanting above all to obtain a statue which reproduces the work of the own sister of the Saint.'⁸⁸ Indeed, while the financial loss and sense of injustice in losing out on their authorial rights was galling to the OCL, de Bercegol's main concern, even after the case was lost, was to continue to assert the originality and spiritual importance of the device that Céline had created.

In his refutation of the Vitalie et Fontana judgement, de Bercegol continued to elaborate on the dialogue of authenticity established in the original trial, putting forward a complex characterisation of the nature of Céline's work:

Only an artist habitually practicing meditation and particularly mystical could have had the idea of this allegory which reminds us not of the words of Saint Thérèse, but her love for Christ on the cross, and it is highly probable that without Mademoiselle C. Martin, Carmelite nun and the saint's own sister, no one would have represented her thus.⁸⁹

Here, as in the description of the earlier case in *A propos des contrefaçons*, the representation was given an aura of unassailable religious authenticity. Céline, the mystic, the nun, and the sister of the saint had made it, resulting in an entirely unique and completely genuine representation of the saint, recalling her love for Christ. Here Céline becomes entirely infected with the aura of the spiritual possessed by the saint herself, and her claims to divine inspiration in her work, which we saw in chapter 2, are articulated by de Bercegol here, showing just how much he invested in Céline's very individual view of her own work. Elsewhere, de Bercegol had also shown investment in the other part of Céline's self-image – that of herself as a great artist. Writing to the

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸⁷ Conclusions Additionnelles, S24D, env. 4, ACL.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Réfutation du jugement du Gand, Jurisprudence Farde 10, S24D, env. 2, ACL, pp. 1-2.

OCL's solicitor about the issue of the success of the representation meaning it belonged to the public domain, he stated 'This would deprive all the great artists, those whose work is admired by all, and would favour mediocrity.'⁹⁰ Céline had not only invented a profound spiritual metaphor in the crucifix and roses then, but was a 'great artist' who took a place alongside the masters. The Vitalie et Fontana trial had been an important exercise in self-fashioning, and even once it was lost, de Bercegol capitalised on it to continue to put forward a view of the unrivalled importance of Céline's work. The outcome of the case was certainly frustrating, but in its playing out the Carmel's self-image is revealed. Here we find the OCL trying to use the law to establish the crucifix and roses as a trademark and, through this, establish control over the representation of Thérèse. But the OCL and the Carmel did not only use formal legal proceedings to try to establish this control, and in several cases in Hungary and Germany in the late 1920s they used more subtle techniques of persuasion. Just as in the Belgian legal cases, they used the infringement of their rights as an opportunity for self-fashioning and the stipulation of authority in the matter of Thérèse's representation.

Weisz Frigyes, Korda and The Hungarian *Contrefaçons*

In 1928 the Carmel and the OCL clashed with another maker of counterfeit statues, but this was a very different situation from the Vitalie et Fontana case. This producer was operating in Hungary, in a different cultural context from nearby Belgium, and they were not commercial manufacturers, but another religious organisation. This was a devotional products manufacturer called Korda, which was run by nuns and had a priest as its director, and they were found to be producing statues without authorisation. Here, the terms of the debate had entirely shifted – this was not a money-making, secular business, but a religious foundation which, while they may well have been profiting financially, could also be expected to have an interest in spreading devotion to the saint. The OCL had already taken steps to protect their works in Hungary some years before this case began. A Budapest-based company, Weisz Frigyes, had been recommended to them by the Provincial of the Hungarian Carmelites, and in November 1925 they gave them a five year contract for the exclusive right to sell their devotional items in Hungary.⁹¹ All their statues of Thérèse were to be sold with the OCL's registered trademark stamped on them, giving them what

⁹⁰ DB/ML 18/11/1927, S24D, env. 4, ACL.

⁹¹ DB/WF 12/11/1925, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

de Bercegol called the ‘seal of authenticity’.⁹² But the use of the trademark did not prevent infringement of the Carmel’s property rights in Hungary, and in early 1928, Korda’s unauthorised activities were discovered by Weisz Frigyes. Korda protested that they were ‘a Catholic, ecclesiastical establishment’,⁹³ but this did not prevent the OCL from taking steps to launch a legal case against them – the OCL and the Carmel viewed a violation of their rights as a matter for the law whether the offenders were members of the clergy or not.

Despite their determination to pursue the Korda case, the Carmel found that, unlike the earlier cases launched against secular companies, where they acted with complete autonomy, they were hindered by the internal politics of the Catholic Church. In March 1928 the Provincial of the Hungarian Carmelites, Fr. Brocardus, wrote to the Carmel to intervene in this ‘*very delicate and very urgent business*’, urging the Carmel to immediately desist in the case.⁹⁴ He wrote:

In consideration that Jewish journalists are seizing on this with joy and using it to make a scandal, which will certainly be damaging to the very widespread devotion to the little Thérèse across Hungary, also indeed for the reputation of the Hungarian Carmelites, I ask that the Reverend Mother Prioress intercede to forbid the progress of this trial *by telegram*.⁹⁵

A certain Dr Arnold Pataky, a university professor in Budapest, wrote to the Carmel in the same month to argue Korda’s case, the director of the company being a friend of his, and he expressed very similar sentiments, saying that the case would have ‘very detrimental consequences’ and that ‘the anti-religious newspapers (above all, Jewish ones)’ would publish damaging articles, saying ‘I fear such articles from the Jewish papers would be very quickly published in the international press.’⁹⁶ The Provincial of the Hungarian Jesuits made another point when he also became involved, writing to the Carmel in March 1928 that ‘in Hungary we are not accustomed to seeing ecclesiastics appear before judges in such cases – it is feared that this trial will not have favourable repercussions for the Church and for religion.’⁹⁷ In a letter written a few weeks later, he reasserted that a ‘trial in the name of the Office Central before secular judges’ was highly undesirable and that he would arrange a hearing before ecclesiastical judges if they so wished.⁹⁸

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ K/PHJ 23/03/1928, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

⁹⁴ B/MA 03/03/1928, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ AP/MA 03/03/1928, S24D, env. 9, ACL. See also his later letters AP/MA 12/03/1928 and AP/MA 23/03/1928, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

⁹⁷ PHJ/MA 03/03/1928, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

⁹⁸ PHJ/CdeL 23/03/1928, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

With the Hungarian Catholic world clearly feeling that a united front had to be presented to the enemies of their faith, and being of the opinion that a legal conflict between two religious institutions in the secular courts couldn't be countenanced, and the OCL and Carmel were now in an extremely uncomfortable position.

The Reaction of the Carmel and the Conclusion of the Korda Case

The OCL's first line of defence in countering the criticisms levelled against them for launching the case against Korda was to put as great a distance between themselves, and their commercial activities, and the Carmel as possible. Raymond de Bercegol replied to the letter from Fr. Brocardus, which had in fact been addressed to Mère Agnès, stating 'First of all, you should know that the Carmel, not wanting to engage in commerce, have entrusted the issuing of their books, images and statues to an independent company, "the Office Central de Lisieux"', and that it was 'this company (and not the Carmel)' who were handling matters in Hungary.⁹⁹ In his letter, de Bercegol also protested at 'the injustice of the situation' from Weisz Frigyes' point of view as the OCL's official agents, and asked 'How could we not pursue such a call to justice?', but stated that, at the request of the Carmel, they had contacted their Hungarian agents to halt the case, claiming 'we have confused this company which, you say, is religious, with the other, unscrupulous *contrefacteurs*.'¹⁰⁰ When the Carmel subsequently wrote to the Provincial of the Hungarian Jesuits' directly, they remained extremely defiant. They asserted:

It is certainly regrettable for religion that such disagreements should arise between Catholics or religious... But is it not also more detrimental to the honour of the same religion that an ecclesiastical firm should put itself in the position – by grave infringements of the rights and of the property of others – of deserving this just prosecution?¹⁰¹

The Carmel were certainly scandalised and, deprived of their day in court, they demanded that reparation be made in an out of court settlement. Korda proved intractable, and eventually Weisz Frigyes wrote to the Carmel to discourage them from pursuing the recovery of damages any further, fearing the scandal the case may still cause.¹⁰² They also articulated to the Carmel, perhaps the first time that anyone had done so, the view that the faithful were naturally attracted to cheaper imitation statues, clearly suggesting that the Carmel could not expect to fight such market

⁹⁹ MB/B 13/03/1928, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ CdeL/PHJ 30/03/1928, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

¹⁰² WF/MA 30/05/1928, S24D, env. 9, ACL. See also K/PHJ 23/03/1928 S24D, env. 9, ACL.

forces.¹⁰³ In mid-1928 a company called Raffl also started selling unauthorised statues abroad,¹⁰⁴ but they were not pursued and this suggests that, with the Vitalie case still going on and the Korda case having ended in the OCL having to desist, it was becoming clear that such cases of the pirating of representations of Thérèse, whether the *contrefacteurs* were religious organisations or secular businesses, were almost impossible to prosecute successfully.

'Portraits clandestins': Images and the German *Contrefacteurs*

When the Carmel faced *contrefaçons* in Germany the issues at stake were of a rather different nature from those encountered in the cases of pirated statues. Images of Thérèse, and particularly photographs, were being reproduced without the permission of the OCL, and the ideas about physical resemblance that we encountered in chapters 2 and 4 once again came into play – here the dialogue is one of accurate representation rather than ownership. The OCL had already established an agent in Germany – Verlag der Schulbrüder, the publishing arm of the teaching order of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian School, based in Kirnach-Villingen, Baden. Brother Michael Zimmer of the organisation had been charged with looking after the OCL's commercial affairs in Germany, and had personally gained the rights to the German translation of *Histoire d'une âme*.¹⁰⁵ Brother Michael acted as a lookout for potential violations of the OCL's rights in the region, but often dealt with the Carmel directly. In May 1926 he wrote to the convent to alert them to the appearance of four images of Thérèse in the publication *Die kleine, weisse Blume von Lisieux*, produced by the Carmelite Fathers of Linz, Austria.¹⁰⁶ Brother Michael's position as a 'spy' was not always an easy role to play however, and he added here 'I ask you... not to tell Linz that it was our house who warned you. Otherwise the situation would be very difficult for us.'¹⁰⁷ In another case Brother Michael sent two holy cards produced in Strasbourg to the Carmel, both showing a glow-in-the-dark reworking of 'Thérèse *aux roses*', and the Carmel described these as 'German horrors' in an accompanying note (see figure 5.12).¹⁰⁸ Some cards published by Verlag der Waisenanstalt, a publisher based in Lorraine, showing crude copies of 'Thérèse *aux roses*' and the '*buste ovale*' were annotated by the Carmel with the words 'Again, two

¹⁰³ WF/MA 30/05/1928, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

¹⁰⁴ Undated notes on Weisz Frigyes and Raffl, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

¹⁰⁵ CdeL/FR 29/01/1929, S24D, env. 8, ACL.

¹⁰⁶ VS/CdeL 07/05/1926, S24D, env. 8, ACL.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ S24D, env. 8, ACL.

horrors to fight!!’ (see figures 5.13-5.14).¹⁰⁹ Meanwhile, the Carmelites of Regensburg produced a small booklet with a pirated version of ‘Thérèse aux roses’ on the cover in 1925 (figure 5.15).¹¹⁰ The bastardisation of their creative images was obviously of concern to the Carmel, but the problem of the copying of their photographs was perhaps more troubling, as the following case suggests.

