

Vagissements à partir d'un terrain occupé: A Very Brief Review of Résistance Literature

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Abstract: Not quite popular in India, and rarely studied as a part of the Indian post- and undergraduate syllabi, literature of the Résistance remains an important part of international literature and recalls the hardships faced by millions of French citizens after Nazi Germany occupied their country in 1940. Just as the Spanish Republicans were supported by members of the *International Brigade*, the German Occupation of France motivated many non-French intellectuals, Samuel Beckett being one of the more important individuals among them, to write poignant novels and poems about the domination of the freedom-loving individuals. The present essay proposes to focus not only on the intellectuals and writings in favour of the French Résistance fighters, but also on those writers and wrings which eulogised the Nazi occupation of France.

Keywords: Résistance, Occupation, Collaborationists, Second World War, war literature, existentialism.

The term 'war literature', even though it is supposed to include all the writings produced by numerous combatants and survivors of equally numerous belligerences that have ravaged humanity since civilisation, expressiveness, and arts matured, identifiably gives a certain prerogative to soldiers' compositions of the First and Second World Wars. Margot Norris, however, writes that while the First World War literature could be related to avant-gardism and modernism, the artistic responses to the Second World War were "more complex and tortured [...] [because the] intensity of violence threatened to sever art's expressive connection to war altogether" (2). Norris further opines that conveying "an adequate idea of the Second World War is close to impossible" because what human beings did to one another during 1939-45 was "almost beyond human conception" (*ibid.* 2). Rereading publications from the time of the Second World War, readers of posterity can also hardly conceive how such a great division was created among the French in so short a time after the *German Armed Forces*, meticulously executing *Fall Rot* between 5 and 22 June 1940, forced France to surrender and occupied it from end-June 1940 to August 1944. The French defeat cleaved their country into the German-occupied 'north zone', and the comparatively-free 'south zone', resulting in the creation of 'Vichy France' under the administration of the Verdun-veteran Philippe Pétain (1856-1951), who operated from Vichy, a town of central France.

Although approximately ninety thousand French soldiers had been

killed prior to the establishment of Vichy France (Crowdy 4), a significant section of French citizens was understandably not ready to be ruled by the Germans or their French representatives. Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970), who was later to prove himself as a ruthless imperialist during the 1954-62 *Algerian War of Independence* and cruelly suppressed students' demonstrations in May 1968, was especially opposed to Pétain's rule and began organising the *Free French Forces*, which would later play a crucial role in the Allied troops' recovery of the country from the Axis soldiers. Belligerence, civil strifes, domination, and struggles for liberation have always attracted voices of intellectuals from all over the world. For example, John Milton (1608-74) wrote *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649) and *Eikonoklastes* (1649) to justify the Parliamentarians' causes during the 1642-9 English Civil War; William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) commemorated the 1789-95 French Revolution respectively in (the ninth and tenth sections of) *The Prelude* (1805) and "France: An Ode" (1798); and Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) mentioned roles of the members of the *International Brigade* during the Spanish Civil War (1936-9) in his *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). The German occupation of France, similarly, motivated a number of European and American intellectuals and artists to focus on the French miseries and eulogise the efforts of the partisans of *French Résistance* to 'liberate' their country from the Nazis and their collaborating French administrators. Incidentally, the term '*Résistance* fighters', according to Terry Crowdy, indicates those patriotic French individuals who lived:

as outlaws [in occupied France], [were] poorly armed, mostly without uniforms and always terminally short of cigarettes [...] [and who] played an effective part in [...] [the] liberation [of France] (6).

The present essay proposes to offer a brief study of different literary writings and films produced in France in both French and English during the period of 1940 to 1944, and afterwards. Even as, internationally, the *Résistance* members and supporting writers are more known to general readers than the intellectuals who considered it better to glorify the Vichy régime rather than support the laxities of the 1870-1940 *La Troisième République* (that is, the *Third Republic*) – derisively referred to as the *Collaborationists* – it is identifiably a phenomenon that arose out of the fact that the Allies (and not the Axis powers) could win the Second World War and rewrote history on their own lines. Among the prominent *Collaborationist* intellectuals, litterateurs, and journalists were Charles Maurras (1868-1952), Abel Bonnard (1883-1968), Pierre Drieu La Rochelle (1893-1945), Louis-Ferdinand 'Céline' (that is, Louis-Ferdinand Destouches) (1894-1961), Henry de Montherlant (1895-1972), the rightist journalist Henri-Robert Petit (1899-1985), Roparz Hemon (that is, Louis-Paul Némé) (1900-78), the Second World War soldier-turned-litterateur Lucien Rebatet (1903-72), 'Raymond Abellio' (that is, Georges Soulès) (1907-86), Robert Brasillach (1909-45), the writer and film-director Marguerite Duras (1914-96), and the

