

The French
Writers' War
1940–1953



Gisèle Sapiro

Translated by VANESSA DORIOTT ANDERSON
and DORRIT COHN

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In memory of my father

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Introduction

In occupied France, the national cultural heritage was at stake for the acting forces. This is why they vied for the big names. Having failed to attract André Gide, the collaborators flaunted Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Henry de Montherlant, and Jacques Chardonne. The homegrown (especially Communist) Resistance retorted with Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard, François Mauriac, and Jean Paulhan. At the beginning of 1944, Charles de Gaulle added the names of oppositional writers in exile to those of Gide and Mauriac: Georges Bernanos and Jacques Maritain. The Vichyist contingent had its own stars, from Henri Pourrat to Charles Maurras, through Henri Massis. With more or less success, each camp thus claimed literary legitimacy in this ideological war. Why and how did writers respond to this demand?

My goal in this book is to demonstrate what is specific about the behavior of French writers under the Occupation, in light of the representations and practices proper to the literary world. The political positions taken by these writers obeyed logics that were not simply motivated by politics. The writers themselves rarely differentiated them from their professional practices: their tendency to engage depended on the way they viewed their craft. And they usually became engaged as artists or intellectuals. But the question of writers' conduct during the "dark years" surpasses that of engagement. The working conditions associated with the craft of writing changed drastically during this period and, as a result, the social signification of individual and collective practices was modified. The very meaning of professional practices and aesthetic options—from art for art's sake to invective—became a site of struggles involving individuals, groups, and institutions. I will analyze the effects of this crisis on the literary world, and what the proposed answers owe to its history.

Writers' engagement during the Occupation has most often been approached from the perspective of a politically focused intellectual history. Cultural practices and institutions are generally dealt with in studies of "daily life" or "cultural life" under oppression. This division leads, on the one hand, to an over-politicized and strongly individualized view, one that tends to focus on extreme figures (Céline, Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, Robert Brasillach, Lucien Rebatet) at the expense of more moderate examples. On the other hand, it leads to a depoliticized view that underestimates the ideological dimension of the most apparently "neutral" cultural activities. Faced with the tendency to disassociate these two questions, my book aims to shed light on each, using the other. I will reinscribe them in a more global approach to literary milieus and the way they worked during this period.

The achievements of the historiography of the "dark years," especially in the field of cultural production, made this approach possible.¹ Still, by adhering to the geographical and political divisions imposed by the specificity of the issues and the mechanisms of constraint, works devoted respectively to Vichy, to the Collaboration, and to the Resistance remained segregated for a long time. It is not by chance that studies attached to different cultural domains—whether literature, artistic creation, or theater—helped shatter these walls:² the cultural hegemony of Paris, which was largely maintained despite the forced emigration of the government to the Southern zone, forced a reevaluation of the weight of the demarcation line; political divisions appeared less clearly in those milieus, since corporative and professional solidarities sometimes won out over ideological divergences. Recently, a parallel interest has developed for the characteristics of behavior in social groups, professions, or milieus.³ From the viewpoint of the historiography of the Occupation, this book is linked to the latter perspective, although it privileges a sociological approach.⁴ Rather than working from geographical (Northern zone/Southern zone) and political divisions, I will take a given professional milieu, its practices and institutions, as my point of departure, in order to examine the crisis's repercussions within it. I will limit myself to metropolitan France, where the majority of the struggles for redefinition of the literary stakes played out.

◆ "The strange defeat," according to Marc Bloch's expression, that brought an end to the "Phoney War" through the occupation of two-thirds of the territory and the signing of the armistice on June 22, 1940, at Rethondes, would open up a real crisis of national identity. Writers did not escape from the logic of struggle and payback that seems to be the lot of every community caught up in a crisis of what Durkheim called collective consciousness. But the writers'

war was not simply a reflection of the civil war. Like any other professional milieu, the literary world has its own codes, references, rules, and principles of division.

It may seem paradoxical to add this study to an approach targeting professional milieus, given that the literary profession is the most individualistic, the least regulated, and the least organized (to the extent that its professional status is called into question): no technical training prepares writers for their trade (unlike musicians, for example) and there are no official requisites mandating entry. The literary world is nonetheless ruled by laws and value hierarchies that are relatively autonomous, to the extent that they cannot be reduced to external social determinations, as Pierre Bourdieu has shown.⁵ Confronted with political, religious, and economic demands, the literary field has affirmed its autonomy, by instituting the primacy of peer judgment as proof of legitimacy: thus, when the book market was industrialized in the nineteenth century, while a large-scale circulation network was developing under the rule of market logic and oriented toward short-term profits, a network of small-scale circulation emerged concurrently, one in which peer recognition outweighed economic criteria. Tension resulted between a pole that was more disposed to respond to external demand and a pole that was more oriented toward the defense of specifically literary values. This tension structured the literary field. What happens to literary autonomy in a period of crisis, when economic constraints are doubled and subject to political stakes? In what forms does it survive, and how does it resist external pressures?

Subject to the double mechanism of constraint imposed by the Nazis and Vichy, surrendered to the different attempts to harness its power, the literary field witnessed the abolition of those conditions that had assured its relative independence, particularly freedom of expression, during the Occupation. But in spite of its objective destructuration, which was amplified by the confusion born of the debacle, in spite of the manhandling of its channels of diffusion, a form of autonomy survived in the way that this now-shattered space functioned.

Whether exiles or stars of the collaborationist Parisian in crowd, underground or counselors to the prince, politicized or aestheticizing, silent or verbose, writers indeed continued to discuss, debate, and judge each other, above and beyond the geographical, political, and legal frontiers. Gossip and rumors were a powerful vector of group cohesion and self-regulation at a time when standard reference points were in upheaval. While the rumor-mill flourished, payback was in fashion: Pierre Drieu La Rochelle and Aragon traded accusations; Robert Brasillach and Lucien Rebatet tore into François Mauriac for having joined the anti-Fascist camp. When it did not consume them, the crisis

exacerbated preexisting divisions that owed more to the history of the literary field than to the historical conjuncture: Henri Massis thus pursued a fight begun twenty years earlier with André Gide and *La Nouvelle Revue française*. Ideological divergences do not sufficiently explain the principles of division that underpin the struggles surrounding the redefinition of the stakes: although appearing in the specific form they adopted during the dark years, they still contain the constants of generational rifts and opposition between forces of autonomy and heteronomy. These principles, which acted in tandem without necessarily overlapping, were at work in both public polemics and institutional struggles.

While generally speaking, we can differentiate “dominant” from “dominated” writers according to their degree of notoriety (an opposition that often coincides with the rift between “old” and “young”), we can also differentiate between them according to the type of notoriety they enjoyed: on one hand, notoriety of a temporal order (institutional consecration, sales figures, high print runs); on the other, notoriety in the symbolic order (peer recognition). How did these factors of differentiation influence their political choices and the behaviors they adopted during the Occupation? Based on these factors, and according to the forms of dependence that they imply with respect to external demand (of the acting powers, the market, the press, or political parties), I will identify four types of social logics that coexisted in the literary field, and that induced different relationships to literature and politics.

At the temporally dominant pole, near the fractions that wielded economic and political power, the trend was toward a worldly respectability that allied “good taste” with a sense of one’s responsibilities, and coincided with what we might call the state logic. Here, politics were considered “vulgar” and took the form of a morality to which art should remain subordinate. At the pole of large-scale production, close to journalism, the media logic prevailed. Privileging the current, the event, the sensational, it tended to impose itself via public scandal in order to stay connected to “public opinion.” The aesthetic logic prevailed at the pole of limited production, especially among authors who enjoyed a strong symbolic notoriety. In keeping with the precepts of art for art’s sake, this logic gives priority to style and form, and tends to distance itself from politics as well as from morality. Finally, at the temporally dominated avant-garde pole, literature’s subversive dimension was brought to the fore. This often led the avant-gardes to align themselves with the political forces of opposition.