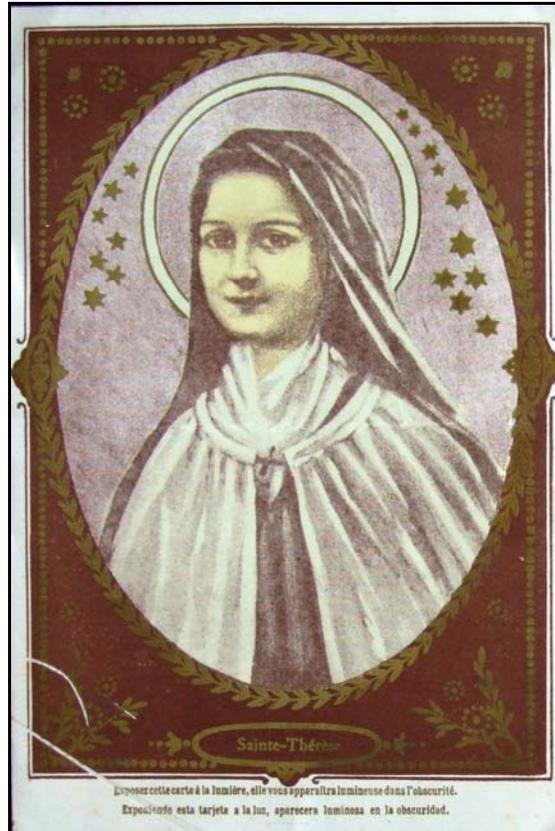


Figure 5.12. One of the ‘German horrors’ – a glow-in-the-dark card produced in Strasbourg, c. 1925.
Source: S24D, env. 8, ACL.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

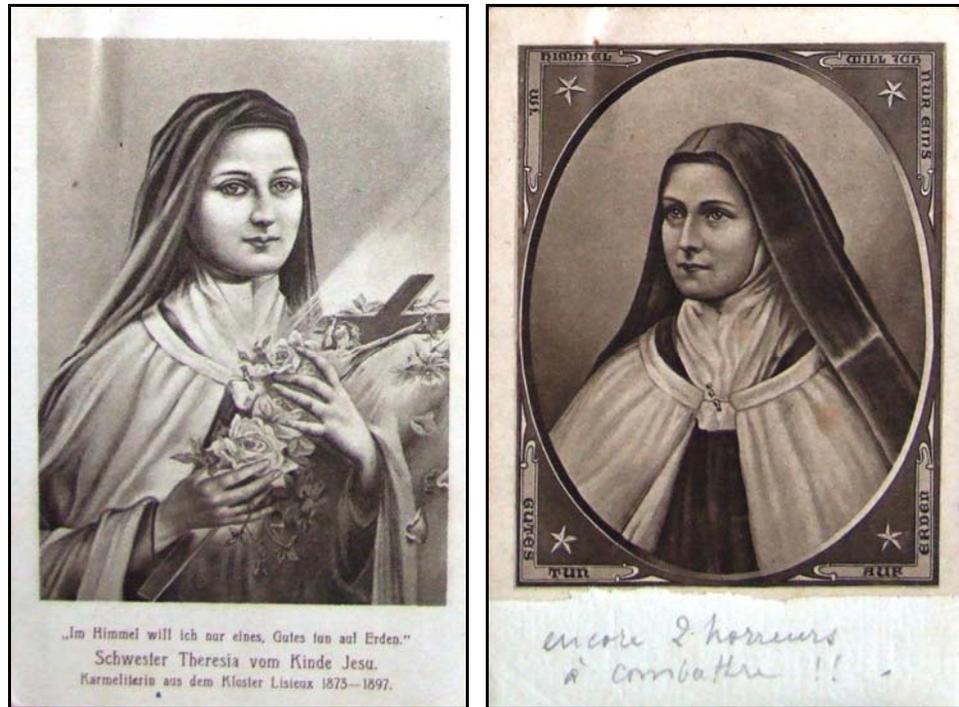


Figure 5.13-5.14. Holy cards produced by Verlag der Waisenanstalt, Lorraine, c. 1925. Source: S24D, env. 8, ACL.

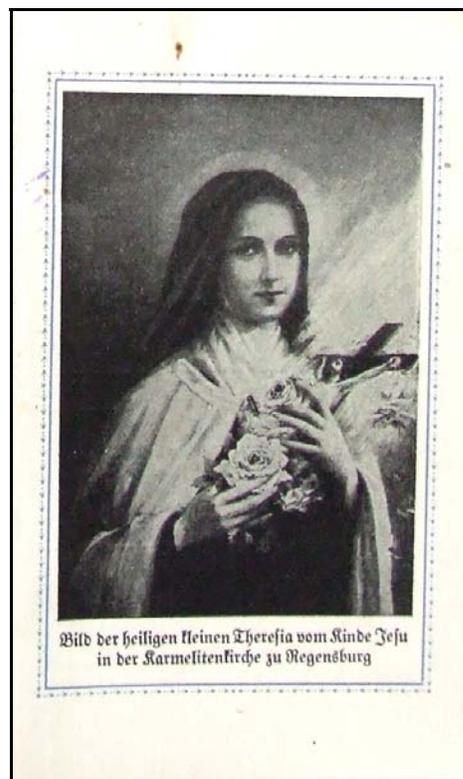


Figure 5.15. Image on the cover of a booklet produced by the Carmelites of Regensburg, 1925. Source: S24D, env. 8, ACL.

'Skapulier', Photographs and the Reimeringer Case

The Carmel's photographs of Thérèse were in heavy circulation throughout Europe by the 1920s, some having been 'leaked' by the Guérin family, as we saw in chapter 2, and others being reprinted in more or less retouched and adapted form from the few photographs the Carmel had published itself, including in the books examined in chapter 4.¹¹¹ One of the first prominent illegal uses of a photograph of Thérèse in Germany was also by a religious *contrefacteur*, as had been the case in Hungary. The German magazine *Skapulier*, produced by German Carmelites, published a photograph of Thérèse in its June/July 1925 issue without the permission of the Carmel of Lisieux. The photograph showed the third pose in the 'Thérèse *aux images*' series of photographs, but the image had been printed back to front, considerably elongated and retouched and the background had been changed (see figure 5.16).¹¹² This image, as well as an altered version of the photograph which had been the inspiration for the 'buste ovale',¹¹³ was being circulated as a holy card in Germany at this time (figure 5.16). While *Skapulier* later promised to print no further illicit images,¹¹⁴ this was not to be the end of the case. In January 1929 Franz Reimeringer, a Berlin-based theologian, director of the third order Carmelites in the city and editor of *Das Innere Leben*, the tertiaries' regular religious publication, also fell foul of the Carmel. He was known to the convent, having previously written to them to ask for the sisters' prayers, being sent an image of Thérèse autographed by the three Martin sisters in response. But the liberties he took with the image of Thérèse that had been reproduced in *Skapulier* were not looked upon favourably by the Carmel. Having obtained a first class relic of Thérèse in 1925, he copied the image from the magazine and touched this relic to all the copies, which were promptly distributed. Reimeringer had created an icon-like image through the contact with the relic – he had imbued the image with power of its original, and this sanctioning of an image that the Carmel certainly disapproved of, through the relic and, by extension, by the saint herself, was highly alarming to the Carmel. Brother Michael of Verlag der Schulbrüder promptly wrote to Reimeringer to try to stop this practice, which Reimeringer later explained was 'purely apostolic', and threatened him with legal action. But Reimeringer had some standing in the Catholic world, and was not going to take this

¹¹¹ See Photos circulants avant l'édition, ED Vrai Visage, env. 1, ACL, showing the wide variety of retouched, cropped and otherwise altered images that were circulating.

¹¹² See page from *Skapulier*, June/July 1925, S24D, env. 8, ACL.

¹¹³ Photograph 9, Appendix 2.

¹¹⁴ CdeL/FR 29/01/1929, S24D, env. 8, ACL.

censure of an action he felt to be a propagation of devotion to Thérèse, and a wholly virtuous act, without an argument.

In a letter to the Carmel, Reimeringer revealed his views on the representation of Saint Thérèse. Believing the *Skapulier* photograph, in its impression of stark realism, to be preferable to the Saint-Sulpician images the Carmel were circulating, he wrote that ‘very often this little saint, who was so extraordinary, is subject to a commercialism that is very undignified.’¹¹⁵ Referring to images that had been ‘tampered’ with, he stated that they ‘truly do no honour to this Little White Flower, nor the Carmel, nor the Church’ and questioned the production of images ‘that don’t correspond with reality.’¹¹⁶ Reimeringer marks himself out as someone concerned with the religious debasement of Thérèse here, like the figures examined in chapter 4, and was clearly well satisfied of the guiltlessness of his position when compared to the commercial makers of religious kitsch. However, he had prepared the ground for the Carmel in suggesting that the image he had reproduced was an authentic likeness, and in the convent’s response, they destroyed this idea utterly. They wrote:

The image that you have submitted is not only not a true portrait of Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus, but horribly deforms the sweet expression that the good God gave to the face of our dear Saint. This print, we must confess to you, has given *much pain* to Our Reverend Mother and her sisters, who cannot find the features of their holy little sisters in it *at all*. The nuns of our convent who were contemporaries of Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus also declare that they don’t recognise it.¹¹⁷

The call to the sisters’ authority in the matter of Thérèse’s representation, as well as the emotional appeal to the personal hurt such images caused, were a powerful deterrent here, and the alleged authenticity of the image is destroyed. With this letter the Carmel included the ‘*portrait authentique*’, so that Reimeringer could make his own comparison, but since this could only be the clearly idealised ‘*buste ovale*’, one wonders what he must have thought to have been offered this alternative in earnest. The letter concluded with the suggestion that Reimeringer could make his own ‘allegorical portrait’ of the saint ‘*but not one that copies or plagiarises those of the Office Central.*’¹¹⁸ He replied a few days later, apologetic ‘for having caused annoyance to [Thérèse’s] sisters in flesh and religion’ and confirming he had burned the offending images.¹¹⁹ With the authenticity of the

¹¹⁵ FR/MA 24/01/1929, S24D, env. 8, ACL.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ CdeL/FR 29/01/1929, S24D, env. 8, ACL.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ FR/MA 09/02/1929, S24D, env. 8, ACL.

images discredited, Reimeringer capitulated instantly, showing both the power of the idea of the authentic and how useful it was for the Carmel as a tool to maintain control over Thérèse's representation.



Figure 5.16. Pirated, retouched photographs circulated in Germany. Left: The photograph reproduced in *Skapulier* in its June/ July 1925 issue and subsequently circulated by Franz Reimeringer. Source: S24D, env. 8, ACL.

The Rights of the Author into the 1940s and 50s

Although no record survives in the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux of any case being launched against *contrefacteurs* after the abortive Korda case of 1928, the Carmel and the OCL continued to take an interest in the illegal use of the images well into the 1950s. A note from the late 1940s in the Archives lists seven companies accused of reproducing photographs of Thérèse illegally, some based in Calvados, others in Asnières and Rouen and some as far away as Holland.¹²⁰ None of these companies appear to have been pursued for damages. The Archives also hold a catalogue issued by Jean Le Marigny of La Seyne, a maker of liturgical items, and he listed a number of items in this catalogue of May 1947, which the Carmel viewed as *contrefaçons*, including

¹²⁰ Adresses photographes reproductions-plagiats, S24D, env. 7, ACL.

two different plaster plaques for wall-mounting and a 17cm bust of Thérèse.¹²¹ In their dealings with other companies, the OCL remained brusque when they thought their rights were being threatened. They turned down flat Éditions Raymon's request to produce Theresian products in May 1951,¹²² and when Éditions Pierre Perrée of rue Saint Sulpice wrote to the Carmel on 12 October 1950 to ask permission to produce images of Thérèse,¹²³ the OCL responded on the convent's behalf, writing: 'We are indeed astonished at the content of your letter... In fact, that the artist and yourself have not taken account of the provenance of the original of your copy is something that is more or less staggering.'¹²⁴ In July 1952 the OCL wrote to the director of the religious articles company Palais du Rosaire, based in Lourdes, about another copyright infringement. The letter stated: 'We are astonished to see on sale in Lisieux the card No. 4 Lisieux – Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus... this card is a copy of our card, a reproduction of a tableau by Céline Martin... the Office Central is sole franchise holder to the rights of [this] author'¹²⁵ (see figure 5.17). Two days later the Director of Palais du Rosaire responded in capitulation.¹²⁶ The fact that such violations of their rights were being combated over twenty-five years after the first *contrefaçon* case shows just how seriously the Carmel and the OCL took maintaining control of their images of Thérèse, devoting considerable energy to it over a period of decades.

¹²¹ Price list for Jean Le Marigny, 1 May 1947, S24D, env. 7, ACL.

¹²² OCL/Éditions Raymon 21/05/1951, S24D, env. 7, ACL.

¹²³ Éditions Pierre Perrée/MA 12/10/1950, S24D, env. 7, ACL.

¹²⁴ OCL/Éditions Pierre Perrée 30/10/1950, S24D, env. 7, ACL.

¹²⁵ OCL/PR 03/07/1952, S24D, env. 7, ACL.

¹²⁶ PR/OCL 05/07/1952, S24D, env. 7, ACL.