Breton nationalist, linguist, and journalist Alan Heussaff (1921-99). These writers, some of whom were executed or condemned during the French *Épuration légale* of 1944-9, perceptively had their own ideologies and respective reasons for advocating or necessitating the Vichy régime, but their publications have been deliberately banned, refuted, or neglected in the post-Second World War period by the supporters of the *Free French Forces*. *Hephaestus Books* has released respectively in August and September 2011 two collections of *French Nazi Collaborators*, which contain references to some of the above-mentioned intellectuals. If the 1934 turbulence in Spain under the Republican government, as Paul Preston opines, resulted in the *Spanish Coup* of 1936 and initiated the *Spanish Civil War* (90-1), the *Collaborationist* intellectuals were obviously influenced by the idea, specially popularised by Pétain, that the erroneous democratic policies of the *Third Republic* had resulted in its defeat by Germany. Wilfred Douglas Halls further adds that the Vichy-supporting intellectuals had also hoped for the establishment of a new regime in which there would be the conglomeration of “Christian aspirations, Latin culture, and [...] French tradition”, and digressive 'individualism' would be banished (37).

The unconditional support extended by a considerable section of the French litterateurs and philosophers to the Vichy régime most probably had its roots in the 1898-founded *Action Française*, a French monarchist and counter-revolutionary movement and periodical founded by Henri Vaugeois (1864-1916) and Maurice Pujo (1872-1955), and whose principal ideologist was the Provence-born Maurras. Maurras, like other late-19th century reactionaries, had been deeply affected by the French defeat in the 1870-1 *Franco-Prussian War*, and joined politics during the 1890s' trial and incarceration of the Jewish French artillery-officer Alfred Dreyfus (1859-1935) on suspicion of espionage for the Germans. Maurras, interestingly, was a vociferous supporter of France's joining the First World War and even criticised the *Treaty of Versailles* for its being 'too lenient' on the Germans. However, after 1934, he became a nationalist and fascist, supporting Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) and Francisco Franco (1892-1975), though he opposed the racist policies of Adolf Hitler (1889-1945). As Pétain became the head of the French government, Maurras in *La Seule France* argued that his country would recover 'morally and politically' under the leadership of the First World War Verdun-veteran. Although the intellectual was arrested by the *Free France Forces* in September 1944, he was on the verge of being detained by the Nazi Germans because he was an admirer of de Gaulle. Throughout his life, Maurras remained ambiguous in his political and intellectual thought, and Michael Sutton describes his thoughts as a “combination of intelligence and fanaticism” (12). In 1944, the French writer was expelled from the *Académie Française*, and died shortly after his release in March 1952. A supporter of French monarchy, nationalism, classicism, anti-Semitism, and anti-Protestantism, Maurras published nine quality writings during the *Occupation*, some of which were politically-affiliated: *The African Pages* (1940), *Without the Wall of*

Cypress (1941), *Mistral* (1941), *France Alone* (1941), *From Anger to Justice* (1942), *French for Revival* (1943), *Poetry and Truth* (1944), *Mistralian Landscapes* (1944), and *The Bread and Wine* (1944). Taking an overall view of Maurras's philosophy and oeuvre, Michael Curtis observes, Maurras supported Vichy, but he was not a collaborator; he remained anti-German and was critical of the French Fascists in Paris who were collaborators, pro-German, and who favoured the creation of an one-party state (xiii).

The homosexual and First World War-veteran Bonnard was a French poet and novelist who chose to spend his last days in Spain rather than facing incarceration and dishonour in his own country to which he voluntarily returned in 1960, having had previously been condemned to death *in absentia* for serving as the *Minister for Youth and National Education* in Vichy France. Bonnard, who became a fascist in the 1930s, was later granted political asylum by Franco. As a so-called 'collaborator', he published only *Thoughts into Action* (1941) during the *Occupation*, though his reputation was established for such pre-war writings as *In Praise of Ignorance* (1926), *Friendship* (1928), *The Moderates* (1936), and *Know How to Love* (1937). Citing different letters written by Bonnard, Laurence Dorléac comments that he was an 'idealist' often with unrealistic political ideas; staunchly opposed to Russian expansionism, he always remained scared of the spread of communist ideas (43). As Karlsgodt writes in *Defending National Treasures*,

[Bonnard] [...] became increasingly critical of Vichy conservatives who, in his opinion, were slowing down social reforms and Franco-German collaboration. The leitmotifs in these wartime writings are action, energy, elitism, and racial purity. [...] In a speech honouring [the German sculptor] Arno Breker, Bonnard called for moral rejuvenation through a *mystique de l'action* (action mystique), in which a new affinity for work and physical effort would take hold in all French people. He also believed that artistic beauty, once the sole province of the materialistic bourgeoisie, should be accessible to all in the New Europe. Yet behind this apparently populist rhetoric, his worldview was profoundly elitist. Speaking on social elites in 1943, he argued that modern society required leadership made up of 'chosen men', based on their character, moral fortitude, and the quality of their work (35-6).