These different logics, which obviously never exist in a pure state, are more or less embodied in practices and institutions. The four institutions that I will examine here—the French Academy, the Goncourt Academy, the *Nouvelle Revue*

française, and the Comité national des écrivains—illustrate them in their most typical manifestations. The forms of dependency that they imply with respect to different social spheres allow us to understand the internal mechanisms that favored the process of autonomy loss during the Occupation. I will pay particular attention to the ways in which the factors of heteronomy conveyed by the literary field's own authorities participated in this process, and to what extent they resisted.

➤ The method that I have favored here is that of a structural history, one that shows not only the coexistence of different logics but also of different temporalities—meaning forms of inertia and rhythms of evolution in the long and short run—in a given state of the literary field: the rapidity of the defeat and the events that followed contrasted with the inertia of representations and the (variable) slowness of readjustments; literary activity was generally slowed by the material difficulties and other dysfunction brought about by the Occupation; finally, the relationship to time varied according to institutional logics (specific inertia), just as it varied among groups and individuals.

In the first part, I examine the literary logics behind writers' engagement. Although it is tempting to interpret attitudes and political choices as direct "reactions" to the event—even more so when the event (defeat, foreign occupation) invades the private sphere and has effects on the most routine daily actions—we must seek out the social mediations that helped orient them. I am less interested in the decisional processes than in the set of factors that overdetermined them at the group level, and especially those factors linked with the mediation of the literary field.

A situation of national crisis such as the Occupation, in which politics carry more weight than usual and all the more so for professional writers, constitutes an ideal-typical case for studying the relationship between writers and politics due to the heightened constraints exerted on their choices. However, while the modalities of writers' engagement are more legible, the interweaving of literary and political logics becomes simultaneously more "transparent" and more difficult to untangle. More transparent, because in times of crisis, tacitly regulated competition becomes a struggle for the symbolic, if not physical, destruction of the adversary, to borrow the terms of Max Weber.⁶ This is what Georges Duhamel, from an "indigenous" point of view, said about the crisis of the 1940s:

I hardly dare confess that literary rivalries have always seemed to me to lack great venom, because they have the benefit of a natural emunctory: they are

settled in public with the aid of strokes of the pen and floods of ink. It has needed the disorders of the present times, when politics can be discerned everywhere under the guise of literature, for me to find enemies in the very place where I was determined to see only competitors or interlocutors.⁷

More difficult to untangle, also, for two major reasons: first, the shuffling of reference points, due to social upheaval; second, over-politicization, which attributed political significance to conducts beyond what was intended by the agents (this is why, even today, the attitudes of writers under the Occupation are generally understood from a strictly political point of view).

The crisis of representations engendered by the defeat and the redefinition of the space of possibles offered to writers in the new conditions of cultural production will first be presented from a synchronic perspective. Starting with the constraints that were specific to the situation, I will move on to the factors that were specific to the literary field, grasped through a quantitative study concerning the trajectories of 185 writers who were active in 1940.⁸ The factorial analysis that I conducted as the basis of this study illuminates the literary field's structuring principles during the Occupation. These principles, which I will later return to in more detail, shed light on the writers' attitudes during the "dark years," as well as the forms of their political engagement.

But these forms of politicization and the relations that they maintain with the categories of literary understanding cannot be grasped without an (at least partial) historicization of the representations that were associated with them, especially those that touch on the "responsibility" of the writer. Centered on the key moments in their crystallization, the diachronic perspective shows the persistence of the representations and the systems of opposition that preceded the crisis. From Agathon's (pseudonym of Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde) polemics against the New Sorbonne to the attacks on André Gide and *La NRF* after the Great War, along with mobilization for the "defense of the West," it was the representations forged twenty, even forty years earlier that reemerged at this time of national crisis, tirelessly renewed by the same actors (Henri Massis played the starring role) or their successors, while adapting them to the contemporary atmosphere. They were mobilized during the "bad masters quarrel," a key moment in the redefinition of the stakes and the redistribution of positions under the Occupation. The relationship to politics is considered here from the vantage point of discursive practices, which tend to differentiate themselves according to the four logics mentioned earlier: "good taste," "scandal," "art for art's sake," and "subversion."

The literary logics of engagement will be considered, thirdly, through the comparison of two singular trajectories, those of two Catholic novelists belong-

ing to the French Academy, Henry Bordeaux and François Mauriac. While the former was a champion of the new regime, the latter was the only “immortal,” as the members of the French Academy are called, to enter the literary Resistance. Centered on the relationship between dispositions, positions, and position-takings, in this case my analysis will privilege the opposition between the types of notoriety, temporal and symbolic, and its implications for the political evolution of these two writers.

The process of redefining the stakes was also driven by institutional struggles. After highlighting the systems of opposition that generally ground the divisions of the literary world under the Occupation, I will examine in the second part how they are embodied in four institutions: the French Academy, the Goncourt Academy, *La NRF*, and the Comité national des écrivains, and how they operate distinctively in each one. Neglected by literary history, the “institutions of literary life,” as Alain Viala has designated them, constitute “the best linkage between the structures of the field and those of the social sphere in which the field is located [. . .]. Their role is crucial, for they serve as spaces for potential dialogue and conflicts between the literary space and political, financial, and religious powers.”⁹ In this respect, they are a good indicator of the forms of autonomy and heteronomy that coexist in that space. As authorities of the literary field that regulate literary life, they help ensure its relative autonomy. They are one of the means by which the peer group exerts control over its members. However, in their conditions of existence and in their very mode of functioning, they bear principles of heteronomy, whether it is a question of dependency on the state, on those who hold temporal power, on the political field and the parties, on the laws of the market, or even on the media. These principles of heteronomy are fully revealed under an authoritarian regime, when the question of institutional survival enters more or less into contradiction with that of maintaining literary autonomy.

In a period of destructuring and representational crisis, these authorities constituted tangible reference points that guided writers’ orientation. While a number of forums disappeared, while certain literary juries, such as the Femina or the Interallié interrupted their activity, both academies and *La NRF* illustrate the literary field’s modes of survival at an institutional level. Ensuring continuity between the previous state of the field and its current state, they allow us to distinguish effects proper to the crisis from changes that were the result of a morphological evolution or previous conflicts. But above all, in a period of ideological war and national identity crisis, these institutions became a stake in the struggle between the acting forces. And this is all the more true since they all claimed to play a national role that justified their survival. Instruments of

literary power in their role as legitimizing authorities, they were also ordinarily powerful instruments of mobilization—to gather petition signatures, group memberships, and so forth—and potential instruments of propaganda, which the different political camps would try to exploit thanks to the crisis. One of the effects of the crisis was precisely the appearance of a new organization, the Comité national des écrivains, which was the principal organization of the literary Resistance.

Taken at once as full-fledged *agents*—endowed with a corporate name and an identity—and as codified groups of positions, these four authorities illustrate the state, media, aesthetic, and political logics that were at work in the literary field. In each one of them, intergenerational struggles, the opposition between forces of autonomy and forces of heteronomy, and ideological stakes had specific repercussions. These characteristics will be examined through a brief reminder of the conditions of their founding, a study of their morphology,¹⁰ and an analysis of their position, as well as of the conflicts that affected them from the 1930s to the Liberation. For clarity's sake, and also to highlight their proper institutional logics, which allow us to better understand their modes of functioning under the Occupation, I have dealt with them separately, while still accounting for the relations between them (the competition between the French Academy and *La NRF*, for example) and with other authorities (thus I will mention the Renaudot Prize in reference to the Goncourt Academy, when appropriate). The schism within *La NRF* team following its takeover by Drieu La Rochelle, who turned it into a “showcase” of the Collaboration, has led me to study the struggles to reappropriate its heritage that punctuated the recomposition of the literary field. They provoked a veritable war of reviews that transcended the demarcation line, and a fratricidal combat between Drieu and Aragon, the great orchestrator of “contraband literature” in the small reviews of the Southern zone. Illustrated by the relationships between its founders (Aragon, Jean Paulhan, Jacques Decour), the alliance between the Communists and non-Communists would make it possible, thanks to literary and militant solidarities, to set up the Comité national des écrivains and constitute a real underground literary community that was able to impose norms of conduct on writers starting in 1943.