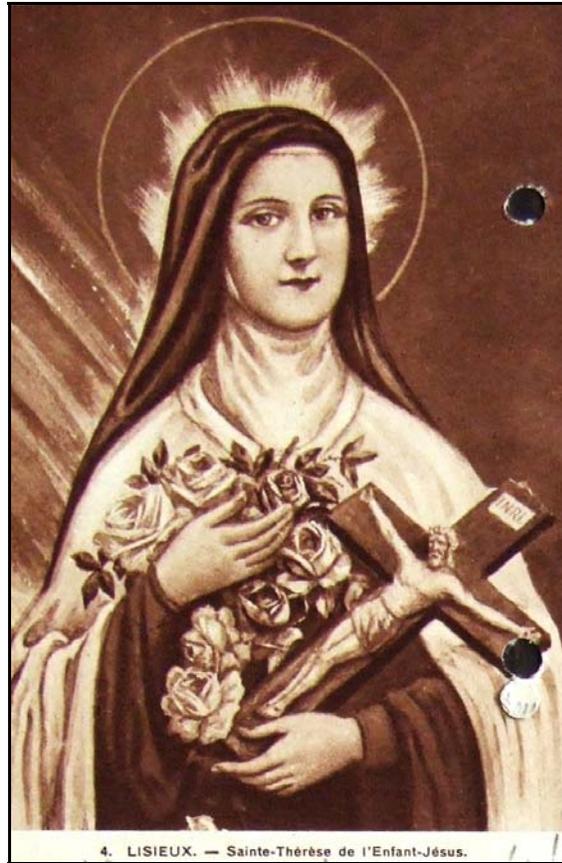


Figure 5.17. Image of Thérèse produced by the Palais de Rosaire, Lourdes, c. 1952. Source: S24D, env. 7, ACL.

Conclusion: The Proliferation of the Image and the Figure of the Artist

There is little doubt that the production of *contrefaçons* was upsetting to the Martin sisters, and the proliferation of crude copies of her images could only have been distressing to Céline, who felt so strongly about the value of her work and of the devotion it promoted. Even from the very earliest days of the cult the sisters resented the existence of poor-quality commercial images of Thérèse which attempted to copy their own. In a letter to Léonie of mid-1913, Marie stated:

If you knew of the bad taste items that are sent to us. In England, they make a statue of Thérèse which does not resemble her at all. Someone else has made a statue of Thérèse lying dead. Mgr. de Teil, who showed us a photograph of it, said that it is worthy of a Mason.¹²⁷

The purpose of this letter was to castigate Léonie for having criticised some of Céline's images, and it is instructive that the *contrefaçons*, figured as crude and religiously-disinterested productions, could be used to throw the authenticity of Céline's images into relief. In these cases Céline's

¹²⁷ MSC/FTh 16/07/1913, ACL.

works were defined against the *contrefaçons*, marking them out as ‘originals’ and the only authentic representations. Indeed, the prosecution of the *contrefaçon* cases, even though they all eventually failed, did not so much have the effect of marking these illegal representations out as fakes, but rather of highlighting Céline’s images as the ultimate representations of Thérèse. However, the cases also seem to have been driven by a personal desire for control of the image on the part of the Martin sisters, and they show just how profoundly the sisters’ personalities shaped the history of the cult of Saint Thérèse. In trying to claim the crucifix and roses as a trademark, the Carmel tried to keep not only the most commercially successful, but also the allegedly most religiously authentic mode of representation of the saint for their exclusive use. Indeed, the emblem was seen by Céline as nothing less than the communicator of the ‘little way’, and of great spiritual value, yet she still sought to restrict its use. The recovery of financial losses does not seem to have been the principal motivation for these cases, as might be expected,¹²⁸ and in fact the *contrefaçons* mattered to the Carmel because they symbolised the slipping away of Thérèse from the sisters’ complete control, just as the books examined in chapter 4, appearing at the same time as some of these cases, saw the claiming of Thérèse by constituencies outside the Carmel, and had to be combated. These cases were an attempt to maintain control of the image and preserve the Celinian Thérèse, even if it meant that people like Franz Reimeringer, who were actively trying to propagate the cult, were prevented from spreading the word about the ‘little way’.

In these legal cases the law emerges as a powerful instrument of cultural legitimization of the Carmel’s images, providing an opportunity for the articulation of their authenticity, even if legal redress was not achieved. In the case of the German photographic *contrefaçons*, there was an opportunity to assert the sisters’ authority on the matter of Thérèse’s real physical appearance once again, and in the case of the statues, the crucifix and roses were marked out as the visual symbol of Thérèse’s essential spirituality – one that had been created by her saintly sister and was, therefore, unique. Indeed, paradoxically, the proliferation of images of Thérèse and the use of her representations by constituencies outside the Carmel allowed Céline’s original artworks to be marked out as the product of genuine spiritual insight and artistic endeavour. French copyright law, enshrining the concept of the ‘*œuvre de l’esprit*’, supported Céline’s own conception of her artworks as the unique products of genuine artistic endeavour, as examined in chapter 2. The legal

¹²⁸ See the brief mention of recouping money for the building of the basilica, undated note from de Bercegol on Weisz Frigyes, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

cases saw her mentioned by name, and the statements on the cases that the Carmel circulated (most notably, *A propos des contrefaçons* of 1926) also emphasised her role as artist. The mass production of alternative representations of Thérèse and the production of bastardised versions of a foundational original made the artist's unique toil all the more important, creating 'fakes' against which the genuine article could be defined more strongly. The creation of this 'whole paradise of polychrome plaster saints'¹²⁹ allowed Céline to be marked out as a rarefied creative genius, and the only artist with the knowledge of both Thérèse's soul and physical appearance that made the production of a truly religiously valuable representation of her possible.

¹²⁹ Michel Tournier, 'La jeune fille et la mort', *Le coq de bruyère* (Paris, 1980), p. 195 [original publication, 1978].

Conclusion

'The real picture of the real saint': The Legacy of the Martin Sisters

On the morning of 25 February 1959 Céline Martin died, two months short of her ninetieth birthday (see figure 9).¹ Her decline had lasted two and a half months, during which time she was ever mindful of her sister's own long, drawn-out death. Some sixty years earlier, tending to Thérèse on her deathbed, Céline had said to her 'You are my ideal, and this ideal I shall never be able to reach.'² After the death of her sister and spiritual exemplar, Céline spent the remaining six decades of her life trying to depict this ideal, moulding and fixing her sister's popular representation, as explored in chapter 2. As a didactic example and an embodiment of the hopes and values of the Catholic faithful, the Celinian Thérèse became an icon – one which, following her successful promotion in the marketplace of popular devotion, as we saw in chapter 3, dominated for half a century. But Céline's death, on the threshold of what was to be a decade of rejection of established ideals and revolutionary change within the Catholic Church, was to be decisive for the direction of the Theresian image, and Céline's Thérèse – that typified by 'Thérèse aux roses' – fell from its position of dominance. We saw in chapter 4 how the image of her sister as Céline had seen her, what has been referred to as 'the "Saint-Sulpician" image of a saint with doe-eyes',³ was attacked, and in chapter 5 we saw the proliferation of representations of the saint outside the control of the Carmel. In both cases the Carmel took the opportunity to put forward robust defences of their images and define Céline as the sole producer of the authentic Theresian iconography. However, Céline's death marked a rapid and dramatic change in the Carmel's approach to the representation of Thérèse – the image she had worked so hard to craft and safeguard was no longer defended and the Celinian Thérèse, while not disappearing altogether, was implicitly challenged by the convent itself for the first time.

¹ See her obituary in *Paris Match*: Robert Serrou, 'Sainte Thérèse a maintenant tous les siens au ciel', *Paris Match*, 518, 14 March 1959, pp. 92-7.

² Sœur Geneviève, *Conseils et Souvenirs*, p. 187.

³ Langlois, 'Photographier des Saintes', p. 266.



Figure 9. Céline laid out for burial, with a statue of Saint Thérèse looking over her. Source: Album famille Martin, ACL.

The Release of 'Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux'

Just eight months after Céline's death, the Carmel were making preparations for the publication of all the extant photographs of Thérèse in their rawest form and this was a clear break with the attitude to Thérèse's representation that the convent had previously displayed. In October 1959 an advertisement appeared in *La Semaine Religieuse de Paris*, asking for any original photographs of the saint to be sent to the Carmel, so that they may contribute to a publication that would be 'definitive in a rather controversial area'.⁴ When the book finally appeared in 1961, titled simply *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux*, a very different representation from Céline's images was revealed. Here was a diversity of faces, contrasting sharply with the standardised Celinian representation: the intelligent-looking eight year old; the chubby-faced fifteen year old novice; the vivacious young religious; the serious, mature professed nun; the drawn and suffering young woman. Here was a new Thérèse for a new age – a much more complex figure than had ever been thought, whose very complexity was her appeal, and who some, as seen in chapter 4, had been hankering after ever since the canonisation. Indeed, *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* was welcomed

⁴ Photographies Inédites de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus - Un appel du Carmel de Lisieux, ED Vrai Visage, env. 1, ACL.

warmly by Thérèse's devotees, and letters replete with fulsome praise were sent to the Carmel. The Abbot of the Abbey of Sainte-Marie-du-Désert, Haute-Garonne, commented on 'this energetic face of your little sister' that was revealed,⁵ while a Parisian nun wrote of her delight in seeing the 'real smile of the little Saint', calling the book 'a magnificent poem to the truth'.⁶ A certain Canon Blouet wrote that 'The light veil of mist which has separated us from this great saint is now definitively dispelled.'⁷ The release of the photographs finally satisfied the 'irresistible desire to know the real Thérèse behind the retouched writings and portraits [that] rose up between the two wars' that René Laurentin has identified.⁸

The engaging and characterful portraits that appeared in *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* corresponded to a new paradigm for the saint – one of authentic spirituality – and it fitted Thérèse's nascent rehabilitation as a theological innovator and spiritual writer of genius, seen in the work of André Combes, amongst others. Their release was part of a general 'return to the documents' for the cult, where the photograph became considered as 'the equivalent of an authentic "document"'.⁹ Indeed, the volume of photographs was produced by François de Sainte-Marie, the Carmelite father with whom Céline had worked to produce the *Manuscrits autobiographiques* – the complete, unedited version of *Histoire d'une âme* – and the book was conceived of as an answer to the feeling that 'The true text calls for the true face.'¹⁰ Céline's original compositions could not hope to survive this onslaught of alternative photographic representations, the photograph being seen as 'truly an "original" in relation to any other graphic production.'¹¹ These photographs which, as Bernard Gouley points out 'had served [Céline] as models for the Theresian images that she had "controlled" for fifty years',¹² were now undermining those images that had been, for her, the far superior representations. Here, in the year before the opening of the Second Vatican Council, the cult of Thérèse had made a definitive shift away from the old articulations of piety towards a new style of devotion.

Robert Orsi has commented that 'Catholic sacred culture before the 1960s was above all a culture of embodiment, of *presence* in bodies and things. God was present on the altar, in the

⁵ Abbot of the Abbey of Sainte-Marie-du-Désert/CdeL 07/06/1961, ED Vrai Visage, env. 1, ACL.

⁶ Marie de la Croix/CdeL 10/06/1961, ED Vrai Visage, env. 1, ACL.

⁷ Canon Blouet/CdeL 01/06/1961, ED Vrai Visage, env. 1, ACL.

⁸ Laurentin and Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 10.

⁹ Langlois, 'Photographier des Saintes', p. 262.

¹⁰ Inside jacket of François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage*.

¹¹ Langlois, 'Photographier des Saintes', p. 262.

¹² Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 207.

Communion wafers, on people's tongues, in the sign of the cross.'¹³ In the early 1960s, the cult of Saint Thérèse was making the move from the 'thingness' of portraits, and all the material culture that went with them, to the document of the photograph – the former was experience and representation, the latter information and fact.¹⁴ Claude Langlois has asserted that 'the collective release of the photographs was profited on to denounce the insipid images of piety, disseminated in their millions'.¹⁵ Indeed, in a promotional article in *Paris Match*, an exclusive which printed some of the photographs from *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* in advance of its publication, 'all the "Theresian" horrors' were denounced.¹⁶ Two years after the release of the book Catholic historian Henri Daniel-Rops referred to the original photographs and railed against Thérèse's Saint-Sulpician depiction, believing it responsible for the erroneous but common belief that 'on the path of sanctity on which she advanced, Thérèse always walked on a carpet of roses.'¹⁷ The rejection of the Celinian Thérèse was also to affect the *chapelle de la Châsse* – the topic with which this thesis began. The jewelled robe which Thérèse's effigy wore was removed and replaced with a plain Carmelite habit and the statues of angels which surrounded the *gisant*, and which Henri Ghéon had taken such exception to (see chapter 4) were taken away.¹⁸ The 'marmorealized woman'¹⁹ was being presented in a more realistic manner – more like a historical personality than a rarefied saint. But while the key representation of Thérèse at the site of her relics was changed to reflect the new mode of her depiction, confirming the rapid changes that were taking place in the cult, the reliquary in the Basilique Sainte-Thérèse, containing bones from Thérèse's right arm (the arm she wrote *Histoire d'une âme* with), was still decorated with 'Thérèse aux roses' and copies of scenes of her life that Céline had commissioned during her artistic heyday. These included adaptations of the images showing her throwing rose petals at the courtyard crucifix and writing in her cell that had appeared in *Vie en images* (see Appendix 2). Despite the move towards the dominance of the

¹³ Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 55.