Pierre Eugène Drieu La Rochelle's suicide in 'liberated' Paris on 15 March 1945 might have instantaneously led the neo-fascists to commemorate him as a martyr, but his Vichy-attachments do not diminish the brilliance of such publications as *Interrogation* (a collection of poems published in 1917), *The Man Covered Women* (novel, 1925), *A Woman at the Window* (novel, 1929), "Le Feu Follet" – a 1931 short-story based on the alcoholic surrealist poet Jacques Rigaut's death, *A Funny Travel* (novel, 1933), *The Comedy of Charleroi* (a 1934 collection of short stories based on La Rochelle's war-trauma), the semi-autobiographical novel *Gilles* (1939) which severely criticises the functioning of inter-war France, *The Man on Horseback* (1943), *The Straw Dogs* (novel, 1944), and the 1992 posthumously-published *War Diary*. A close friend of the

communist French litterateur Louis Aragon (1897-1982), La Rochelle was a thrice-wounded First World War veteran who came to denounce the decadence of France under the parliamentary system of the *Third Republic*. Believing that a federal Europe would bolster its own economic capabilities, the French writer, initially staunchly opposed to Hitler's racist policies, embraced Nazi ideals after visiting Germany in 1935. La Rochelle joined the fascist *Popular Party of France (PPF)* in 1936; left it in 1939 only to support in 1940 the German occupation of France; became disillusioned with the Vichy régime in 1943, and embraced *Eastern Spirituality* and Stalinism by 1944. Identifying La Rochelle to be one of the more-studied Collaborationist individuals, Sarah Shurts identifies in her doctoral dissertation the element of introspection that permeates his novels and short stories (338). She further writes that critical works on the French writer have later "reduced his ideological attachments to political expediency, professional opportunism, suicidal tendencies, and a pathological loathing of himself and his intellectual class" (341).

Identifiably one of the more influential writers of the 20th century, Louis-Ferdinand Destouches (who wrote under the pseudonym of 'Céline') was grievously wounded in his right arm near Ypres on 25 October 1914 while serving his term as a First World War French soldier. He later graduated as a gynaecologist, and in 1924, served as an intern at a Parisian maternity hospital. In 1932, he wrote his first novel, *Journey to the End of Night*, a nihilistic, misanthropic, pessimistic though humorous narrative of the misadventures of the anti-hero and First World War-veteran Ferdinand Bardamu, which was shortlisted for *The Goncourt Prize*. In the 1936 *Death on Instalment Plan*, the Parisian doctor Bardamu reappears and engages in numerous sexual escapades in the French capital city which has had become a symbol of moral degeneration. The pamphlet *Mea culpa* (1936) is about Céline's Russian journey and his views on human nature, while *Trifles for a Massacre* (1937) is an anti-Semitic publication and in *School for Corpses* (1938), the gynaecologist seems to have decided that the evils of the world are caused by the multiplicity of Jews. Written during the Occupation, *A Nice Mess* (1941) reiterates Céline's dislike of the Jews and Freemasons and his admiration for the German invaders. In *Guignol's Band* (1944), the novelist describes the 1915-16 London-visits of Bardamu, demobilised after an arm injury during the Great War. The novel is a dive into the world of prostitution and trafficking, which the sardonic doctor faces. After Germany's defeat in the Second World War, Céline escaped to Denmark, and returned to France in 1951, where he regained his lost reputation through the trilogy: *Castle to Castle* (1957), *North* (1960), and (the posthumously-published) *Rigodon* (1969). Will Self, in his 10 September 2006-article "Céline's Dark Journey" (published in *The New York Times*; U.R.L.: <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/10/books/review/Self.t.html>), writes about Céline's oeuvre:

Straightforward fear adumbrates his invective, which [...] is aimed against all classes and races of people with indiscriminate

abandon. Indeed, if *Ulysses* is the great modernist novel most inspired by a desire for humanistic inclusion, then *Journey to the End of Night* is its antithesis: a stream of misanthropic consciousness, almost unrelieved by any warmth or fellow-feeling. I say almost, because Céline does have some weaknesses, notably for children. As Bardamu puts it, when his concierge's nephew is dying: 'You never mind very much when an adult passes on. If nothing else, you say to yourself, it's one less stinker on earth, but with a child you can never be so sure. There's always the future'. [...] Céline offers devastating critiques of Christianity, capitalism, socialism – all the kleptocratic belief systems devised to keep the poor in their place, and the bourgeoisie in theirs as well. [...] Céline went on writing throughout all this, but after *Death on the Instalment Plan* (1936), the more lyrical – and certainly funnier – sequel to *Journey*, the novels became increasingly gnomic and disjointed. Is it overdetermining to suggest, that just as the universal paranoia of *Journey* decayed into the tawdry specificity of anti-Semitism, so the famous ellipses that broke up Céline's diatribes into a kind of prose-poetry increased in number and frequency until they were like machine gun bullets, riddling with holes the once cohesive weave of his language?