The effects of the crisis were not limited to the Occupation period. They largely determined the modes of restructuring the literary field at the Liberation, which is the subject of the last part. Social upheaval favored the crystallization of a new generation that established itself starting in September 1944, particularly through the CNE and the confrontations surrounding the purge. The notion of the “responsibility of the writer” was at the heart of these strug-

gles. Having emerged from the shadows, the CNE claimed to inaugurate a new deontology for the writer's profession. But its power of excommunication was quickly contested. Rocked by internal divisions, the enterprises born of the Resistance also found themselves confronted with the traditional authorities, which intended to regain their place and take part in the national reconstruction. These institutional conflicts, through which the process of "normalization" began, will be sketched out in the last chapter. They culminated in 1953, date of the second amnesty law, after which the issues that the crisis raised, without disappearing, ceased to dominate literary life.¹¹

➤ The choice to found my analysis of writers' attitudes under the Occupation upon the logics proper to the literary world and its institutions, rather than upon preconceived categories of political history, has the merit of reevaluating the relative significance of some actors, to make others emerge, and to establish the share of continuities and ruptures in the collective and individual lives of the members of this atypical social group. A contribution to the social and cultural history of the "dark years," this book also helps to better determine the place of those years as a turning point in contemporary literary history, while shedding a different light on the forms of imbrication between literature and politics in what has been called a "literary nation."¹²

PART I

The Literary Logics
of Political Engagement



CHAPTER I

Choices under Constraints

For those of our townfolk who risked their lives in this predicament the issue was whether or not plague was in their midst and whether or not they must fight against it.
—Albert Camus, *The Plague*

In order to pose the question of writers' political choices under the Occupation, we must first ask ourselves what the stakes were and how they were perceived by the literary community. But these stakes were not immediately clear. Of course, for those who heard it, the appeal of June 18 offered an alternative: defeat was neither foregone nor irreversible; the armistice was a political and military error. But who was this upstart young general who dared to rise up against the hero of Verdun? How much credit should be given to this military man, who had declared himself the head of the "Free France" government without any other formality? In the beginning, Vercors tells us, "Everyone believed that the government had authorized the general to speak, since he had just served as minister under Reynaud."¹ This illusion was quickly dispelled. Two attitudes now became possible: acceptance or refusal of the German Occupation. But even if it were enough to sum up the range of choices possible at that particular conjuncture, which obviously isn't the case, this alternative remains purely theoretical. How did it translate into practice? The question is even more pressing since writers, just like the rest of the population, had to confront practical and material problems. The faculties of critical thinking that we attribute to writers as intellectuals—that is to say professional thinkers—should not mask the fact that these faculties are exercised from a given and necessarily limited point of view. Nor should we forget that, even if these faculties are not forged by and for practice, they are no less inscribed in the practical conditions of life, at both

group and individual levels. Thus the principles that informed the modes of perception of the issues at stake, as well as the attitudes and the conducts adopted, need to be related to the specific conditions under which these issues appear in the literary field.

The Redefinition of the Stakes and the Space of Possibles

The apparatuses that both the Nazi occupant and the Vichy government put in place to control cultural production generated an obvious loss of autonomy and a real destructuring of the literary field. Repression, proscriptions, censorship, control of the means of production (notably through the distribution of paper), propaganda: French literature had never known such constraints, even under the Second Empire. Moreover, the division of the territory into two zones and the exodus of a number of writers who sought refuge either in the unoccupied zone or abroad led to the loss of the very geographic centralization that had been one of the conditions of the autonomization of the French intellectual field and its ability to compete with power during the Dreyfus affair.² The crisis of representations caused by the upheaval of reference points further weakened the literary field's mechanisms of resistance to heteronomy. Finally, loss of autonomy translated into the subordination of the literary stakes to the political stakes: whether or not to publish in these conditions became a political issue. The most apolitical attitudes thus took on political significance.

The over-politicization of the literary stakes is directly linked to the transformation of the conditions of production. But it also arises from the eagerness of an entire fraction of agents (institutions and individuals) to serve the new powers. Thus, loss of autonomy also occurred according to the literary field's own logic. If the promotion of internal agents like Drieu La Rochelle to enact collaborationist politics in the cultural domain initially emphasized the blurring of reference points, it ultimately contributed to the solidarity of Resistance writers in their struggle to reclaim autonomy.

THE UPHEAVAL OF REFERENCE POINTS AND THE REIGN OF RUMOR

After the debacle, confusion was great. The defeat, the occupation of more than half the country by a foreign power, the scuttling of the Republic, the construction of an authoritarian regime, a whole month-long chain of events that occurred at breakneck speed—while scattered families were still trying to reunite and scarcity led to an obsession with material matters—generated a deep con-

fusion and feeling of disorientation, of “floating,” while awaiting clarification of the issues.³ “I float like a cork,” Roger Martin du Gard wrote to Maria van Ryselberghe on July 22, 1940, “[. . .] and for the moment it is on the most stinking, the most fermented sludge that I float . . . Vichy is something that exceeds all the images one can make of it.”⁴

Before the war, the shuffling of political reference points had increased confusion, due to the back-and-forth maneuvers that led a large fraction of the nationalists to adopt neo-pacifist positions—against sanctions for Mussolini’s Italy as a result of the invasion of Ethiopia, for the Treaty of Munich, against France’s entry into the war—whereas the anti-Fascists rallied the hawks. It was also the result of a schism on the left, between full-fledged pacifists and anti-Fascists, a schism that began to appear during the Spanish Civil War. The Blum government’s politics of nonintervention—supported by the moderate or pacifist fractions against the Communists and proponents of the anti-Fascist cause—created divisions that were solidified by the Treaty of Munich and the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Finally, it was the result of the pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, which sounded the death knell of the union of the left realized under the Popular Front and excluded the Communists from the political playing field. The rise of the Vichy regime increased confusion. As Robert Paxton says, “It was not clear in the south whether anti-Germanism meant opposing Vichy or rejoicing in its simulacrum of independence and its nationalist rhetoric.”⁵

This confusion translated into hesitations, doubts, and about-faces. On July 14, the day the Germans entered Paris, André Gide found Marshal Pétain’s speech—claiming that “the spirit of enjoyment” had won out over the “spirit of sacrifice”—“admirable.” He changed his mind two days after the armistice when he heard the marshal’s new speech, suspecting “some infamous deceit”: “How can one speak of France as ‘intact’ after handing over to the enemy more than half of the country? How to make these words fit those noble words he pronounced three days ago? How can one fail to approve Churchill? Not subscribe most heartily to General de Gaulle’s declaration?”⁶ Roger Martin du Gard, a sworn pacifist and in favor of Munich, apologized in December 1940 for having “renounced” his “deep convictions” in 1939 and “thought that there was no other solution than war, and that, *this time*, this war was ‘just’”⁷—which would, by the way, have no effect on the attitude of withdrawal that he adopted. In the unoccupied zone, Paul Léautaud, whose initial anti-German reflex would not long resist the occupant’s politics of seduction, was astonished from the month of September on by the sudden reversal of institutional writers’ positions:

It is a nice contrast, and rather unexpected: the reactionary writers, the conformist, official academicians, celebrating homeland, patriotism, honor, great sentiments, writers such as Abel Hermant, Pierre Benoit, Abel Bonnard [. . .] have collaborated from day one with the papers published in Paris, with the authorization and under the surveillance of the Germans. Writers who are somewhat marginal, “resistant” as they are called, like Descaves (a little) and myself, if I dare to name myself, are saying: “Not on my life.”⁸