¹⁴ See Barthes on the photograph being viewed as 'an emanation of *past reality*', possessing a power to naturalise cultural messages. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London, 1984), p. 88.

¹⁵ Langlois, 'Photographier des Saintes', p. 265.

¹⁶ François de Sainte-Marie OCD and Robert Serrou, 'Ste Thérèse Retrouvée Vivante', *Paris Match*, 610, 17 December 1960, p. 140. See also: François Delteil, 'Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux', *Vie Thérésienne*, 4 (October 1961), pp. 41-2; P. Joseph André, 'Portrait de la Petite Thérèse', *Vie Thérésienne*, 5 (January, 1962), pp. 22-31; Paul-André Lesort, 'Vrai Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux', *Les Annales de Sainte Thérèse*, 38, 2 (1962), pp. 6-29.

¹⁷ See Henri Daniel-Rops, *L'Église des Révolutions*, 2, pp. 867-77.

¹⁸ See additional note, RTAG, p. 97.

¹⁹ Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*, p. 200.

photographs, Céline was continuing to shape her sister's representation at the very site of her body – Céline's Thérèse was weakened, but in fact lived on.

The UK Relics Tour, the Question of the 'Real' Image and the Persistence of Céline's Influence

The fact that the release of *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* did not mark the definitive end of the Celinian Thérèse was highlighted during the visit of the relics of Saint Thérèse to the UK in late 2009. Here it was also apparent that the controversy over the saint's depiction has not yet been concluded either, and the search for the 'true' face of Saint Thérèse goes on. Between mid-September and mid-October 2009 the relics of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux toured England and Wales, visiting twenty-two locations, from the Notting Hill Carmel to Wormwood Scrubs prison, in her first visit to Britain.²⁰ The tour received a great deal of press and television coverage, and here concerns about the commercialism of the event emerged, with some commentators portraying it as characterised by a circus-like frivolity and an unseemly emphasis on the retailing of religion. Author Simon Jenkins suggested the whole enterprise was essentially fake, referring to the tour as a 'show', and emphasising the sale of 'St. Thérèse keyrings, purses, figurines and fridge magnets'.²¹ Journalist Matthew Parris went to visit the relics at Westminster Cathedral and commented that inside the building 'Something like a shopfront faced me: Candles £1 – Roses £1.'²² Thérèse, in her undoubted popularity amongst the ordinary faithful, was acting as an *agent provocateur* in the ongoing debate about the role of religion in British public life, a debate fully revived during the papal visit to Britain of September 2010, and here, as in the biographies of over eighty years ago that we examined in chapter 4, unease about the relationship between commerce and religion again emerged.²³

But the representation of the saint was also at issue in this debate, revealing essential concerns about not only authentic religious practice, but the authentic image. Many commentators expressed concern about the trustworthiness of the displayed images of the saint. John Walsh, in a

²⁰ On the tour see Harris, 'Bone Idol?'

²¹ Simon Jenkins, 'Let the credulous kiss their relics. It's no weirder than idolising Beckham', *The Guardian*, 17 September 2009 < <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/sep/17/st-therese-relics-wormwood-scrubs> > [accessed 21 January 2010].

²² Matthew Parris, 'In the cathedral I saw a sign. God help us', *The Times*, 15 October 2009 <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/matthew_parris/article6875245.ece> [accessed 31 December 2010].

²³ See also Cool, 'Sainte Thérèse trahie par sa sœur': 'At Lisieux, the traditional battery of Sulpician items always attracts the pilgrim. But new products emerge', including CDs of Thérèse's poetry, and video tapes of the centenary celebrations.

disparaging comment piece on the tour, wrote that ‘Idealised paintings tend to emphasise her rosebud mouth and soft hands, forever clutching blown roses, though contemporary photographs reveal a tougher-look babe, with a granite jaw and razor-blade lips.’²⁴ Here again was a contrasting of the Celinian images with the photographs by a critic of the cult – the debate about Thérèse’s representation goes on. However, it was not just critics of religion who discussed the images in such tones. Senior figures of the Church also revealed ambivalence about the standard images of the saint. In the homily given when the relics arrived at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King in Liverpool on the ninth day of the visit, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Liverpool, Vincent Malone, mentioned images of the saint:

What’s the point of these relics? There is a well-known picture of Saint Thérèse – you’ll see it on some of the literature in the cathedral today. I hope it’s a good likeness. I fear it may have been touched up a little in a way we now take for granted, but would not have been so common in the early days of photography. But if we could have the real picture of the real saint in real colour, I think we’d happily put it in the best frame we could make and feel that somehow it brought us close to her – especially if there was only one copy and no one was allowed to reproduce it. We have here today not primarily such a picture of Saint Thérèse but some physical remains of the actual body God gave her, in which she served him. No one may make a copy of them; they are unique. They are housed in the best reliquary we can make, because, as something that makes us feel very close to the person we honour, they are irreplaceably precious.²⁵

The Bishop evokes a veronica-like image of Thérèse here – the ‘real picture of the real saint’ – an image as authentic as the relics themselves.²⁶ The available images are suggested to fall short of this ideal, having been subject to a modern process of ‘faking’, provoking anxieties about their anachronistic inauthenticity. Throughout the tour the reliquary was accompanied by an icon of Thérèse by Spanish artist Guillem Ramos-Poquí, commissioned by the Discalced Carmelites of England and Wales especially for the tour, and the Bishop stood before this as he gave his homily (see figure 10). Based on Thérèse’s appearance in a group photograph of the community of the Carmel taken in 1895,²⁷ it incorporated representations of the elements of Thérèse’s name in religion – the Child Jesus and the Holy Face. Although a creative image, this seemed to embody a

²⁴ John Walsh, ‘Saint Thérèse is visiting Wormwood Scrubs prison on her tour of England’, *The Independent*, 7 July 2009 <<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/columnists/john-walsh/john-walsh-Isquosaint-therese-is-visiting-wormwood-scrubs-prison-on-her-tour-of-englandrsquo-1734268.html>> [accessed 22 January 2010].

²⁵ Bishop Vincent Malone, Evening Prayer homily delivered at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool, 24 September 2009, reproduced in *The Relics of St. Thérèse of Lisieux*, p. 27.

²⁶ See also Keith Barltrop, ‘Through the visible to the invisible’, *The Tablet*, 27 September 2008, pp. 16-7.

²⁷ Photograph 18, Appendix 2.

‘serious’ approach to Thérèse as a nun and a Doctor of the Church, her spiritual preoccupations being emphasised and her face being given a more or less naturalistic appearance. This was an image that suited the Bishop’s words. However, very different representations of the saint were also present in the Cathedral that day.



Figure 10. Guillem Ramos-Poquí, ‘St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face’, 2009. Source: author’s collection.

Despite the insistence on the importance of the authenticity of the image and the highlighting of the possibilities for the fake in the Bishop’s homily, the images of Thérèse at the Metropolitan Cathedral during the relics visit were overwhelmingly Celinian ones. Most locations on the tour did not produce their own programme for the visit, rather handing out copies of a booklet produced for the relics visit by the Little Way Association, a London-based missionary charity.²⁸ This contained a total of sixteen images of Saint Thérèse. Of these, eleven were substantially original photographs. The photograph known as ‘Thérèse *au chapelet*’ was repeated three times and the ‘*cliché Gombault*’ twice.²⁹ The photograph of Thérèse at fifteen was printed

²⁸ *The Little Way Association Booklet*, issue 79.

²⁹ Photographs 37 and 6, Appendix 2.

back to front and all were printed as detail of the originals, and were fairly poor copies. The biggest images in the booklet, including three full-page prints, were all Céline's portraits or images produced under her direction. These were Annould's 'An evening at Alençon', Céline's 'Thérèse with harp', a version of her 'Thérèse *aux roses*', and her colour version of the '*buste ovale*', as well as Jouvenot's picture for *Vie en images* showing the adolescent Thérèse praying for the conversion of the murderer Pranzini. It was striking to see, amid much talk of the relevance of Thérèse to the problems of our age, these images which embody the pre-1960s Thérèse used so prominently, and the presence of the 'serious' icon, the photographs and the popular devotional images side by side indicates how contested the image of Thérèse still is. Indeed Thérèse Taylor has commented that, 'The cult of Saint Thérèse has become markedly post-modern, as different and incompatible representations of this individual are displayed simultaneously and enjoyed together.'³⁰

Céline's Thérèse is not dead. She still has currency in contemporary devotion to the saint and, further to this, is still a source of controversy. Céline's Thérèse persists both loosely in every representation that shows Thérèse with her traditional attributes, which is the vast majority of them, and directly in the persistent use of her images in popular publications, on postcards, on souvenir items, holy cards and in church decoration. Indeed, despite the Bishop's wariness about 'touched-up' images and the rejection of much of pre-Vatican II visual culture by the Church hierarchy, the portraits have continued to sell in the real marketplace of devotion and, as Thérèse Taylor has noted, 'Despite this energetic intellectual campaign, the Catholic masses have retained a taste for the artistic style of Céline Martin, and her portraits of Thérèse continue to circulate.'³¹ A post-modern rehabilitation of kitsch may be partly responsible for this, and Theresian expert Guy Gaucher has proclaimed himself 'often in agreement with the indignation' against Céline's images, but asserted that 'It is true that they do not lack charm and that in their "retro" aspect, so fashionable nowadays, they work quite well'.³² Céline's legacy has outlived that of Pauline, whose edited version of the autobiography has been out of circulation for fifty years, and her influence also lives on in the role she played in shaping her parent's legacy, who were beatified in 2008. She was not only a witness for the process, but did more than anyone to shape them as potential saints in the public imagination, providing portraits of them and working on publications with Stéphane-

³⁰ Taylor, 'Images of Sanctity', p. 286.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Guy Gaucher, 'Mon amour pour les images', *Thérèse de Lisieux*, 738 (1994), p. 6.

Joseph Piat that represented them as exemplars to the faithful.³³ It is Céline who should principally concern us when we look to the history of the cult of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, and this thesis has just begun to demonstrate the work to still be done on this topic.

The Continuing Search for the 'True Face' of the Saint

While Céline's portraits are still popular, the photographs are now also ubiquitous, and since the early 1960s the Church has exploited the realist, documentary quality of the photographs of Thérèse enthusiastically, their nature chiming exactly with the post-Vatican II aesthetic of the Church and they have become important images for late twentieth-century French visual culture. Thérèse's face in a handful of the most popular photographs³⁴ has become visual shorthand for her cult in the way that the crucifix and roses symbol used to fulfil this function. Céline's significance to the contemporary representation of Thérèse is again underscored by the fact that she was also the author of these photographs – she has influenced both the photographic and the creative images, which are considered as opposing representations. We saw in chapter 2 how Céline styled her photographs in the fashion of the times and posed Thérèse in modes that were no less influenced by the devotional art of the late nineteenth century than her original portraits. It is important to remember that photographs, particularly photographic portraits, are never 'pure' documentary sources, and that these photographs are as culturally subjective as the portraits of Thérèse are. When we see a photograph of Thérèse now, so often used to evoke a sense of her historical palpability, the black and white images connoting authenticity and realism, we are actually seeing another expression of the Celinian Thérèse.

Where the photographs are concerned, it can be asserted that there has been a making of a second 'mythical' Thérèse since their release, no less culturally constructed than the Celinian Thérèse. There has been a rise of a cult of authenticity, for which the photographs are the ultimate representations of the saint, and the nature of this cult is well illustrated by a plate in one of Guy Gaucher's recent popular books on the saint (see figure 11), which contrasts 'truth' (Thérèse's face in one of the photographs of her dressed as Joan of Arc), and 'fiction' (a brightly coloured copy of 'Thérèse *aux roses*'). The dominant, contemporary Thérèse is also well-represented by Kathryn Harrison's popular biography of the saint, informed by Freudian and feminist theory.

³³ See Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 190.

³⁴ Principally 2, 4, 14 (detail), 18 (detail), 37, 46, Appendix 2.