Henry Marie Joseph Frédéric Expédite Millon de Montherlant, simply known as 'Henry de Montherlant', had already become a famous litterateur prior to the beginning of the Second World War, his *The Bachelors* (1934) and the tetralogy *The Young Girls* (1936) (consisting of *Unmarried Girls*, 1936, *Pity for Women*, 1936, and *The Demon of Good*, 1937) having been sold millions of copies. Among his more famous plays were *The Queen Died* (1934), *The Master of Santiago* (1947), *Port Royal* (1954), and *The Cardinal of Spain* (1960). In his first novel, *The Dream* (1922), the homosexual writer who was expelled from the *Sainte-Croix de Neuilly Academy* and was mobilised, wounded, and decorated in 1916 during the First World War, eulogised the courage and camaraderie of French soldiers. A similar theme can be noticed in his *Funeral Chant for the Dead at Verdun* (1925). Later, his *The September Equinox* (1936–8) was banned by the Germans for its nationalistic tone. However, in his *The June Solstice* (1941), de Montherlant appears to have had taken an abrupt turn from his usual themes, admiring the German military occupation of France and justifying the defeat of the *Third Republic*, which he, like his eccentric aristocratic father who shunned electricity and telephone connections, so deeply hated. After France was 'liberated' by the Allies, his 1941 publication earned for him the identity of a collaborator, and he was disgraced – beaten on the Paris streets to the extent of being blinded. The author's *The City Whose Prince is a Child* (1952) and the novel *The Boys* (1969) deal with homosexual themes – an area of concern that not only earned him stigma but also was partially responsible for his suicide on 21 September 1972.

Richard Golsan, in his *French Writers and the Politics of Complicity*, writes about how in spite of his literary talents, de Montherlant has been vituperatively accused by the critic Guehenno of being an exhibitionist,

full of vanity, and an intellectual with an 'inadequate philosophy of history' (24). However, he also points out the areas where de Montherlant differs from other collaborators. He was, in words of Golsan, "not an anti-Semite [:] [...] or [...] merely a knee-jerk reactionary motivated by a hatred of Communism or an adulation of such figures as Hitler [and] [...] Mussolini" (*ibid.* 25). His identifiable anti-Nazi views at the beginning of the Second World War and his support of fascism during the Occupation made the critical interpretations of his writings extremely strenuous. Taylor, in her *The Facts on File Companion to the French Novel*, writes that de Montherlant's "writings reveal contradictory tendencies of sacrifice and abandon, austerity and sensuality. Above all, de Montherlant was opposed to the mediocrity and decadence of contemporary society, a frustration that sometimes led him to try and escape into the past. [...]. [Henry de] Montherlant's knowledge of classical culture and Christian spirituality mark his oeuvre in which one finds a fundamental tension between stoicism and a love of pleasure. A recurring theme is the notion that the world is chaos followed by night" (274).

The right-wing journalist, Henri-Robert Petit, whose anti-Semitic books, including *The Reign of the Jews*, partially influenced Céline, became the Secretary-General of the *Anti-Jew Committee of France* in 1937, and in 1942, was appointed the Vichy-French *Commissioner for Jewish Affairs*. Whereas his two sons later volunteered for the *German Armed Forces*, Petit became the chief editor of the collaborationist newspaper *Le Pilon* in 1940. He was amnestied in 1959, following which he re-associated himself, though temporarily, with the French neo-Nazi group *Federation of National and European Action* (commonly abbreviated as the 'F.A.N.E.'). Though not an anti-Semite like Petit, Louis-Paul Némó was an intellectual from the north-western French region of Brittany who compiled dictionaries, wrote poems and short stories under the *nom-de-plume* of 'Roparz Hemon', and founded the literary journal *Gwalarn* before entering the Second World War as a French soldier. He was wounded and imprisoned by the Germans, and after his release, went back to Brest in August 1940, only to be appointed the director of programmes at *Radio Roazhon-Breizh* two months later. In October 1942, Némó and the German linguist Johannes Leo Weisgerber (1899-1985) co-founded the *Celtic Institute of Brittany* (C.I.B.) and later he assisted in German intelligence. Nevertheless, even after escaping to Germany during the 'liberation', he was imprisoned there, and later self-exiled himself to Ireland, where he researched at the *Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies* (D.I.A.S.), published *A Historical Morphology and Syntax of Breton* (1975), and created the periodical *Ar Bed Keltiek*.