For writers, the new powers’ “call for bids” opened, despite an apparatus of constraints, a new space of possibles that did not offer itself up to immediate decoding. In the autumn of 1940, solicitations were the order of the day. Meant to ensure the literary legitimacy of these new ventures, they at first fed the illusion of a large and diversified supply, at least for those who weren’t immediately excluded because of their origins or opinions. This illusion masked the restriction of possibles within the framework of the new conditions of production. Appointed by the ambassador Otto Abetz to revive *La Nouvelle Revue française* under his direction, Pierre Drieu La Rochelle urged writers to associate themselves with his project. During his September stay in Vichy, he summoned the former director of the journal, Jean Paulhan, and then the literary columnist of *Le Figaro*, André Rousseaux, a Catholic who had been an editor at *Action française* in the 1920s. Like Jean Paulhan, André Rousseaux declined. He would still be approached by Jean de la Hire and Jacques Chardonne, who wished to see *Le Figaro* return to Paris.⁹ Roger Vailland, a journalist at *Paris-Soir* who had withdrawn to the Southern zone along with his newspaper, met with his former professor, Marcel Déat, in Vichy. Déat was editing the revived *Œuvre* in Paris and asked Vailland to join him there. After long hesitations, Vailland declined the offer.¹⁰

Senior writers were solicited first and most frequently in an effort to legitimate these enterprises. Their hesitations contributed to the loss of reference points during the first months of the Occupation, since younger authors usually situated themselves in relation to their elders, either in alignment or at a distance. But for the younger generation, these hesitations also inspired hope, at a time of social upheaval, that positions would become available, a hope that the extolling of the youth by the Vichy regime could only nourish. For the youngest ones, the cost of abstaining, of retreating from public life, a stance the writers of “refusal” would soon assume, could moreover appear greater, as this quote by Henri Membéré, reported by Vercors, illustrates: “In fact, it’s easy for a Gide, a Duhamel, to publish nothing under German domination; their work is done, it

is famous, they will have no trouble finding their audience after the Liberation, whereas I, with just one well-received novel and another that came out too late? In five years, in ten years, I will be forgotten; I'll have to start over from scratch."¹¹ For older writers, meanwhile, the threat of a takeover by the younger generation inspired a feeling of being cast aside, which likely played a part in André Gide or Paul Valéry's initial decision to lend their prestige to Drieu La Rochelle's project—although they would quickly change their mind. Roger Martin du Gard expressed this feeling in his typical form, that of "incomprehension"; harassed by pressing questions—"Why are you silent? People like you who have gained some credit for their work have a duty to light the way!"—and exiled in Nice, he felt he had even less "right to say a word" because he seemed "to have lost contact with the up-and-coming generation": "Do we even have a common vocabulary anymore? When I happen to hear young people hold forth, discuss, I am often struck by the feeling that I no longer speak the same language. That we no longer use the same words to mean the same things."¹²

The politicization of literary issues, the political meaning now attached to publication in *La NRF*, for example, wasn't immediately perceptible, especially for those residing on the other side of the demarcation line. Doubled by geographical dispersion, the *hysteresis* effect meant that the space of possibles was still viewed as it was before the war, as writers' hesitations again show us. Should we publish in Drieu La Rochelle's *NRF*, the writers asked themselves? Jean Schlumberger, Michel Leiris, and Raymond Queneau flatly refused, but André Gide offered up his "leaflets," which appeared in the first and third installments (December 1940 and February 1941), although he continued to waffle until several letters, including those of Francis Crémieux (the Jewish literary critic Benjamin Crémieux's son), who accused him of treason, and Jean Wahl, who blamed him, called him back to order.¹³ Solicited by Drieu La Rochelle to resume his theater article in *La NRF*, Paul Léautaud immediately thought to suggest that his *Journal littéraire* appear there, since the *Mercure de France's* disappearance suspended its publication. Jacques Bernard, the director of the *Mercure*, opposed this plan for reasons of competition. Still, Léautaud expressed his worries about the journal's publication conditions to Drieu, who assured him that he ran it in complete freedom. He rebelled upon discovering that the journal was subject to German censorship, then allowed himself to be reassured upon learning that Gallimard was paying the collaborators and that he had refused the entry of German capital into the house.¹⁴ Must we publish in *La NRF*? Jean Grenier asked Armand Petitjean, André Fraigneau, and François Mauriac. "Why not write for *La NRF*?" Armand Petitjean replied in April 1941. This former journal contributor, who had been mutilated in the Phoney War,

continued: "Drieu is weak, but sincere. As for myself, I'm going to publish an article in it in May, and I don't have any lessons to learn from the French after what I saw of them in June 1940."¹⁵ "It's a duty to write in *La NRF* to show that the French civilization continues,"¹⁶ retorted the novelist André Fraigneau. François Mauriac, who was "very happy with its reappearance and [who had] congratulated Drieu, before having read it" but saw in the first issue "the opposite of what [he] expected: a pure space, a summit reserved for poetry, for pure literature, for ideas . . ." still retained "a small weakness for this review";¹⁷ he could still answer Jean Grenier in November 1941, when he was on the verge of committing himself to the first underground writers' committee: "But yes, of course, it is necessary to contribute to *La NRF*. Unnecessary to tell you that I'm not at all with Drieu, but I am not outraged by his attitude. Such is the position of France, today, that nobody has the right to cast stones at anybody. For who could be sure of taking the best side?"¹⁸

Slowly, a kind of "cooperation" fell into place among the scattered writers. Correspondence, soon limited by the creation of interzonal cards, was replaced by generalized word of mouth spread by newsmongers, especially those who legally or clandestinely crossed the demarcation line. "We had just been admitted into the vast information system that was developing day by day and made word of mouth a much more powerful news vector than Radio-Paris," Jean Lescure recalled.¹⁹ Jean Paulhan was one of these newsmongers. Thanks to the position of "power behind the (literary) throne" that he had acquired during the interwar period, thanks to the breadth of contacts that he was probably alone in maintaining among the scattered authors, he was the "hub" that more or less preserved the unity of this fragmented field. From summer to winter 1940, whether through an abundant correspondence or chance encounters, he spread the writers' news and informed them, from day to day, of the conditions in which *La NRF* would reappear. He was also an indispensable mediator, "taking the pulse" of the authors vis-à-vis the renewed publication of *La NRF*, with which he was no longer involved. Even better, as we will see, he directed the authors, gave them advice and tips, and played the role of an oracle, since the verdicts he handed down—depending on whether or not they were heeded—predicted the authors' future in literary "eternity." He would be one of the pillars of the recomposition of the pole of limited production in the struggle to regain literary autonomy.