Here, Harrison states that ‘Unlike the posthumous portrait Céline would paint of her sister, the one that hides a face behind an emblem and that has contributed to the un-knowing of Thérèse, the photographs provide a means for those who doubt Thérèse to touch her wounds.’³⁵ Harrison fully rejects the pre-1960s Thérèse, defined by John Cornwell as symbolic of ‘a spirituality that emphasized interiority over community, submission over social action, silence over speaking out’,³⁶ evoking instead a visceral authenticity. Thérèse Taylor has commented on the creation of this new myth: ‘By deploring the semi-obsolete myth of the “Little Flower” modern Catholic writers have reinserted Saint Thérèse into a contemporary cult of authenticity and originality. In pointing to the earlier distortions and suppressions they have created an ideological space to invent new meanings for her photographs and writings.’³⁷ Marion Lavabre has pointed out that ‘the saint is always “in representation”’,³⁸ their image constantly being renegotiated, while Robert Orsi has demonstrated that ‘Hagiography is best understood as a creative process that goes on and on in the circumstances of everyday life, as people add their own experiences of a saint to his or her *vita* and contemporaries get woven into the lives of the saints’.³⁹ It is clear that Saint Thérèse is still subject to an ongoing process of refashioning and remaking. This is a process which is no less culturally contingent than Céline’s own representations, but which is more multivalent and diverse in nature for now being in the hands of a far wider constituency of people than in the period this thesis has examined.

³⁵ Harrison, *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*, p. 118.

³⁶ John Cornwell, *Hitler’s Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (London, 1999), p. 174.

³⁷ Taylor, ‘Images of Sanctity’, p. 286.

³⁸ Lavabre, ‘Sainte comme une image’, p. 90.

³⁹ Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 113.

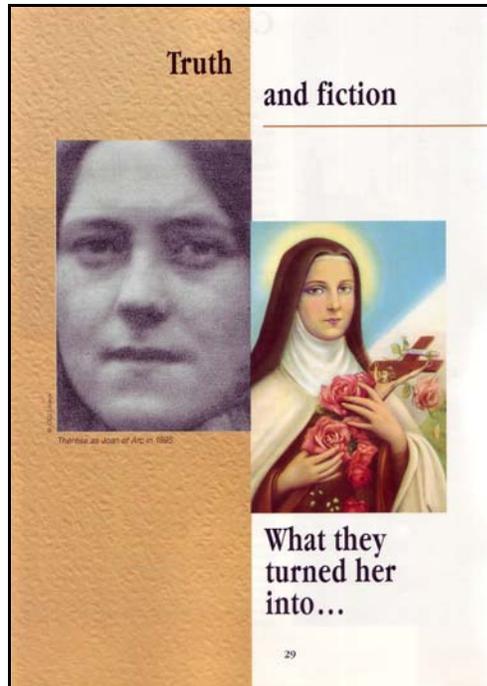


Figure 11. A plate contrasting the ‘real’ Thérèse and her idealised representation from a book by Guy Gaucher. Source: Guy Gaucher, *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux: From Lisieux to the Four Corners of the World* (Strasbourg, 1995).

We may return once again to the *chapelle de la Châsse* to see the way in which Thérèse’s representation is still being reshaped today. Just as the chapel was changed in the 1960s, it has recently been changed again in building work that was completed in 2008. The whole of the chapel of the Carmel is now panelled in wood, the ex-votos that line the walls are covered, and its fading nineteenth-century interior hidden. The *chapelle de la Châsse* itself is now designed for the quiet interiority of modern spirituality, rather than the perhaps more ostentatious religious practice of Céline’s milieu, and instead of opening onto the nave as it once did, it is now screened off, meaning that one must make a conscious decision to stand before the *châsse* and make the relics of Saint Thérèse the focus of one’s attention. A parallel change has happened in Thérèse’s representation at the Diorama Sainte-Thérèse, where the reopening of the attraction in 2006 saw the original figures restyled to fit the ‘new’ Thérèse. While the original first scene showed an angel leaning over the crib of the new-born Thérèse, now the Martin family surround it, emphasising Thérèse’s historical reality over devotional sentimentality. In the scene that once showed her sitting in meditation in the convent garden, she now sits writing in her cell, emphasising her role as a spiritual writer and serious theologian over that of dreamy mystic. And

in the scene where she enters the convent, she no longer kneels before her father for his blessing, but before her fellow Carmelite sisters, emphasising her vocation to the religious life, rejecting the patriarchal implication of the former scene. The notion of authenticity still informs the representation of Thérèse today and the cultural and historical contingency of the authentic means that her representation will be ever changing.

The search for a ‘true’ face of the saint seems to be a wider impulse in contemporary Catholic culture. In 2008 the German Church historian Michael Hesemann included a reconstruction of the face of Saint Paul, done in collaboration with the forensics experts of the State Bureau of Investigations of North Rhine-Westphalia, in his book *Paulus von Tarsus: Archäologen auf den Spuren des Völkerapostels* (2008). While the tools used were the best modern science has to offer, the historical evidence they relied upon was meagre, and it seems that some are still searching uncritically for the ultimate ‘true’ likeness.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, the representation of Australian nun Mary MacKillop became a topic of popular debate when she moved a step closer to sainthood in December 2009, with it being asserted that ‘Glamorous, digitised contemporary images of humble nineteenth-century nun Mary MacKillop, who took a vow of poverty and lived hard years in the outback, bear little relation to the real woman.’⁴¹ The beatification of the Polish priest Jerzy Popiełuszko in June 2010 indicated that such debates will continue. Famous during his lifetime for the subversive sermons he gave at his church in Warsaw, attacking the communist authorities during the rise of the *Solidarnosc* movement, scores of photographs of him exist. Yet, at his beatification ceremony softened, Saint-Sulpician-style images of the priest abounded. There are many other histories of the representation of saints to be written, and as long as new saints are ‘made’ – that is, in the broad cultural sense of being reshaped to fit the accepted tropes of sainthood, rather than the narrow sense of their official recognition by the Church – there will be new controversies over their ‘true’ face.

Concluding Remarks

The examination of Thérèse’s image in the period of the Carmel’s control of it, concentrating only on that institution, leaves many other histories of the saint that are still to be

⁴⁰ For a late-Victorian approach to this issue, see William Harrison Bradley, ‘Have We Authentic Portraits of St. Paul?’, *The Biblical World*, 9, 3 (March, 1897), pp. 179-84.

⁴¹ Natasha Robinson, ‘Beatification of Mary MacKillop enhances her appeal’, *The Australian*, 23 December 2009 < <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/beatification-of-mary-mackillop-enhances-her-appeal/story-e6frg6nf-1225812929840> > [accessed 30 December 2009].

written. As mentioned in chapter 1, a scholarly monograph on Thérèse's cult as a whole is most wanting, but a history of her representation post-Vatican II, as well as an in-depth examination of the various artistic engagements with her image that have arisen over the last century, are just two possibilities for further investigation of the history of her representation.⁴² Nancy Caciola's identification of 'three analytical rubrics' for the study of sainthood: the self-fashioning of the saint, the cultural construction of reality, and the contributions of communities,⁴³ also suggests the potential for further study. This thesis has only dealt with an aspect of the second of these – there is still much scope to look at Thérèse's own 'self-canonisation' in her writings, and the very large topic of the popular reception of the saint, which was considered here only in the narrow terms of an elite band of intellectuals and writers in chapter 4. Indeed, perhaps most enlightening would be a study of the popular reception of Thérèse's image in the pre-1959 period, if the sources could be found for it. Devotion to Thérèse could also be examined in a range of other geographical contexts,⁴⁴ the growth of Catholicism outside of Europe and Thérèse's status as Patroness of the Missions meaning there is clearly much further research to be done here. Saint Thérèse is a remarkably neglected figure and deserves much greater attention from the scholars of modern popular religion.

In her memoirs, Céline recalled some comments Thérèse had made about the fate that awaited those who became saints: 'Who is the saint who is loved for himself? They may be praised, their Life written, magnificent feasts are prepared for them, there are religious festivals... Afterwards, [the devotees] speak of the organ and the sermons... And what about the Saint?'⁴⁵ In examining the representation of Thérèse since 1959 we have examined those layers of distance that devotional culture puts between the historical character and the saint they become. The holy is the unknowable and unreachable, and all the accoutrements of devotional culture are intended to shorten the distance between Heaven and Earth. Here we have revealed the process of turning Thérèse Martin into Saint Thérèse of Lisieux through the images that Céline Martin created of her, and how the controversies that followed were used to further legitimate her creation. In this history of Thérèse's visual representation we have found an attempt to make the saint knowable

⁴² See 'Artistic Engagements with Saint Thérèse' in the bibliography for a key selection of these.

⁴³ Caciola, 'Through a Glass, Darkly', p. 301, 303-5.

⁴⁴ Laura Pettinaroli has begun to consider Saint Thérèse's significance to Russia. See Laura Pettinaroli, 'La politique russe du Saint-Siège (1905-1939)', unpublished PhD thesis, Université Lumière Lyon 2, Lyon, 2008, Appendix 69, 70.

⁴⁵ Sœur Geneviève, *Conseils et Souvenirs*, p. 165.

through the placing of her within the rigid, fixed boundary of the tangible image, then reproduced through a range of devotional items that the faithful could physically possess, appropriating the saint in the process. In examining the ‘texts’ and ‘things’ of Robert Orsi’s definition of religion as ‘a form of cultural work’, which involves ‘institutions *and* persons, texts *and* rituals, practice *and* theology, things *and* ideas’,⁴⁶ we have begun to get at the history of ‘mentalities and cultures’, rather than the history of dominant ‘social structures and institutions.’⁴⁷ By looking at the formulation of an image for Thérèse from the grassroots of the Carmel, we have avoided the macro vision of religious structures that imperils the understanding of popular belief and begun to reveal something of her importance to the practice of Catholic popular piety. Thérèse has been part of the Catholic religious economy for over a century now, and Theresian iconography has been an extremely significant part of the religious culture of modern France – in uncovering the unwritten history of the Celinian image, this thesis has made a contribution to the understanding of the French popular devotional landscape in the twentieth century.

Thérèse’s posthumous life has been an extraordinary one. Her existence as a saint has liberated her, allowing her to do far more since her physical death than she could have ever achieved in her twenty-four years of life. Her posthumous representations have gained a potency and life, or lives, of their own, beyond Thérèse’s own limited ‘living’ experiences, gaining a relevance which far exceeds that of the historical character. She has become a popular cultural icon, been the focus of operas,⁴⁸ novels,⁴⁹ films⁵⁰ and artworks,⁵¹ and has even gone into space,

⁴⁶ Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, p. xix.

⁴⁷ Sarah C. Williams, ‘Victorian Religion: A Matter of Class or Culture?’, *Nineteenth Century Studies*, 17 (2003), p. 15. For a groundbreaking study of popular religious culture and the role of material culture in this, see *Idem.*, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark, c.1880-1939* (Oxford, 1999).

⁴⁸ Gerard McLarnon and John Tavener, *Thérèse: An Opera in One Act* (London, 1979). *Thérèse*, broadcast 8 October 1979, BBC Radio 3 (British Library Sound Archive, T2542BW / T2543BW).

⁴⁹ Bernanos, *Les grands cimetières sous la lune*; Cesbron, *Briser la statue*; Michel Tournier, ‘La jeune fille et la mort’; Graham Greene, *Monsignor Quixote* (London, 1982); Elisabetta Rasy, *La Prima Estasi* (Milan, 1985); Laura Kreyder, *Thérèse Martin* (Paris, 1988); Catherine Rihoit, *La petite princesse de Dieu* (Paris, 1992); Michèle Roberts, *Daughters of the House* (London, 1992); Carmel Bird, *The White Garden* (St Lucia, Queensland, 1995); Ron Hansen, *Mariette in Ecstasy* (London, 1996); Mary O’Connell, *Living with Saints* (London, 2002); Mark Salzman, *Lying Awake* (London, 2002); Maile Meloy, *Liars and Saints* (London, 2003).

⁵⁰ Julien Duvivier (dir.), *La vie miraculeuse de Thérèse Martin* (France, 1930); Maurice de Canonge (dir.), *Thérèse Martin* (France, 1938); André Haguët (dir.), *Procès au Vatican* (France, 1952); Alain Cavalier (dir.), *Thérèse* (France, 1986); Leonardo DeFilippis (dir.), *Thérèse* (USA, 2006).

⁵¹ Canadian artist Nicole Jolicoeur’s 2004 work *Déprises I (Thérèse)* used cut up and reassembled photographs of Thérèse, reflecting on the continual transformation of her face and the issue of female identity. See Jeanne Perreault, and Patricia Levin, ‘“The Camera Made Me Do It”: Female Identity and Troubling Archives’, *Mosaic: a journal for the interdisciplinary study of literature*, 37, 4 (December, 2004), pp. 127-47. American Artist Barbara Ellmann included Thérèse in her ‘Altars’ series. See Kay Turner, ‘Barbara Ellmann – Altars’, *lady-unique-inclination-of-the-night*, Cycle 6 (Autumn, 1983).

with American astronaut Colonel Ron Garan taking a relic of the saint, given to him by the Carmel of New Caney, Texas, on the Discovery shuttle mission of May 2008.⁵² Thérèse has been the focus of intense devotion and of people's hopes and dreams across decades, all over the world. She has fired imaginations, not as a historical person, but as a reshaped spiritual commodity. In examining the early history of that reshaping, this thesis has exposed the creation of this figure that has meant so much to so many.