The Sorbonne-educated anti-Semite Lucien Rebatet criticised music for the rightist newspaper *Action Française*, and between 1932 and 1944, reported for the rightist *I am Everywhere*. Identified as an important French novelist by the noted American critic Francis George Steiner, he had become sympathetic to the Nazi ideals prior to the German occupation of France and began accusing Jews of initiating a global

belligerence merely to halt Adolf Hitler's advancement. During the 1939-45 war, he was conscripted into the *French Armed Forces*, and after a brief period of service, became a radio reporter for the Vichy government, a post he later resigned to report for *The People's Cry*. In his 1942 *The Ruins*, he accused the *Third Republic* politicians and the French Jews for hastening the defeat of the French forces by the German military troops. His two novels – *The Two Standards* (1952) and *The Ripe Grains* (1954) were published after the War, the first one six years after he was sent back to France from Austria, where he was initially sentenced to death but was later released from prison. Throughout his life, Rebattet remained a vociferous fascist though his anti-Semitic tendencies subsided toward the end of his life. Acknowledging his persuasive powers as a radio broadcaster, Alice Kaplan identifies him as “a second-rate Céline” (139).

Georges Soulès, who became the *Secretary General* of the fascist *Revolutionary Social Movement* in 1942, escaped to Switzerland after the conclusion of the Second World War and was pardoned in 1952. His literary career started when he was already forty-seven years of age, and he specialised in religious investigative writings, publishing, respectively in 1950 and 1984 such works as *The Bible – Encrypted Document* and *An Introduction to Biblical Number Theory*. Antoine Faivre opines that Soulès, who wrote under the pseudonym of 'Raymond Abellio', “clearly deserves an important place among contemporary neognostics” (290).

Robert Brasillach is identifiably one of the few French writers to have been executed – in the southern Parisian commune of Montrouge on 6 February 1945 – for his collaborative activities in Vichy France. The homosexual writer of such novels as *The Spark Thief* (1932), *Child of the Night* (1934), *The Bird Merchant* (1936), *The Seven Colours* (1939), and *The (Female) Conqueror* (1943), and the well-read 1944 collection of *Poems*, Brasillach became a fascist in 1934 and later edited the rightist newspaper *I'm Everywhere*. In 1940, while serving against the invading Germans as a French soldier, he was temporarily incarcerated, and became in 1942 an ardent supporter of the Occupation. As a Nazi-favoured intellectual, he advocated death penalties for the leftist politicians and members of the French Resistance, and especially because of his repeated insistence on the assassination of the French politician Georges Mandel (1885-1944), de Gaulle refused to pardon him, though French literary giants like Paul Claudel (1868-1955), Paul Valéry (1871-1945), Jean Cocteau (1889-1963), and Albert Camus (1913-60) had, in unison, petitioned the French general for the commutation of Brasillach's death sentence. He died without repenting for either his support for the Occupation or his anti-Semitism, justifying his actions in *Letter to a Solider of the Class of Nineteen Hundred and Sixty*, published posthumously in 1946. Critics like François Truffaut and Dominique Venner, just like Brasillach's biographer Alice Kaplan, have had been highly appreciative of the intellectual quality of his publications, with Kaplan almost identifying him as a French socio-literary-cultural icon. David Carroll has, however, resented the late-20th

century attempts to “transform Robert Brasillach into a literary martyr” (100), and points out that in spite of all his literary talents, the executed French intellectual has had been an ultranationalist and fascist who could not deny his responsibility for the Fall of France (*ibid.* 101).

The French writer and film director Marguerite Duras's publications during the Occupation included *The Impudent* (1943) and *Quiet Life* (1944), but they rarely reflected her leftist leanings. She worked as a book-censor for the Vichy French government between 1942 and 1944, but she also supported the efforts of the *French Résistance*. Her husband, Robert Antelme (1917-90), the writer of *The Human Species* (1947), was deported to the *Buchenwald Concentration Camp* for his *Résistance* activities, but was later saved by the Allied troops. Reflecting on Marguerite Duras's oeuvre, Leslie Hill writes, “Duras is adept at suddenly disclosing fresh autobiographical information or denying what was thought to be firmly established; and it is clear from this that the uncertainties she thus introduces into the biographical record are the result of a calculated strategy designed to undermine any reductive attempt to use biography as a means of accounting for her writing” (1). Another collaborating litterateur, Alan Heussaff, left his linguistic concerns to serve the separatist *Bezen Perrot* militia in 1943 and 1944, was sentenced to death in absentia after the Second World War, and later amnestied in 1967. However, his collaborationist activities never exceeded his linguistic researches.