In a time of censorship and information control, word of mouth replaced official information channels which, reduced to propaganda, found themselves discredited. Marc Bloch, who noted this phenomenon for the Great War, quoted a comedian: "The prevailing opinion in the trenches was that anything could

be true except for what was allowed to be printed.”²⁰ Things were no different during the four years of the Occupation. As Paul Léautaud observed in his *Journal*: “We are surrounded by lies, exaggerations, biased arguments on both sides. The coryphaei of the newspapers stamping them with their tremolos and their command tirades. How do you find the truth in all that, how do you know which side it’s on? Anyone who gets worked up for either side is a naïve fool.”²¹

But the network of informal information was also an amazing network spreading idle gossip, false news, and rumors. The war, German oppression, social upheaval, terror, denunciations, the muzzled press, outrageous propaganda, the police-state character of the Vichy regime associated with its instability, with its changing leaders, could only give free reign to rumors at every level of society, the outlet of all social fears. “[French opinion] obeys anonymous commands and propagates wild rumors that spread from one end of the country to the other like wildfire. We hadn’t seen that since the Great Fear of 1789,” Alfred Fabre-Luce described.²² The rumor of the “synarchic plot” is one of the most famous examples of this phenomenon.²³

In the literary world, dispersion and the loss of reference points consolidated the reign of malicious gossip and backbiting which, practiced in a playful or polemic mode, are normally the essential vectors regulating internal power relations. As Norbert Elias has shown,²⁴ gossip is a practice that aims to reinforce or perpetuate group cohesion. It exerts a vital function since only the word, whether of praise or criticism, has the power of making something *exist*, and since the worst punishment a writer can receive is the silence of his colleagues. Nothing demonstrates this fact more clearly than this anecdote related by Raymond Queneau in his journal written in 1939:

Gide’s *Journal* was just published. In Paulhan’s office, everyone bustles about and looks for his name. Benda arrives. Paulhan says: “We’ll see what Gide has to say about you.” Benda agrees. We look: Gide only has good things to say. But Paulhan says: “Look, Benda, p. 250 (f. ex) . . . p. 1250 . . . he went 15 years without talking about you!”²⁵

Under the Occupation, gossip was at once a vector of cohesion that contributed to the restructuring of the literary field, a weapon used to exhume old grudges, and a channel for redistributing alliances. At a time of shifting allegiances, rumors and false news proliferated in fertile ground. “Unpleasant rumors were circulating about him [Daumal]. It’s difficult today to imagine how those times of whispers, of monitored words were times of rumor, insinuation, false information, endless repetitions, hidden meanings, and often self-interested lies.

The various tragedies that we experienced hadn't discouraged the 'pals' from their gossip-mongering," Jean Lescure recalled.²⁶ "False news," Marc Bloch has said, "is the mirror in which the 'collective consciousness' observes its own features."²⁷ Rumors "justified," a posteriori, all of the old disagreements that then took on an aura of premonition—the "ah! I knew that we couldn't count on him," "ah! I told you so," and so forth—and had the double virtue, in those troubled times, of reassuring everyone in their position while retroactively giving them a clear conscience. André Breton thus made use of the rumors stating that Louis Aragon—with whom he had broken ties in 1932 after denouncing "Front rouge" as a circumstantial poem—had become a champion of the new regime. "Sincerely, I don't see myself cozying up to Déroulède's disciple, the new Lavedan, the libertine who sleeps with Joan of Arc," he answered Pascal Pia, after Pia asked him to contribute to the review, *Prométhée*, that he was planning to launch in the Southern zone with Aragon's participation.²⁸

The conjuncture of civil war and institutional distrust gave these types of rumor an immediate effectiveness. Rumors had to be taken seriously by the Resistance, given the necessary precautions it had to take while recruiting (semi-) clandestinely. "Tzara—Ribbentrop-Dessaigues. Yes, if necessary. La Tour du Pin, better not. His liberation occurred under mysterious conditions,"²⁹ the Swiss mediator François Lachenal wrote to Jean Lescure, editor of the semi-legal review *Messages*, in the summer of 1943. One year later, Paul Eluard expressed his reservations about Arthur Adamov's possible contribution to *Messages*, since he was supposedly an agent of the Romanian Fascist organization OFRA. Meanwhile, Jean Lescure was quietly reproached for including Raymond Queneau in the journal, since the ambiguities of his novel *Un rude hiver*, published by Gallimard in 1939, made him appear suspicious.³⁰

While spontaneous cooperation, calls to order, and readjustments ultimately ensured some last measure of autonomy for the literary field, the transformation of the conditions of production and the over-politicization of literary issues that followed contributed to the shuffling of reference points. Moreover, literary life was widely disrupted following the debacle and the division of the country into two zones. Literary prizes weren't distributed in 1940. Returning to literary activity meant fulfilling administrative requirements for the occupying authorities, such as the request for a pass, in keeping with the exception allowed by paragraph 8 of title V of the August 28, 1940, ordinance allowing selection committees to meet, and a dispensation of the ban forbidding publications from circulating between the two zones, so that the members who had withdrawn to the Southern zone could receive the new publications. The attribution of the Femina and Interallié Prizes would be suspended for the duration

of the Occupation. The Goncourt Academy and the Renaudot jury would resume their activities in 1941. But the modalities of this return to activity did not meet with the Goncourt committee members' unanimous approval. Why shouldn't they award the Goncourt Prize in Lyon rather than Paris?

Decentralization quickly became a site of struggle: it opposed, at either end of the new dominant ideology, those who "wanted to keep Paris going" and those who favored a decentralization that was better adapted to the circumstances, preferring to situate themselves under French authority alone. The problem was even more urgent when it applied to the two very Parisian sites of consecration, the French Academy and the Goncourt Academy. In the official press, the fate of the two academies and the dispersal of their members were a continual source of preoccupation. The "immortals" who, unlike the Goncourt committee members, could not vote by correspondence or delegation, were regularly called upon to return (only a dozen Academy members attended the weekly dictionary meetings during the entire duration of the Occupation) and asked to conduct elections to replace the members who died during this period.

Publishing houses, traditionally concentrated in Paris, returned to activity under the conditions imposed by the occupier. Should publication continue "under the boot" in order to maintain "the French spirit" as some insisted, or should it cease given the risk of playing into the hands of the occupier, who was trying to normalize cultural life under its heel? Was it legitimate to contribute to the Parisian press, or the Vichy press? The answers to these questions were not unequivocal. They were not posed in the same manner for those in different positions in the literary field. Nor were they determined by solely political considerations. It was also a matter of literary survival, and sometimes material survival, when it wasn't a question of seeking profit in both areas.

While some hesitated about the proper behavior to adopt, others immediately adhered to the "National Revolution" and/or the Collaboration, an adhesion that was also often the chance to enact a coup de force in the literary field. Yet between abstention and ideological adhesion, there was a wide array of attitudes and self-justification strategies, from those who minimized, not without bad faith, the political effects of their choice to continue publishing in a subjugated press, to those who, without openly declaring their support of the conqueror, nonetheless didn't have a hard time resigning themselves to the yoke of an occupant who appeared less awful than expected. Vercors relayed a conversation with André Thérive, a critic at *Le Temps* before the war: "After all,' he says to me, 'it's my job. A waiter will serve a beer to a German, so why couldn't a journalist publish an article?'"³¹ For his part, Jean Guéhenno observed in his *Journal des années noires*:

The republic of letters is decidedly none too rich in character. X . . . is preparing his conversion. Naturally, he avoids sweeping declarations, as is his habit, but if you ask him about Germany, he explains that it has made huge progress over the past twenty years and has become more . . . democratic. As for America? It has also changed a lot. It's no longer the colonial and still young America of 1909, but a cowardly country from which we can no longer expect anything. . . He leaves you the task of drawing, from his statements, the resigned conclusions that they bear. He is himself resigned to once again, and as quickly as possible, having his plays performed in Paris.³²

Let's not forget that the restriction of the possibles wasn't one-way, even if it was much more severe for writers who refused to compromise with the acting forces. Thus, while it may seem atypical, the attitude of someone like Paul Léautaud was no less significant; he refused to give a fragment of his journal to *Le Figaro*, which passed for a refuge of the opposition in the unoccupied zone, because he was afraid of upsetting the occupier! A few days later, having learned that Léon-Paul Fargue and Paul Valéry had been denied the *visa de censure** (the decision would later be reversed), and fearing for his own volume of theater articles that was due to be published by Gallimard, he congratulated himself on his decision: "Here's something that really proves I was right to give up contributing to *Le Figaro*."³³

The new powers, whether German or Vichyist, turned to projects to harness French cultural heritage that would not have been as successful had they not matched interests on both sides: from the logic of survival, to the turn toward political authorities to overthrow the power relations that constituted the prewar literary field, the redefinition of possibles and the conduct that was adopted cannot be understood from a solely ideological viewpoint. In the heart of the literary world were found the factors of "accommodation" of the Occupation situation that Philippe Burrin has identified. He differentiates between three categories according to their form and degree: a form that is "a structural one imposed by the need to have public services that continue to function and an economy that does not collapse," a more willful form that "was chiefly motivated by a desire to defend or promote interests of either a personal or a corporative nature, in a situation of uncertain outcome," and finally simple "political accommodation," the search for an agreement with Nazi Germany.³⁴

* Official permission to publish.—Trans.