⁵² 'St. Thérèse Relic Makes Space Flight', *Catholic Online* <
http://www.catholic.org/national/national_story.php?id=30670&cb300=vocations> [accessed 16 January 2009].

Appendix 1

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux: A Posthumous Chronology

- 1897 30 September: Death of Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face, aged 24.
4 October: Burial of Sœur Thérèse in the Carmelite enclosure of the cemetery of Lisieux.
29 October: Mère Marie de Gonzague sends Thérèse's writings to Père Godefroy Madelaine, monk of the Abbey of Mondaye, for his opinion on publishing the work.
- 1898 13 January: Publication of 'J'accuse!', Émile Zola's letter on the Dreyfus Affair.
1 March: Père Godefroy Madelaine gives his favourable opinion on the manuscript.
7 March: The Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, Mgr. Hugonin, gives permission for the publication of *Histoire d'une âme*. Isidore Guérin, Sœur Thérèse's uncle, seeks a suitable publisher.
Céline produces 'Thérèse and her father' for the first edition of the autobiography and the 'Thérèse-angel' in 'The Holy Family'.
2 May: Death of Bishop Hugonin.
12 May: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, Bar-le-Duc, are chosen as publishers for *Histoire d'une âme*
8 July: Léon-Adolphe Amette takes office as Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux.
30 September: Imprimerie Saint-Paul publishes 2,000 copies of *Histoire d'une âme*. Three copies are sent to a contact in Rome in the hope they may be passed to the Pope.
- 1899 28 January: Léonie Martin enters the Visitation convent, Caen.
Easter: First edition of *Histoire d'une âme* goes out of print. The Carmel begins work on the second edition.
Céline produces the 'buste ovale' for the second edition of the autobiography.
Imprimerie Saint-Paul publishes 4,000 copies of the second edition of *Histoire d'une âme*.
A copy of the second edition is sent to the Pope via Cardinal Gotti, Protector of the Carmelites.
September: First mention of a devotional image being produced by the Carmel in a letter from the secretary of the General of the Carmelites.
October: Half of the copies of the second edition of *Histoire d'une âme* have been sold.
First pilgrims arrive in Lisieux and the first miracles occur.
- 1900 The Carmel enquires with Cardinal Gotti's secretary about the permitted devotions to a pious person and the canonisation procedure.
24 May: Leo XIII canonises Rita of Cascia, Italian Augustinian (died 1457).
2 July: Sœur Françoise-Thérèse (Léonie Martin) makes her profession at the Visitation convent in Caen. The Carmel sends the convent 80 images for the occasion showing 'Thérèse in meditation' on one side and one of her poems on the other.
19 July: Opening of the first Métro line in Paris.
- 1901 1 July: Associations Act is passed, suppressing religious orders and confiscating their property.
The first translations of *Histoire d'une âme* appear, in English and Polish.
- 1902 Spanish translation of *Histoire d'une âme* appears.

- Céline produces 'Thérèse and her mother' and possibly 'Thérèse with harp'.
 19 April: Pauline is re-elected prioress.
 Publication of *Une rose effeuillée*, the popular edition of *Histoire d'une âme*.
- 1903 1-19 July: First Tour de France takes place.
 20 July: Leo XIII dies.
 Céline produces 'Thérèse and Leo XIII'.
 4 August: Pius X becomes Pope.
 Thomas Nimmo Taylor, a Scottish priest, visits the Carmel of Lisieux and suggests that Sœur Thérèse may be canonised.
- 1904 13 January: Sœur Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur enters the Carmel.
 7 July: Law on Congregations is passed, effectively banning religious congregations from teaching.
 Italian, Dutch and German translations of *Histoire d'une âme* appear.
 Publication of *Appel aux petites âmes*, with the 'Thérèse-angel' on the back cover.
 17 December: Mère Marie de Gonzague dies from cancer of the tongue, aged seventy.
 Céline produces her image of the Holy Face.
- 1905 Portugese translation of *Histoire d'une âme* appears.
 14 April: Death of Sœur Marie de l'Eucharistie (Marie Guérin) from tuberculosis, aged thirty-five.
 Céline produces 'Thérèse morte'.
 9 December: The law on the Separation of Church and State is passed by the French Chamber of Deputies.
- 1906 21 February: Bishop Amette leaves his post.
 27 May: Pius X beatifies the Carmelites of Compiègne.
 9 July: The cause of Thérèse and the activities of the Carmel are mentioned in an article by François Veuillot in *l'Univers*.
 13 July: Thomas-Paul-Henri Lemonnier takes office as Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux.
- 1907 Céline produces the 'bouquet' and 'Thérèse pensionnaire'.
 15 October: Bishop Lemonnier asks the community to write down their memories of Sœur Thérèse.
 21 November: Bishop Lemonnier gives the *imprimatur* to a prayer for the beatification of Sœur Thérèse. This is used on the reverse of images issued by the Carmel.
 The appendix 'Pluie de Roses', containing miracle accounts, appears in *Histoire d'une âme*.
 Braille translation of *Histoire d'une âme* appears.
- 1908 8 May: Mère Marie-Ange de l'Enfant-Jésus is elected prioress and writes to Bishop Lemonnier to support Thérèse's cause.
 Bishop Lemonnier authorises the opening of the preliminary process of the cause.
 26 May: The miraculous healing of Reine Fauquet, a four year old blind girl, at Sœur Thérèse's grave.
 14 December: Mère Marie-Ange writes to the General House of the Carmelites to ask for a Postulator of the cause to be allocated.

- 1909 January: Rodrigo di San Francesco da Paola (Rome) and Mgr. de Teil (Paris) are named Postulator and Vice-Postulator of the Cause.
 4 February: Vice-Postulator of the Cause, Mgr. de Teil, makes his first visit to the Carmel of Lisieux.
 18 April: Pius X beatifies Joan of Arc.
 Céline produces 'Thérèse and Joan of Arc'.
 28 September: Death of Isidore Guérin.
 12 November: Death of Mère Marie-Ange de l'Enfant-Jésus from tuberculosis.
 Mère Agnès is re-elected prioress.
 November: Céline's painting of the Holy Face receives first prize at the International Exposition of Religious Art at Bois-le-Duc, Holland.
- 1910 Between 1910 and 1914 Lives of Thérèse appear in Albanian, Arabic, Armenian, Basque, Breton, Bulgarian, Kanak, Sinhalese, Danish, Greek, Hindi, Latin, Maltese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Tagal and Tamil.
 16 January: Sœur Thérèse appears in a vision to Mother Carmela, prioress of the Carmel of Gallipoli.
 5 March: Rescript from Rome for the opening of the process on the writings.
 4 April: Bishop Lemonnier permits the investigation of the writings of Sœur Thérèse to begin.
 22 May: Opening of the preparatory process (*processiculus*) for the investigation of the writings of Sœur Thérèse.
 12 June: Closing of the *processiculus*.
 25 June: The writings of Thérèse are put to the Sacred Congregation of Rites.
 3 August: A diocesan Tribunal is set up and charged with preparing the cause of Sœur Thérèse.
 12 August: First session of the Tribunal's interrogations takes place at the Carmel. The sisters give their depositions.
 6 September: Exhumation of Sœur Thérèse's remains and transferral to a new vault in the cemetery.
 24 September: Mère Agnès writes to all the Carmels in France asking for support for Sœur Thérèse's cause.
- 1911 Catalan, Croatian, Flemish, Hungarian and Japanese Lives of Thérèse appear.
 Céline produces the 'buste ovale' in colour for Mgr. de Teil's *Articles* and 'Thérèse and Céline'.
 12 April: Cardinal Gotti is nominated Cardinal Relator (Reporter) of the Cause.
 29-30 August: End of the investigation into the reputation for sanctity, start of the non-cult process (*super non cultu*).
 6 September: Visit of the members of the Tribunal to Lisieux.
 7 September: Last session of the non-cult process.
 11 December: Closure of the non-cult process.
 12 December: Closure of the informative process.
- 1912 Céline produces 'Thérèse aux roses'.

- 5 February: The copied, certified documents of the informative process and the non-cult process, called the *Transsumptum*, are presented to the Sacred Congregation of Rites.
- 6 March: The study of the *Transsumptum* begins in Rome.
- 6 December: The Theologian Censor gives his judgement on the writings of Sœur Thérèse.
- 10 December: Rome approves the writings of the Servant of God Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus.
- 1913 Céline produces 'Thérèse with angels', Thérèse without angels', 'Thérèse as sacristan' and the first version of 'Thérèse *bambino*'.
- 8 March: The defence lawyers, Luigi Toeschi and Adolfo Guidi, finish the *Summarium super Causae introductione*.
- 1914 Vietnamese, Chinese, Georgian, Russian and Turkish Lives of Thérèse appear.
- 10 January: Decree authorising the opening of the debate on the dossier of the informative and non-cult processes, disregarding the usual ten year delay from the receipt of the documents.
- 8 April: The Promoter of the Faith, Canon Dubosq, signs the objections (*animadversions*) to the introduction of the cause.
- 9 June: The Sacred Congregation of Rites decides in favour of the introduction of the cause.
- 10 June: Pius X signs the Decree for the Introduction of the Cause.**
- 28 June: Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary assassinated in Sarajevo.
- July: The Carmel is receiving an average of 200 letters a day.
- 1 August: General mobilization in France. Outbreak of the First World War.
- 15 August: The Sacred Congregation of Rites sends the remissorial letters allowing the opening of the apostolic process.
- 20 August: Pius X dies.
- 3 September: Benedict XV becomes Pope.
- 24 November: Death of Mère Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur, sub-prioress of the Carmel of Lisieux, from tuberculosis.
- 1915 17 March: The apostolic process formally opens at Bayeux.
- The Carmel has already disseminated 211,515 copies of *Histoire d'une âme* (already translated into 35 languages), 710,000 copies of the *Vie abrégée*, 110,000 copies of *Pluie de roses* and 8,046,000 images.
- 9 April: The first witness is heard by the Tribunal.
- 13 May: Presentation of the *Positio super non cultu* at Rome.
- 10 June: Benedict XV authorises the production of medals of Sœur Thérèse.
- 9 December: Tribunal's examination of the Postulator's *Articles*.
- 1916 Death of Doctor La Néele, the husband of Jeanne Guérin.
- 22 January: The Promoter of the Faith presents his objections to the non-cult process.
- 6 February: Response of the defence to the non-cult objections.
- 14 March: The Sacred Congregation of Rites confirms the sentence of the diocesan Tribunal on the non-cult process.
- 19 March: Death of Cardinal Gotti.

- 22 March: Benedict XV approves the decision of the Sacred Congregation of Rites of 14 March.
- 23 March: The Sacred Congregation of Rites decrees that the enquiry on the reputation for sanctity will be dispensed with, expediting the process.
- 1 April: Cardinal Vico becomes Cardinal Relator (Reporter) of the Cause. The Sacred Congregation of Rites authorises the formation of a Tribunal for the Apostolic Process on the heroicity of the virtues of the Servant of God and the veracity of the miracles.
- 22 September: Opening of the apostolic process proper.
- 1917 Early 1917: The Office Central de Lisieux is formed.
- 7 August: The last witness of the apostolic process on the heroicity of the virtues of the Servant of God and the veracity of the miracles is heard.
- 9-11 August: Second exhumation and identification of the remains of the Servant of God.
- 30 October: Closure of the apostolic process at Bayeux.
- 4 November: The documents of the apostolic process are presented to the Sacred Congregation of Rites.
- 14 November: Benedict XV authorises the opening of the Roman process.
- 1918 The Carmel is receiving around 500 letters a day.
- 22 August: The defence present the *positio* on the validity of the beatification procedure.
- 23 October: The Promoter of the Faith presents his objections on the validity of the procedure.
- 8 November: Response of the defence to the objections of the Promoter.
- 11 November: Signing of the armistice – First World War ends.
- 10 December: The validity of the process and the evidence in favour of the cause is recognised.
- 1919 23 April: Work starts on adaptations to the chapel of the Carmel of Lisieux.
- 22 September: Benedict XV exempts the cause from the 50 year delay between the death of the Servant of God and the opening of the Roman process on the heroicity of virtues.
- 23 September: The defence presents the *positio* on the heroicity of virtues.
- 21 October: Cardinal Vico visits the Carmel and declares ‘We must hurry to glorify the little saint if we do not want to be pre-empted by the voice of the people.’
- 1920 Céline produces ‘Thérèse *expirante*’.
- 18 February: The Promoter of the Faith presents his objections to the *Summarium* compiled by the defence.
- 15 March: Response of the defence.
- 13 May: Benedict XV canonises Marguerite Marie Alacoque, French nun, mystic and promoter of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (died 1690).
- 16 May: Benedict XV canonises Joan of Arc.
- 1 June: The *dubium* on the heroicity of virtues is presented to the Ante-preparatory Congregation. Definitive positive judgement of the Congregation.
- 4 August: Publication of the *Novae animadversiones* as well as the response of the defence in the *Nova Positio super virtutibus*.
- 1921 Céline produces ‘Little apotheosis for the beatification’.