It is understandable, in view of the ultimate victory of the Allied forces over the Axis military powers, number, why the number of publications and cinema released in favour of the French *Résistance* far exceed those written or produced by the collaborationists. Even in the later years of the 20th century, some English novels and non-fictional works deal with the themes of *Résistance* and the attempted German control of the patriotic Frenchmen. They include Graham Swift's *Shuttlecock* (1981), Piers Paul Read's *The Free Frenchmen* (1986), James Watson Bacque's *Other Losses* (1989) and *Just Raoul* (1990), and Sebastian Faulks's *Charlotte Gray* (1999). The winner of the 1983 Geoffrey Faber Memorial Award for Fiction, *Shuttlecock* is a psychological thriller concerning the debilitations of 20th century urban life and narrated by the weak and self-conscious Prentis. The plot, in which the narrator's war-veteran father is revealed not to be a heroic spy with the former code name of 'Shuttlecock' but a Collaborating villain, helps the novelist to examine how the myth of heroism survives the brutality inherent in human nature. In Read's *The Free Frenchmen*, the loyal French citizen Bertrand de Roujay, who is perennially unlucky in love, escapes, after the Nazi invasion of France, to London to join de Gaulle's *Free French* forces. Interestingly, while his former wife is a communist, de Roujay's brother becomes a supporter of the Vichy French administrators. The fictional family of de Roujay represents elements that plagued France when it was in danger of losing its national identity. In *Other Losses*, Bacque alleges that the American general, Dwight Eisenhower, orchestrated the deaths of approximately 0.8 million German prisoners-of-war between 1944 and 1949; *Just Raoul* focuses on the private efforts of Raoul Laporterie to save several Jews from the Nazis in occupied France. In *Charlotte Gray*, a young Scottish woman involves herself with the *Résistance* politics of

Occupied France while trying to trace her lover, a *Royal Air Force* pilot, who has had gone missing in Vichy France. While doing so, she encounters several gruesome secrets, which were daily-life realities in Occupied France. Published exactly fifty years before *Charlotte Gray*, Charles Morgan's novel *The River Line* deals with the smuggling of Allied servicemen out of Occupied France. Reproduced as a play in 1952, *The River Line* focuses on the mental turmoil of a group of Allied military officers concealed in the Nazi-infested Toulouse when they understand that one among them is an impostor. Following the German conquering of France, the Protestant American journalist Varian Mackey Fry (1907-67) went to Marseilles as an agent of the *Emergency Rescue Committee* and helped several Jews and anti-Nazi French activists to escape incarceration by the Nazis. Fry's *Surrender on Demand* was published in 1945 by the New York-based *Random House*. Nancy Cunard (1896-1965), an English poet and anarchist, has also had been a consistent voice against the German domination of the French citizens all throughout the period of the Second World War.

However, the most important English writings of and during the Résistance emanated out of the Irish dramatist and Nobel laureate, Samuel Beckett (1906-89). During the Second World War, he and Suzanne Déchevaux-Dumesnil (1900-89), later his wife, joined the French Résistance, and worked as courier-people. In August 1942, Beckett's clandestine activist-group was betrayed, forcing him and Déchevaux-Dumesnil to escape to the south-eastern French village of Roussillon, where they settled for two years and helped the *Maquis* to sabotage the *German Armed Forces* in the Vaucluse Mountains. While in concealment in Roussillon, Beckett unsuccessfully tried to complete his novel, *Watt*, which was ultimately published in 1953. Anthony Uhlmann, in fact, observes in his "Beckett and Philosophy" that Beckett's vision of life and his oeuvre have had been principally influenced and moulded by his connection with the Résistance (*A Companion* 91). Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953) is perhaps the most representative work indicating his association with the Résistance, and Gerry Dukes points out that even the original title of the play in French – *En attendant Godot* – has an ironic connotation related to the Résistance, indicating those who chose to collaborate with the Occupationists (*Bloom's Modern* 140). In fact, every aspect of *Waiting for Godot* can be interpreted in terms of Beckett's association with the Résistance – right from the tramp-like Vladimir and Estragon's waiting for an unknown personality, the leafless tree of the first act, to the same act's master-slave relationship demonstrated between Pozzo (an identifiably Italian character, suggestive of Fascism) and Lucky (probably an English name signifying the attack of the fascists on the Allied countries). It has even been opined in *The Continuum Companion to Twentieth-century Theatre* that the minimalistic play itself is set in the French village of Roussillon, where Beckett escaped to avoid being arrested by the *Gestapo* (76). David Bradby writes, "*Waiting for Godot* contains several references to this part of France, including the name of the farmer for whom Beckett worked, Bonnelly, and the peculiar red colour of the earth" (12-3).