THE NAZI APPARATUS OF CONSTRAINT AND
THE SITES OF LITERARY COLLABORATION

The double apparatus of constraint and the workforce that it required, joined with the new powers' eagerness to ensure the continuation of cultural activities in order to "normalize" life under the Occupation, actually match up with the corporative or individual, economic, professional, or ideological interests of cultural agents and producers (publishers, press bosses, authors), generating a chain of participation in the structures of Collaboration. The economy's subordination to the political sphere contributed greatly to the political significance that the stakes related to the pursuit of cultural activities assumed, even though this political meaning was not necessarily intended. Meanwhile, the crisis situation and the demand for legitimation emanating from the German and Vichyist powers created a true "call for bids" among those producers of collective representations otherwise known as intellectuals. This double movement had a direct impact on the power relations that structured the literary field, favoring their reversal to the benefit of those who yielded to the most heteronomous logics.

Judging by the occupier's efforts to monitor French cultural production, this was a sizeable economic and ideological stake. Gérard Loiseaux arrived at the same conclusion while taking stock of the 1,073 people employed by the Propaganda-Abteilung alone: "The Propaganda's means in terms of personnel translate the importance that Nazi Germany attributed to psychological action in France."³⁵ Three different services shared this task.

The Propaganda-Abteilung, placed under the control of the occupied zone's military administration, the *Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich* (MBF), but taking orders from Joseph Goebbels, was tasked with the suppression of anti-German protests and the creation of pro-German propaganda; it also monitored public opinion and managed an intelligence service, in conjunction with German espionage services. It saw to the strict application of policy from the Ministry of Propaganda of the Third Reich, whose object was to weaken France's "cultural imperialism." Until December 1940, the *Gruppe Schrifttum* (literature) of the Paris Propaganda-Staffel was directed by the *Sonderführer* Friedhelm Kaiser; after, by the *Sonderführer* Gerhard Heller.

The German Institute, affiliated with the Reich embassy for the German military administration in France, was directed by Doctor Karl Epting, the former director of the office of German university exchanges in Paris. The Institute worked toward the development of a cultural collaboration between Germany and France. In the cultural field, it enacted the policy that earned Otto Abetz, an expert on French affairs for the minister of Foreign Affairs Joachim von

Ribbentrop, his ambassadorship. This policy sought to maintain the illusion of a possible Franco-German collaboration for the purpose of building a “New Europe” even as it worked surreptitiously to divide the French and destroy France’s influence abroad: “In exactly the same way that the idea of a peace was usurped by national socialist Germany and served to weaken French morale without damaging the combative spirit of Germany itself, similarly the European idea could be usurped by the Reich without prejudicing the claim to primacy in Europe, a primacy that national socialism has anchored in the German people.”³⁶ Aside from its support of certain French authors, the Institute established lists of translations of German books into French: Epting’s adjunct, Karl Heinz Bremer, had forty German works translated between January 1940 and January 1941, and in February 1941, Epting created a “Franco-German translation committee” that, in conjunction with French editors and authors, drew up a list of more than 1,000 German titles to be published in France.

Finally, the Amt Schrifttum, a subsidiary of Alfred Rosenberg’s office (Alfred Rosenberg was Hitler’s delegate for the intellectual and ideological education of the Nazi Party members), which starting in 1941 designated the “Office of the Reich for the promotion of German literature,” was an example of “expertise” intervening after publication. Its vocation was to “decontaminate” and “sanitize” literature, and maintained branches in occupied countries for this purpose.³⁷

Despite their close collaboration, these three departments would be rivals throughout the Occupation, fighting over jurisdiction and disagreeing on the means to employ. Drawing on the strength of his seduction strategy, which consisted in making the French work for German interests, Otto Abetz tried to extend his sphere of influence into the cultural sphere, and, moreover, into the political sphere. He did not manage to reduce the Propaganda to a censorship department, or obtain the closure of the Rosenberg unit in Paris; the latter, following a close competition with the embassy, would monopolize the pillage of artwork; still, he won a half victory against the former when, in July 1942, the Propaganda Ministry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reached an accord regulating the division of labor, limiting the Propaganda’s spheres of influence in favor of the Institute. Yet the conflicts continued. In the aftermath of the accord, Gerhard Heller would be assigned to the embassy. In its summary of November 1943, the Reich’s Security Service would judge the various strategies of both the embassy and the Propaganda equally deficient—a deficiency that we might describe as relative.³⁸

The apparatus of repression took hold in the summer of 1940. The Denoël and Sorlot publishing houses were shut down, the Hachette distribution ser-

vices requisitioned. The system created to apply political and racial censorship was rapidly put in place. The first list of forbidden books, called the “Bernhard list” and including 143 titles, led to the confiscation of more than 700,000 books between the twenty-seventh and thirty-first of August.³⁹ On October 4, the “Otto list,” created by the Propaganda in conjunction with the embassy and including 1,060 works pulled from the shelves, appeared along with a censorship agreement signed by the publishers’ union. This agreement presented the principle of self-censorship as a condition of resuming activity in the publishing houses of the occupied zone. In 1942, new measures would reinforce censorship and the monitoring of production: paper rationing began in January, while an authorization number was required for all publications in the occupied zone beginning in March. The Otto list would undergo two new editions in January 1942 and May 1943, whose supplements would notably include a list of 739 “Jews writing in French” in the latter edition, thus systematizing the application of racial policy in the cultural domain.

The reopening of publishing houses, occurring under the constraints of self-censorship that the publishers chose to accept, also involved negotiations of an economic and ideological order. Despite Vichy’s vigilant defense of French economic interests, Abetz worked toward the influence of German capital in publishing and the press. Thanks to the billion-franc credit it received from the embassy, the Hibbelen trust would control nearly fifty periodicals by 1944, that is to say 45 to 50 percent of the Parisian press.⁴⁰ The book community was generally more anxious to defend its interests, while still making necessary, and sometimes overzealous, concessions in order to secure advantageous conditions. In addition to the Aryanizations, particularly those of Calmann-Lévy, Ferenczi, and Nathan, which culminated in either a German participation or the nomination of a subservient administrator, the Germans bought up shares of the Denoël and Sorlot publishing houses. The Denoël house, suffering from financial difficulties, would extract a great benefit from this collaboration: at the beginning of 1942, it would increase its capital from 365,000 to 1,500,000 francs.⁴¹ But Gallimard would not allow the Germans to acquire shares in the company.

The orientation of French cultural production was not solely repressive. Promotional campaigns encouraged collaborationist literature. In 1941, the Propaganda drew up a “List of literature to promote” that included 189 works, some authored by notorious champions of extreme collaboration: Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, Jacques Chardonne, Lucien Rebatet, and Robert Brasillach; but also Pierre Benoit, Marcel Arland, Henry de Montherlant, Paul Morand, Jean Giono, Roger Verceel. It served as a “veritable multimedia publicity operation”

targeting print journalism, radio, and bookstores.⁴² The following year, the luxurious catalogue “Mirror of Books 1941–1942” would appear, copublished by the Propaganda and fourteen French publishers, including Gallimard, Grasset, and Denoël. The Propaganda authorities increased solicitations of, and favors for, the “promoted” authors: trips to Germany, translations, film adaptations. While the politics of censorship severely limited translation into German, eleven authors, including Alphonse de Chateaubriant and Jean de La Varende, benefited from this new, exceptional form of promotion.