- 25 January: Ratification of the vote.
 19 February: The Promoter of the Faith publishes the *Novissimae animadversions* which are printed in the new *Summarium*.
 15 March: Response of the defence.
 2 August: General meeting of the two assemblies before the Pope, who ratifies their vote.
14 August: Benedict XV promulgates the Decree on the Heroicity of the Virtues of the Servant of God. Sœur Thérèse is now known as the Venerable Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Discourse of Benedict XV on the 'little way'.
 September: The defence presents the *positio* on the veracity of the miracles proposed to the Sacred Congregation of Rites.
 30 December: Publication of the Promoter of the Faith's first objections to the three miracles proposed.
- 1922 15 January: First response of the defence to the objections to the miracles.
 22 January: Benedict XV dies.
 6 February: Pius XI becomes Pope.
 7 March: Ante-preparatory Congregation and vote of the consultants in the miracles process.
 21 May: Death of Mgr. de Teil. He is replaced as Vice-Postulator by Père Arnaud de Saint-Joseph.
 28 May: Response of the defence to the second objections of the Promoter of the Faith, presented following the Ante-preparatory Congregation.
 25 July: Preparatory Congregation on the two miracles, vote of the cardinals.
 9 October: Last objections of the Promoter of the Faith concerning the miracles.
 15 October: Last response of the defence.
- 1923 30 January: General Congregation on the miracles in the presence of Pius XI.
 11 February: Decree of Approbation of the Miracles: that of a seminarist of Bayeux, Abbé Charles Anne, cured of pulmonary tuberculosis, and of Sœur Louise de Saint Germain of the Sisters of the Cross, Ustaritz, cured of a stomach ulcer.
 19 March: Promulgation of the decree *de tuto* declaring that the beatification can proceed. Discourse of Pius XI.
 26-27 March: Third exhumation and identification of the remains of the Servant of God. Transferral of the relics to the chapel of the Carmel.
29 April: Pius XI beatifies Thérèse at Saint Peter's Basilica, Rome. She is now known as the Blessed Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus.
 28-30 May: Triduum is celebrated at Lisieux in the presence of Cardinal Vico.
 31 May: Mère Agnès is made prioress for life.
 25 July: Pius XI gives his petition for the resumption of the cause of canonisation.
 12 August: Ante-preparatory Congregation for the examination of two miracles occurring after the beginning of the process of beatification: that of Maria Pellemans, cured of pulmonary tuberculosis at the grave of Thérèse between 19 and 26 March 1923, and of Gabriel Primouzi, of Parma, cured of arthritis in the knee and vertebral tuberculosis during June 1923.

In this year 300,000 pilgrims visited Lisieux and the Carmel received around 800 to 1000 letters a day.

- 1924 Céline produces the ‘Little apotheosis for the canonisation’.
12 August: Ante-preparatory Congregation for the approbation of miracles.
- 1925 Céline produces ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ in colour and a second colour version of the ‘*buste ovale*’.
27 January: Preparatory Congregation for the approbation of the miracles.
17 March: General Congregation.
19 March: Decree of Approbation of the Miracles. Discourse of Pius XI.
24 March: General Congregation *de tuto* concludes that the canonisation may proceed.
29 March: Decree *de tuto*. Discourse of Pius XI.
30 March: Secret consistory.
2 April: Public consistory.
17 May: Pius XI canonises Thérèse at Saint Peter’s Basilica, Rome. She is now Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. 60,000 people are present in the Basilica and 500,000 fill Saint Peter’s Square.
31 May: Pius XI canonises Saint John Vianney, the Curé d’Ars (died 1859).
4 July: The new chapel of the Carmel of Lisieux is consecrated. The first day of a novena, finishing on the 12 July, for the procession of the relics of Saint Thérèse around Lisieux.
24-30 September: Celebrations in Lisieux. Cardinal Vico, as envoy of Pius XI, visits the Carmel and puts a golden rose, blessed and sent by the Pope, in the hand of the effigy of Thérèse in the *chapelle de la Châsse*.
- 1927 January: The publication of *Novissima Verba*, an abridged version of the *Derniers entretiens*.
17 May: Inauguration of a statue of Saint Thérèse in the gardens of the Vatican.
13 July: The liturgical feast of Saint Thérèse (3 October) is extended to the whole Church.
14 December: Pius XI proclaims Saint Thérèse Principal Patroness of the Missions, equal to Saint Francis Xavier, at the request of 225 missionary bishops.
29 December: Bishop Lemonnier dies.
- 1928 6 July: Emmanuel Célestin Suhard takes office as Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux.
- 1929 Céline produces ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’, second colour version.
Pius XI proclaims Saint Thérèse Patroness of the *Russicum*, the seminary created for the evangelisation of Russia.
30 September: Laying of the cornerstone of the Basilique Sainte-Thérèse, Lisieux.
- 1930 23 December: Bishop Suhard leaves his post.
- 1931 12 September: François-Marie Picaud takes office as Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux.
- 1933 8 December: Pius XI canonises Bernadette Soubirous, visionary of Lourdes (died 1879).
- 1935 Céline re-paints ‘Thérèse *bambino*’.

- 1937 11 July: Cardinal Pacelli (Papal Legate and future Pius XII) conducts the inauguration and benediction of the Basilica at Lisieux. Pius XI broadcasts a radio message on the occasion.
12 July: Cardinal Pacelli visits the Carmel of Lisieux.
- 1939 10 February: Pius XI dies.
2 March: Pius XII becomes Pope.
1 September: Germany invades Poland. The Second World War begins.
- 1940 19 January: Death of Sœur Marie du Sacré- Cœur (Marie Martin), aged 80.
2 May: Pius XII canonises Gemma Galgani, Italian mystic and stigmatic (died 1903).
- 1941 16 June: Death of Sœur Françoise-Thérèse (Léonie Martin), aged 78.
24 July: The Mission de France is founded and its seminary established at Lisieux.
- 1944 **3 May: Pius XII proclaims Saint Thérèse joint Patroness of France, equal to Joan of Arc.**
June: Lisieux suffers damage in the allied bombings. The community of the Carmel of Lisieux take shelter in the crypt of the Basilica.
- 1945 15 August: Japanese surrender. End of Second World War.
- 1946 Publication of *Histoire d'une famille*.
- 1947 The 50th anniversary of the death of Thérèse Martin. Her relics tour France and visit almost every diocese in the country.
27 July: Pius XII canonises Catherine Labouré, French nun, visionary and founder of the Miraculous Medal of the Immaculate Conception devotion (died 1876).
- 1948 September: Publication of the first edition of the *Letters*, edited by André Combes.
- 1950 24 June: Pius XII canonises Maria Goretti, Italian virgin martyr (died 1902).
1 November: Pius XII dogmatically defines the Doctrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- 1951 28 July: Death of Mère Agnès de Jésus (Pauline Martin), aged 90.
Mère Françoise Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte Face is elected prioress.
- 1952 Publication of Céline's book *Conseils et souvenirs*.
- 1953 Publication of Céline's book *Le père de Sainte Thérèse*.
- 1954 Publication of Céline's book *La mère de Sainte Thérèse*.
11 July: The Basilique Sainte-Thérèse, Lisieux is consecrated.
5 August: Bishop Picaud retires.
29 October: André Jacquemin takes office as Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux.

- 1956 The unedited autobiographical writings, prepared by François de Sainte-Marie, are published for the first time as the *Manuscrits autobiographiques*.
- 1957 March: The introduction of the cause for the beatification of Zélie and Louis Martin is sanctioned.
- 1958 9 October: Pius XII dies.
28 October: John XXIII becomes Pope.
- 1959 25 February: Death of Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte-Face (Céline Martin), aged 89.
- 1961 Publication of *Céline. Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face. Sœur et témoin de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* by Père Stéphane-Joseph Piat.
Publication of the 47 extant photographs of Saint Thérèse, with commentary by François de Sainte-Marie, in *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux*.
- 1962 11 October: Opening of the Second Vatican Council.
- 1963 3 June: Pope John XXIII dies.
21 June: Paul VI becomes Pope.
- 1964 Publication of the second edition of Piat's *Céline*.
- 1965 8 December: Closure of the Second Vatican Council.
- 1969 10 December: Bishop Jacquemin resigns. Jean-Marie-Clément Badré takes office as Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux.
- 1971 July: Publication of the *Derniers entretiens*, the first volume of the critical edition of the Complete Works (Édition du Centenaire).
- 1972 July: Publication of the first volume of the *Correspondance générale* (Édition du Centenaire).
- 1973 2 January: Centenary of the birth of Thérèse Martin.
- 1978 6 August: Pope Paul VI dies.
26 August: John Paul I becomes Pope.
28 September: Pope John Paul I dies.
16 October: John Paul II becomes Pope.
- 1979 Publication of the *Poesies* (Édition du Centenaire).
- 1980 2 June: John Paul II visits Lisieux and prays in the infirmary where Saint Thérèse died.
- 1985 Publication of the *Récréations Pieuses* (Édition du Centenaire).
- 1988 Publication of the *Prières*, completing the Édition du Centenaire.

- 19 November: Bishop Badré retires. Pierre Auguste Gratien Pican takes office as Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux.
- 1992 Publication of the Nouvelle Édition du Centenaire in 8 volumes by Éditions du Cerf and Desclée de Brouwer, Paris.
- 1995 Beginning of the worldwide relics tour.
- 1997 Centenary of the death of Thérèse Martin.
19 October: John Paul II proclaims Saint Thérèse a Doctor of the Church.
 Publication of Piat's *Céline* in English.
- 2001 15 April-1 July: The relics of Saint Thérèse visit Ireland for the first time.
- 2005 2 April: Pope John Paul II dies.
 19 April: Benedict XVI becomes Pope.
- 2008 31 May: American astronaut Colonel Ron Garan takes a relic of Saint Thérèse on the Discovery shuttle mission. During the 14 day mission she travels 5,735,643 miles around the earth at 17,057 miles an hour.
 19 October: Zélie and Louis Martin, the parents of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, are beatified at the Basilique Sainte-Thérèse, Lisieux.
- 2009 16 September-12 October: The Relics of Saint Thérèse visit the United Kingdom for the first time.

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Appendix 2

Images of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux Created or Commissioned by the Carmel of Lisieux

Images by Céline Martin (Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte-Face)		
Title	Medium	Date
The Holy Family (The 'Thérèse-angel)	Oil painting	1898
Thérèse and her father	Drawing	1898
The <i>buste ovale</i>	Drawing	1899
The Annunciation	Oil painting	1900
Thérèse and her mother	Drawing	1902
Thérèse with harp	Oil painting	c. 1902
Thérèse and Leo XIII	Drawing	1903
Thérèse <i>morte</i>	Drawing	1905
Thérèse <i>pensionnaire</i>	Drawing	1907
The <i>bouquet</i>	Drawing	1909
Thérèse and Joan of Arc	Drawing	1909
Thérèse as first communicant	Drawing	1909-10
The <i>buste ovale</i> , colour version	Oil painting	1911
Thérèse and Céline	Drawing	1911
Thérèse <i>aux roses</i>	Drawing	1912
Thérèse as sacristan	Oil painting	c. 1912
Thérèse with angels	Oil painting	1913
Thérèse without angels	Oil painting	1913
Thérèse <i>au bambino</i> , first version	Oil painting	1913

Thérèse <i>expirante</i> (original by Blanchard)	<i>Grisaille</i>	1920
The little apotheosis for the beatification	Oil painting	1921
The little apotheosis for the canonisation	Oil painting	1924
Thérèse <i>aux roses</i> , colour version	Oil painting	1925
The <i>buste ovale</i> , second colour version	Oil painting	1925
Thérèse with globe (original by Martini)	Oil painting	1928
Thérèse <i>aux roses</i> , second colour version	Oil painting	1929
Thérèse <i>au bambino</i> , second version	Oil painting	1935

Source: Recueil Travaux Artistiques Geneviève, ACL.