Among the more famous French authors, Albert Camus (1913-60) wrote extensively though symbolically about the French Résistance. The winner

of the 1957 Nobel Prize for Literature, Camus joined the *French Communist Party* in 1935. He was a pacifist during the early part of the Second World War, turning against the Germans after December 1941, after witnessing the Nazi execution of a communist activist. He joined the French Résistance group of *Combat*, and became the editor of the group's newspaper of the same name in 1943, later reporting the Allied army's liberation of Paris. Interestingly, he vociferously opposed the United States of America's dropping of atomic bomb on Hiroshima. His novel, *The Plague* (1947), which apparently deals with some medical workers in the Algerian city of Oran swept by a pestilence. As Barbara Fass Leavy writes, Camus's 1947 publication can be read as an allegory of "the Second World War and the French resistance to the Nazis" (185).

The avant-garde French writer's existentialist acquaintance, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-80) wrote two plays – *The Flies* (1943) and *No Exit* (1944) – in Occupied France, which could be read as his reaction against the Résistance. In the three-act *The Flies*, Sartre recounts how Orestes and Electra seek to avenge the death of their father, King Agamemnon of Argos, by killing their mother Clytemnestra and her paramour Aegisthus, who had helped her to commit the regicide. *No Exit* is a depiction of life in hell in which three deceased characters – Joseph Garcin, Inès Serrano, and Estelle Rigault – are punished by being locked into a room together for eternity. Both the plays – the first one perceptively focussing on freedom from psychological slavery and the second on living conditions in ghettos and their effects upon human beings – are important contributions to Résistance literature. Though the German administrators of defeated France did not ban the plays, Sartre was more committed to Résistance than most of the other then-French intellectuals. In 1939, he was drafted into the *French Armed Forces*, and imprisoned for nine months as a prisoner-of-war by the Germans. Released in April 1941 because of ill health, and resettling in Paris a month later, he and his lifelong partner, Simone de Beauvoir (1908-86), helped found the underground group *Socialism and Freedom*, and kept themselves engaged in anti-Nazi activities throughout the period of the Second World War.

Simone de Beauvoir's *She Came to Stay* (1943) is set in occupied France and offers a fictionalised account of her and Sartre's relationship with Olga Kosakiewicz and Wanda Kosakiewicz. Her next novel, *The Blood of Others* (1945), focuses on the conflict between the Collaborators and the Résistance fighters to whom she was so intimately attached. Ursula Tidd, in *Simone de Beauvoir*, writes, "[T]he use of violence is explored in the context of Résistance actions in wartime France in *The Blood of Others* and in broader historical contexts in *All Men are Mortal* (1946) and *The Mandarins* (1954)" (37). It must be mentioned that Gilbert Joseph has had later questioned the role of the couple as Résistance fighters in his *So Sweet Occupation* (1991), and Kate and Edward Fullbrook, in their "Sartre's Secret Key", describe their roles as 'ambivalent', 'incompetent', and 'failure' (*Feminist Interpretations* 102).

The Mark of Man (1944), a novel by Claude Lecomte (better known as 'Claude Morgan') (1898-1980), was equally successful in portraying the

horrors of the Occupation as Camus's and Sartre's respective related publications. Lecomte was a communist, who participated as a militant in the Spanish Civil War, and after the German invasion, he became a member of the *National Committee of Writers (C.N.E.)*, which was established in 1941. After the association's chief, Jacques Decour (1910-42) was executed by the Nazis, Lecomte took over his charge, and supervised the regular release of the Résistance newspaper, *The French Literature*, between 1942 and 1944. Though Lecomte's novels *Violence* (1933) and *Freedom* (1937), and his 1970 essay on Roger Vailland (1907-65), "The Man of Quality", were equally popular, *The Mark of Man* can be easily hailed as an identity-maker for the leftist French writer. *Army of Shadows* (1943) by Joseph Kessel (1898-1979), which offers a bleak and unromantic portrayal of the Résistance combatants by narrating the adventures of the fugitive French civil engineer and Résistance fighter, Philippe Gerbier, and *Diary of a Bastard* (1944) by Henri Queffélec (1910-92), are two other important publications from the period of the Occupation. About *Diary of a Bastard*, Paul Raymond Cote observes in *The Contemporary Novel in France* that it deals masterly with existential concerns, other than reflecting on the Résistance (336). *Tales of Auxois* (1943) by Edith Thomas (1909-70) is also often read as a significant Résistance publication. Having had written stories on behalf of the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War, Thomas became a Résistance activist during the Second World War, eventually joining the *French Communist Party* in 1942 (until 1949). She published her experiences of the Occupation in fictionalised accounts under the nom-de-plume of 'Jean Le Guern, Auxois', and in 1943, founded the *C.N.E.* with Jean Paulhan (1884-1968) and Claude Lecomte. Dorothy Kaufmann's *Edith Thomas: A Passion for Resistance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004) offers an exhaustive study of this powerful female voice of the Résistance. Roger Nimier (1925-62) served in the *French Armed Forces* until 1945, and later led the *Hussards*, a literary group that was opposed to existentialism. He recounted about the Résistance in his *Swords* (1948) and *The Blue Horseman* (1950). The teenage hero of *Swords* – a novel almost marred by the writer's depiction of violence – is a member of the Résistance militia, but is shown to be unable to sympathetically feel for his comrades. *Uranus* (1949), by the children's writer Marcel Aymé (1902-67), focuses on the different 1946 dilemmas of a small group of French survivors – the members including Pétain Archambault, Gagneux, and Watrin – who try to grapple with post-war-life in the hamlet of Blemont, previously destroyed by heavy American bombing during the 1939-45 belligerence. Jean Gwenaél Dutourd (1920-2011), incarcerated by the Germans during the Occupation, later became a Résistance activist, and recalled the hardships of French life during the Nazi occupation in his *The Best Butter* (1952). The effectiveness of such novels and other publications can be increased if occasionally reread in light of such Résistance-related films like Henri-Georges Clouzot's *The Raven* (1943), Jean Gremillion's *The Heaven is yours* (1944), and Jean-Pierre Melville's *Army of Shadows* (1969).