The press was influenced more directly. Having taken possession of the Havas agency offices and created the French Agency of Press Information (AFIP), which became an intermediary for the official information agency of the Reich (which also funded private agencies like Inter-France), the German authorities organized a twice-weekly orientation conference aimed at the managers and editors in chief of the occupied zone. In December 1941, eleven periodicals were selected for priority paper allocation: *La Gerbe*, *Comoedia*, *Je suis partout*, *L'Appel*, *Le Journal de la Bourse*, *Le Rouge et le Bleu*, *Jeunesse*, *L'Atelier*, *Au pilori*, *La Révolution nationale*, *Le Franciste*.⁴³ The first three on the list were politico-literary weeklies with a high concentration of writers, or aspiring writers. They were the principal platforms for the literary press in the occupied zone and were representative of the different options and tendencies; while *Comoedia's* literary page claimed non-involvement, *La Gerbe* and *Je suis partout*, each in its own way, set the tone for intellectual collaborationism, as we will see.

Like certain publishing houses, a number of newspapers, whether preexisting or newly created in honor of the conjuncture, immediately began to go with the flow, forecasting the Germans' demand. For their staffs, this was a chance to take the place of the two-thirds of Northern zone periodicals that had ceased publication,⁴⁴ such as *L'Aube*, *L'Intransigeant*, *L'Ordre*, and *Le Populaire*, or moved to the unoccupied zone, like *Le Figaro*, *Le Temps*, *Paris-Soir*, *L'Action française*, *La Croix*, *Gringoire*, and *Candide*. For instance, *La Gerbe*, a politico-literary weekly that claimed to represent “the French will,” founded in July 1940 by the writer Alphonse de Chateaubriant, replaced the two great right-wing weeklies of the 1930s, *Gringoire* and *Candide*. Its circulation, which reached 140,000 copies in 1943,⁴⁵ made it one of the chief sites of intellectual collaborationism; according to Lucien Rebatet, it represented the “conformist and academic-leaning” pole.⁴⁶ This position was reinforced by its proximity to the Collaboration group, founded and chaired by Alphonse de Chateaubriant; its honor committee, born in part of the very official prewar Comité France-Allemagne, united leading figures of the intellectual world, including five members of the Institute, four of whom were members of the French Academy.

Financed by the German embassy, advised by the Gruppe Schrifttum of the Propaganda-Staffel, *La Gerbe* advocated an active collaboration in order to insert an agricultural France into the “European order,” and quickly distanced itself from a Vichy regime that it considered not collaborationist enough. Taking as its model the “religious act” of self-effacement vis-à-vis the community that was accomplished by National Socialism, *La Gerbe* sought to work toward the “recovery” of a France that had been abandoned to the “slavery” of the machine, capitalism, and individualism. Anti-Semitism ruled, along with repeated invectives against the Freemasons and the suggestion that they be confined to concentration camps. Contrasting the obsolete era of the “political” with the “organic” era founded on the eternal laws of nature, the paper did not initially identify with any party,⁴⁷ but it would draw closer to Marcel Déat’s Rassemblement national populaire (RNP). Some of the RNP’s members participated in conferences organized by the “Gerbes françaises” and funded by the Office of the Secretary of State for Youth.⁴⁸ In 1944 *La Gerbe* would launch a campaign for a single party; the leaders of the RNP and Jacques Doriot’s Parti populaire français (PPF) would be interviewed for this purpose. The editorial staff also received representatives of the Légion des volontaires français contre le bolchévisme (LVF), which included Chateaubriant on its board of benefactors,⁴⁹ and would see two members join its ranks (including its former manager Marc Augier, future Waffen-SS).

La Gerbe rallied elements that came to support Nazi Germany for a variety of different reasons—PPF, Action française, regionalism—but were joined in visceral anti-Republicanism and anti-Bolshevism. Its sixty-three-year-old director, Alphonse de Chateaubriant, had authored novels that retraced the geste of his ancestors, the fallen landed gentry. These novels had earned him the Goncourt Prize (1911) and the French Academy’s Prize for the Novel (1923), as well as the respect of regionalists. He then committed himself to an antimodernist campaign that led him to seek the archaic sources of a mysticism beyond Catholicism; he would find this mysticism reflected in National Socialism.⁵⁰ This “Breton-mystic-Hitlerophile novelist,” according to the portrait traced by Lucien Combelle, had published “a book of astonishing fervor, *La Gerbe des forces*, with Hitler as Saint George confronted by the Muscovite dragon; the swastika, a recasting of the Christian cross in Toledo steel” in 1937.⁵¹ Among the paper’s regular participants, Bernard Faÿ, professor at the Collège de France and Freemasonry specialist who was promoted to the administration of the Bibliothèque nationale after Julien Cain’s dismissal, served as the designated historian; ethnology professor Georges Montandon filled its pages with his theories of eugenics, calling for the separation of “individuals [who are] ethnoracially foreign”

and their exclusion from the right to reproduce.⁵² The race theorician Arthur de Gobineau's grandson, Clément Serpeille de Gobineau, brought his personal touch to the paper. The writings of Pierre Drieu La Rochelle and Abel Bonnard, a member of the French Academy, appeared conspicuously on the political "front page"; they would be joined in 1944 by Robert Brasillach, following the latter's departure from *Je suis partout*. Camille Fegy, a former Communist militant who had joined Doriot's PPF, became the journal's editor in chief in 1941. Until 1942, sections such as "peasantry" and "youth" could still be found, along with a social and women's page that offered to return woman to her state of maternal "dignity," and in which countless articles were devoted to the premarital examination.

From a literary point of view, *La Gerbe* distinguished itself from collaborationist periodicals by devoting a considerable amount of space to regionalist production, thanks to its columnist Gonzague Truc, a Maurrassian Catholic critic, and Henry Poulaille, the leader of "proletarian literature." While the former represents, along with Camille Mauclair and François Navarre, the self-righteous criticism that dominated *La Gerbe*, the latter's presence at first seems incongruous. This heterogeneity was the result, notably, of the few volunteers among established writers, which favored an alliance of minorities. The young Lucien Combelle, who began offering his services in 1940, remembers that "the first and second knives[†] were lined up on the kitchen table, in complete equality, simplicity, in the winter of 1940, there was no crowd, aside from the 'die-hards,' it was enough to show up. I show up, immediately hired for the literary page, my devil."⁵³ He would manage to add a more anticonformist touch to the page. Ramon Fernandez, *La NRF* critic won over to the Collaboration, wrote columns on political books. Charles Péguy, Céline, and Montherlant were set up as models of an aesthetic conception deriving from the Middle Ages, while the literary pages regilded by such famous figures as Paul Morand, Marcel Aymé, and Jean Giono published mainly populist or regionalist authors like Jean Rogissart and Pierre Béarn. The theater section, edited by André Castelot and H.-R. Lenormand, initially benefited from the appearance of Jean Anouilh, Charles Dullin, and Jean Cocteau.

Belonging to the Grasset network united some of these writers who, from Chateaubriant to Poulaille by way of André Fraigneau and Cocteau, had very diverse literary and ideological sensibilities (we can hardly consider Poulaille an

[†] This is an idiomatic expression corresponding to the idea, in English, of first and second string. A *second couteau* could also be translated as "second fiddle."—Trans.

admirer of National Socialism).⁵⁴ The Grasset house was, indeed, overrepresented at *La Gerbe*, whether by past or current authors.⁵⁵ Furthermore, in his collection “À la recherche de la France,” Bernard Grasset gathered the most engaged essays by collaborationist writers who were not—or were no longer—part of his “stable.” These included Abel Bonnard’s *Pensées dans l’action*, Pierre Drieu La Rochelle’s *Ne plus attendre*, and Henry de Montherlant’s *Le Solstice de juin*, and notably collected authors that had been published or, like Montherlant, “taken”—by Gallimard, his chief rival. Like Ramon Fernandez (a Gallimard author who had additionally published with Grasset), these authors were also the stars of the new rendition of *La NRF*.