Images by Other Artists			
Artist	Title	Medium	Date
Annould (engraving by Jouvenot)	Thérèse on the battlefield	-	1915?
Annould	Death of a soldier	Wash drawing	1915
Jouvenot	The angel at the cradle	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	The baptism	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse at Semallé	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse running to mass	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	The dream of the demons	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse counting her sacrifices with Céline	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	The death of Mme. Martin	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	The arrival at <i>Les Buissonnets</i>	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	The paupers at <i>Les Buissonnets</i>	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse praying in the chapel of Carmel	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse at Trouville with Pauline	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse playing hermits with Marie Guérin	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	The encounter with Mgr. Hugonin	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse meditating in her bedroom	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse instructing poor children	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	The conversion of Pranzini	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse at the bishop's palace	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	At the Colosseum	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse in Venice	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse entering Carmel	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse as postulant	Wash drawing	c. 1917

Jouvenot	The clothing cortege	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	The clothing in the choir	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse with the elderly sister	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse in the laundry room	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse working in the refectory	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	The divine office	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Thérèse throwing rose petals at the courtyard crucifix	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Jouvenot	Last communion	Wash drawing	c. 1917
Roybet	Thérèse	Oil painting	1917
Blanchard (later retouched by Céline)	'Thérèse <i>expirante</i> '	<i>Grisaille</i>	1920
Blanchard	Thérèse and the stars	<i>Grisaille</i>	1920?
Blanchard	Thérèse taking the habit	<i>Grisaille</i>	1920?
Blanchard	Pentecost 1887	<i>Grisaille</i>	1920?
Blanchard	First communion	<i>Grisaille</i>	1920?
de Winter	Thérèse strewing flowers on the Holy Sacrament	Drawing	c. 1920?
Grün	Apotheosis above St Peter's Basilica	<i>Grisaille</i>	1921?
Annould (design), Blanchard (painting)	Nazareth	Wash drawing	c. 1925
A nun of the Carmel of Lisieux	Giving of the golden rose	Oil painting	1926?
Sœur Marie du Sainte Esprit	Canonisation in St Peter's Basilica	Oil painting	1927
Sœur Marie du Sainte Esprit	Thérèse Patroness of Missions	Oil painting	1935
A nun of the Carmel of Lisieux	Thérèse Patroness of France	Oil painting	1944?
Annould	An evening at Alençon	Wash drawing	-
Annould	An evening at Lisieux	Wash drawing	-

Annould	The cure by the Holy Virgin	Wash drawing	-
A nun of the Carmel of Lisieux	Thérèse fishing	Wash drawing	-
A nun of the Carmel of Lisieux	Thérèse and Pauline in the parlour of Carmel	Watercolour	-
A nun of the Carmel of Lisieux	Confirmation	Watercolour	-
A nun of the Carmel of Lisieux	Thérèse entering the cloister	Watercolour	-
A nun of the Carmel of Lisieux	The crowning of Marie du Sacré-Cœur	Watercolour	-
A nun of the Carmel of Lisieux	The evening of the profession	Oil painting	-
A nun of the Carmel of Lisieux	Thérèse at the foot of the cross	Oil painting	-
A nun of the Carmel of Lisieux	Thérèse writing in her cell	Watercolour	-
A nun of the Carmel of Lisieux	The wounding by love	Oil painting	-

NOTE: The 96 images included in *Quelques miracles et interventions de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Paris, 1928) and the plates from *La petite voie. Ascension mystique de la montagne de la perfection d'amour et d'enfance spirituelle de la Servante de Dieu Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Tableaux allégoriques* (Paris, 1919) are not listed here, but were all completed by Charles Jouvenot.

Sources: Archival note 20/02/1975, *Vie en Images de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, ACL; *Recueil Travaux Artistiques Geneviève*, ACL; *Marie du Saint Esprit – circulaire inédite établie en 2007*, ACL.

Sculptures			
Artist	Title	Medium	Date
Père Marie-Bernard	Medallion of Thérèse as first communicant	Wood	1919
Père Marie-Bernard	Thérèse sitting	Marble	1919
Père Marie-Bernard	Bust on small pedestal	-	1919
Père Marie-Bernard (sculpted by Alliot)	Maquette for the <i>gisant</i> (for the <i>chapelle de la Châsse</i>)	-	1920
Alliot	<i>Gisant</i> for the <i>chapelle de la Châsse</i>	Coloured marble	1920
Alliot	Angels for the <i>chapelle de la Châsse</i>	Marble	1920
Père Marie-Bernard	Thérèse <i>aux roses</i>	Marble	1922
Père Marie-Bernard (sculpted by Alliot)	Maquette of Thérèse on her knees (to mark her former grave in the cemetery of Lisieux)	-	1923
Alliot	Thérèse on her knees (to mark her former grave in the cemetery of Lisieux)	Marble	1923
Alliot	Thérèse with the Virgin, Infant Jesus and the Holy Face (for the altar of the chapel of the Carmel of Lisieux)	Marble	1924
Père Marie-Bernard	Thérèse <i>aux roses</i> (for the Abbey of Soligny-La-Trappe)	Marble	1924
Père Marie-Bernard	Bust in bas-relief (given to Pius XI for the canonisation)	-	1925
Père Marie-Bernard (sculpted by Sarrazolles)	Maquette of Thérèse holding out a rose (for baptistery at Cathedral de Notre Dame, Alençon)	-	1928
Père Marie-Bernard (sculpted by Alliot)	Maquette of Thérèse and her father (for the garden of <i>Les Buissonnets</i>)	-	1931
Alliot	Thérèse and her father (for the garden of <i>Les Buissonnets</i>)	Marble	1931
Père Marie-Bernard	Bust of Thérèse as sacristan (for the Carmel of Lisieux)	-	1932
Père Marie-Bernard	Thérèse with arms outspread (for the crypt of the Basilica)	Marble	1932
Alliot	Angels for the Way of the Cross, Basilica Sainte-Thérèse	-	c.1933
Père Marie-Bernard	Thérèse Patroness of the Missions (for the Carmel of Lisieux)	-	1933

Père Marie-Bernard (sculpted by Alliot)	Maquette of Thérèse with Our Lady of Mercy	-	1935
Alliot	Thérèse with Our Lady of Mercy	-	1935
Père Marie-Bernard	Bas-relief of the Cure of the Virgin (for the façade of <i>Les Buissonnets</i>)	-	1937
Père Marie-Bernard	Thérèse <i>Omen Novum</i> (for the entrance to the Basilica concourse)	Marble	1938
Père Marie-Bernard (sculpted by Coin)	Maquette for the tympanum for the Basilica	-	1944
Alliot	Thérèse with the Infant Jesus and Holy Face (for the Chapter of the Carmel of Lisieux)	Bronze	-
Alliot	Thérèse throwing flowers (for the cloister courtyard of the Carmel of Lisieux)	-	-
Alliot	Thérèse <i>au bambino</i>	-	-
Alliot	Nazareth	-	-
Alliot	Bust of Thérèse and her father (for the grounds of La Musse)	-	-

Sources: Pierre Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l'âme. Un trappiste au service de Thérèse* (Wailly, 2000); Recueil Travaux Artistiques Geneviève, ACL; S-23ii TRAVAUX correspondance Alliot 1919-59, ACL; THER-14 F Marie-Bernard sculpteur, ACL.

Photographs				
Photographer	Title	Medium	Date	Number
Unknown professional photographer	Thérèse aged 3½	Citrate proof	26 June 1876-mid-July 1876	1
Besnier (professional photographer)	Thérèse aged 8 with Céline	Negative	1881	2
Poupet (professional photographer)	Thérèse aged 13	Print	February 1886	3
Besnier (professional photographer)	Thérèse aged 15	Glass negative	2-7 April 1888	4
Abbé Gombault	Thérèse novice with mantle	Glass negative	After 10 January 1889	5
Abbé Gombault	Thérèse novice without mantle (the ' <i>cliché</i> Gombault')	Glass negative	After 10 January 1889	6
Céline	Thérèse et al in the infirmary porch	Glass negative	November (?) 1894	7
Céline (set up)	Sœur Geneviève near the infirmary porch	Glass negative	November (?) 1894	8
Céline (set up)	Thérèse et al in the courtyard of the Lourdes grotto (1st pose)	Glass negative	20 November 1894	9
Céline (set up)	Thérèse et al in the courtyard of the Lourdes grotto (2nd pose)	Citrate proof	20 November 1894	10
Céline	Thérèse as Joan of Arc (1st pose)	Glass negative	21 January-Spring 1895	11
Céline	Thérèse as Joan of Arc (2nd pose)	Glass negative	21 January-Spring 1895	12
Céline	Thérèse as Joan of Arc in prison	Glass negative	21 January-Spring 1895	13
Céline (set up)	Thérèse as Joan of Arc with Céline as Saint Margaret	Glass negative	21 January-Spring 1895	14
Céline	Thérèse as Joan of Arc crowned in heaven	Citrate proof	21 January-Spring 1895	15
Céline (set up)	The community at recreation (1st pose)	Glass negative	20 April 1895	16
Céline (set up)	The community at recreation (2nd pose)	Glass negative	20 April 1895	17
Céline (set up)	The community on the cloister porch	Glass negative	15 April 1895	18
Céline (set up)	The community in the courtyard of the Lourdes grotto	Glass negative	15 April 1895	19

Céline (set up)	Thérèse with novices and hourglass	Glass negative	15 April 1895	20
Céline (set up)	The community at the feast of the Good Shepherd (1st pose)	Glass negative	27 or 28 April 1895	21
Céline (set up)	The community at the feast of the Good Shepherd (2nd pose)	Glass negative	27 or 28 April 1895	22
Céline (set up)	Thérèse with novices and superiors	Glass negative	27 or 28 April 1895	23
Céline (set up)	The community at the wash (1st pose)	Glass negative	19 April 1895	24
Céline (set up)	The community at the wash (2nd pose)	Glass negative	19 April 1895	25
Céline (set up)	The profession of Céline	Print	17 March 1896	26
Céline	Thérèse and Sœur Marie de la Trinité	Citrate proof	17 March 1896	27
Céline	Thérèse and Sœur Marthe de Jésus	Glass negative	17 March 1896	28
Céline	Thérèse standing in the cloister courtyard	Citrate proof	6 or 7(?) July 1896	29
Céline (set up)	Thérèse with her sisters and cousin (1st pose)	Glass negative (not original)	19(?) March 1896	30
Céline (set up)	Thérèse with her sisters and cousin (2nd pose)	Glass negative (not original)	19(?) March 1896	31
Céline (set up)	Thérèse, Mère Marie and novices	Citrate proof	30 April 1896	32
Céline (set up)	The community in the cloister courtyard (1st pose)	Glass negative	6 or 7(?) July 1896	33
Céline (set up)	The community in the cloister courtyard (2nd pose)	Glass negative	6 or 7(?) July 1896	34
Céline (set up)	The community haymaking	Glass negative	6 or 7 July 1896	35
Céline (set up)	The community in front of the statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary	Glass negative	6-12 July 1896	36
Céline	Thérèse <i>au chapelet</i>	Glass negative	12(?) July 1896	37
Céline	Thérèse <i>au lys</i>	Glass negative	12(?) July 1896	38
Céline (set up)	Thérèse as sacristan with her sisters and cousin (1st pose)	Glass negative	Early November 1896	39
Céline (set up)	Thérèse as sacristan with her sisters and cousin (2nd	Glass negative	Early November 1896	40

	pose)			
Céline	Thérèse <i>aux images</i> (1st pose)	Film negative	7 June 1897	41
Céline	Thérèse <i>aux images</i> (2nd pose)	Glass negative	7 June 1897	42
Céline	Thérèse <i>aux images</i> (3rd pose)	Glass negative	7 June 1897	43
Céline (set up)	The novitiate in the cloister courtyard	Glass negative	After 3 June-before 8 July 1897 (7 June 1897?)	44
Céline	Thérèse lying ill in the cloister	Glass negative	30 August 1897	45
Céline	Thérèse lying dead in the infirmary	Citrate proof	1 October 1897	46
Céline	Thérèse lying dead in the choir	Contact proof of negative	3 October 1897	47

Sources: François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux*, 2 vols (Lisieux, 1961); François de Sainte-Marie, *The Photo Album of St. Thérèse of Lisieux* (London, 1962), trans. Peter-Thomas Rohrbach OCD; Sœur Cécile, 'Visage de Thérèse', *Vie Thérésienne*, 34, 3 (1994), pp. 208-16.

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- S-23ii TRAVAUX correspondance Alliot 1919-1959.
- S-23LL TRAVAUX correspondance Jouvenot dessinateur.
- S-23NN TRAVAUX artistes divers A-B.
- S-23PP TRAVAUX artistes divers C-M.
- S-23QQ TRAVAUX artistes divers N-R.
- S24A Diorama.
- S24B Office Central Catalogues.
- S24D Office Central Contrefaçons.
- S35 Diorama.
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