Numerous other powerful litterateurs and intellectuals wrote against the

German occupation of France during the Second World War. More famous among them include the French religious essayist Marc Boegner (1881-1970); Marc Bloch (1886-1944), the historian who published the controversial *Strange Defeat* in 1946; Berty Albrecht (1893-1943), who founded the feminist journal *The Sexual Problem*; Paul Eluard (1895-1952), a poet who co-founded the *Surrealist Movement*; Elsa Triolet (1896-1970), the wife of the leftist French novelist Louis Aragon (1897-1982); the French founder of *Liberation* – Emmanuel d'Astier de la Vigerie (1900-69); Jean Prevost (1901-44), writer and journalist; Missak Manouchian (1906-44), a Franco-Armenian poet; the poet René Char (1907-88); Elaine Jeannin-Garreau, who wrote *The Cries of Memory*; Lucie Aubrac (1912-2007), a former history teacher who summarised her memories of the Occupation in *They will Live with Elation* (1984); Charlotte Delbo (1913-85), who published the trilogy *Auschwitz and After* (consisting of “None of Us will Return”, “Useless Knowledge”, and “The Measure of Our Days”) in 1971; Marianne Cohn (1922-44), who wrote about her experiences of Nazi interrogation in her 1943 poem “I’ll Crack under Torture Tomorrow, not Today”; the blind French author Jacques Lusseyran (1924-71); and the French feminist Evelyne Sullerot (b. 1924).

Prior to conclusion, mention must be made of the contributions of Louis Aragon and Jean Marcel Bruller (1902-91), who wrote under the pseudonym of ‘Vercors’, to the subgenre of Résistance literature. Between 1942 and 1945, the communist-minded Aragon, who was mobilised in 1939 and awarded the French War Cross for courageousness, published *The Imperial Travellers* (1942), *Aurélien* (1944), and *The Servitude and Grandeur of the French: Scenes of Terrible Years* (1945), registering his opposition to the German intervention. Aragon also wrote for the *Midnight Edition*, and was a member of the *National Front Resistance Movement*. Max Adereth, in his “French Resistance Literature: The Example of Elsa Triolet and Louis Aragon”, collected in *Literature and War*, identifies Aragon and Elsa Triolet to be “among the best-known Résistance writers” who have most successfully portrayed how “literature is affected by revolution and war” (124). Jean Bruller, on the other hand, captures the sentiments of the dominated French commoners in his *The Silence of the Sea* (1942) and *The Battle of Silence: Memories of Midnight* (1967). In his 1942 novel, Bruller depicts how an elderly French gentleman and his niece participate in the Résistance by not speaking to Werner von Ebrennac, a Nazi officer who is occupying his residence. The perplexed von Ebrennac gradually realises that his comrades are exploitative, and after that, he decides to leave France to fight on the Eastern Front. Laura Frost comments that *The Silence of the Sea* marks a paradigm shift in Résistance writings, which were always expected to depict the Germans as necessarily evil dominators (80). In conclusion, it may be said that the Résistance writings and those published by the supporters of Vichy France will always claim an important space in international literary field. War literature has always been used to warn pupils against the dangers of belligerence. Résistance literature, if included in undergraduate and postgraduate syllabi, will undeniably motivate them to have a boarder

perspective regarding the dangers of militarism and how violence affect the sensitive individuals, asphyxiating them both physically and spiritually.

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