La Gerbe soon found itself competing with two other publications that were resurrected in 1941: *Je suis partout* and *Comoedia*. Led by a team that was both younger and more ideologically homogeneous, *Je suis partout* billed itself as the “revolutionary” and “avant-gardist” pole of intellectual collaborationism. It was launched in 1930 by the Arthème Fayard publishing house, which was already publishing *Candide*, in order to discuss international politics. *Je suis partout* had united Pierre Gaxotte, its editor in chief, with a team of young Maurrassians (Robert Brasillach, Lucien Rebatet, Claude Jeantet, Thierry Maulnier, Claude Roy) whose turn toward Fascism at the time of the Popular Front victory led to the journal being abandoned by its publisher and handed over to an anonymous society whose principal shareholders were Charles Lesca and André Nicolas.⁵⁶ Though it had yet to embrace doctrinaire racism, the new editorial staff, including Alain Laubreaux, made *Je suis partout* one of the forums for triumphant anti-Semitism in the years preceding the war. Pulled between the Germanophobic nationalism that they had inherited from their master and the seductive power of Nazi Germany, the contributors called for a French version of Fascism that they would not find in the Vichy regime. This was all the more true since the members of the team who had taken refuge in the Southern zone—Rebatet, Laubreaux, and Henri Poulain, who had become writers for the radio—were quickly regarded with suspicion at Petain’s headquarters, as much for their pro-Nazi fervor as for their blatant *arrivisme*.⁵⁷ At the end of 1940, they decided to return to Paris, where they resumed publication of *Je suis partout* in 1941. The journal’s publication had been suspended in May 1940 for its antiwar attitude.

The team reunited, minus some of its members, including Pierre Gaxotte, Thierry Maulnier, and Claude Roy, representatives of the nationalist line who disassociated themselves from the enterprise (in fact, following the arrest of Lesca and Laubreaux for attacking state security, Thierry Maulnier and Pierre Varillon had published a final issue in June 1940 without commenting on the

fate of their colleagues, which earned Maulnier the reputation of a “sniper” and a “Gaullist” in the collaborationist press).⁵⁸ Although Brasillach sought the approval of Maurras, the latter rejected those of his offspring who had crossed enemy lines. Still, Brasillach reunited with his colleagues after his release in the spring of 1941, along with Pierre-Antoine Cousteau. They appointed new writers, including the inevitable Abel Bonnard, who wrote editorials in the spring of 1941; Lucien Combelle; Noël B[ayon] de la Mort, who produced the column on prisoners, “Nos prisonniers”; Morvan-Lebesque. The permanent secretary of the French Academy, André Bellessort, maintained a literary column there, alternating with Georges Blond until Bellessort’s death in January 1942; Alain Laubreaux served as theater critic. Laubreaux, who meant to take advantage of the circumstances by reigning over theatrical life, aspired to the administration of the Comédie-Française, a position that he almost attained after the resignation of Jean-Louis Vaudoyer in March 1944.

Having become a “major political and literary weekly,” *Je suis partout* competed with *La Gerbe* for the few fashionable writers who did not balk at giving texts to the collaborationist press (Marcel Aymé, Jean de La Varende, Anouilh), all the while promoting its own editors, longing for literary recognition, in its columns (it published, for example, novels by Laubreaux and Brasillach). Like *La Gerbe*, the journal staked a claim to Péguy, Céline, and Montherlant, but while a conformist criticism and self-proclaimed subversiveness coexisted at *La Gerbe*, *Je suis partout* claimed exclusive adherence to the second category in order to build a “European,” “virile,” and “healthy” literature; in a word, a “Fascist” literature.⁵⁹ More than *La Gerbe*, where some of its editors ended up, the *Je suis partout* team sought to distance itself from the conventional moralism of the traditionalists surrounding Marshal Pétain, like Henry Bordeaux, and the backward-looking neoclassicism of their former master, Charles Maurras. Céline’s publisher, Denoël, opened its doors to the most virulent among them, Rebattet and Laubreaux.⁶⁰

Whereas, at Brasillach’s initiative, the paper momentarily appeared deferential toward the head of the French state, its hostility toward the Vichy regime became plain once it was revived, and this hostility would grow. The already seriously undermined nationalism of its collaborators effortlessly transformed into an unconditional support for Nazi Germany and the unification of Europe under its leadership. Setting aside the tireless exhortation to form a single party, the editors were less concerned with the elaboration of a program of “national and social revolution” than with denunciation—of the dead Republic, the prewar literary establishment, Bolshevism, Gaullism, England, Freemasons, and especially Jews—and the calls to murder that were their specialty.⁶¹ Far from disarming them, the turn-

ing point of the war would lead them to harden their positions, provoking a split within the team after the fall of Mussolini in the summer of 1943 and the departure of Brasillach, followed by Georges Blond and Henri Poulain.⁶² Those who stayed would radicalize their engagement by joining the militia or the PPF.

A true “pressure group,”⁶³ the *Je suis partout* team also filled the principal forums of the collaborationist press, notably *Le Petit Parisien* which, with a circulation of 500,000 copies in 1943, was by far the most widely disseminated Parisian newspaper. The profits were not just symbolic. Although they generally remained secondary in initial motivations, the economic profits that editors, papers, and authors could draw from an active collaboration partially explain the amount of goodwill and zeal that some displayed. The different forms of support that the German propaganda services offered the writers and distribution authorities seem to have been fruitful. In a situation where salaries were frozen while prices climbed, leading to a 37 percent decline in real salary between 1938 and 1943,⁶⁴ we can imagine the relative rise of profits linked directly or indirectly to collaboration, with the help of a few examples.

With a print run of 65,000 copies, Lucien Rebatet’s *Les Décombres* [The Ruins], published in 1942 by Denoël, was one of the best sellers of its time. It earned its author 500,000 francs, or approximately twice his annual income as a journalist,⁶⁵ a considerable sum at a time when Paul Léautaud saw his secretarial salary at *Mercure de France* reduced by 25 percent, bringing his income to 1,000 francs a month.⁶⁶ *Je suis partout* doubled its prewar circulation of 50,000 copies, and would even reach 200,000 copies. Having become a booming business, it could supplement its contributors’ freelance wages, which amounted to a share of the business’s profits according to Brasillach himself. His salary of 8,000 francs a month as editor in chief was supplemented by 20,000 francs in 1941, 90,000 in 1942, and 20,000 in 1943.⁶⁷ Certainly, the sum of 20,000 francs that Brasillach received for the publication of a novel in *Je suis partout* seems ridiculous in light of the payments that the Anglophobic and anti-Semitic weekly *Gringoire* (relocated to Marseille) was then offering Pierre Benoit and Jean de La Varende, two very popular authors. These payments for their novels reached 200,000 francs.⁶⁸ But as I have said, the growth in profits was relative. With a circulation of 600,000 copies, *Gringoire* was the leading weekly before the war, and it maintained its status under the Occupation, with 330,000 copies. It could therefore richly reward those bestselling authors that German support and the eviction or voluntary retreat of competitors had helped make into stars.

The conditions under which *Comoedia* (a theater daily that had ceased publication in 1937) reappeared in 1941 with the agreement and under the direct control of the German Institute illustrate these different forms of compromise.

The journal, now a weekly, was required to demonstrate its “European” objectives through the creation of a “Know Europe” page and the insertion of a number of pro-German articles. Since its director, René Delange, cannot be accused of Germanophilia, according to the German censors themselves, there remains the prickly question of the growth of the *Comoedia* company’s capital, which went from 500,000 to 4,000,000 francs after the paper was acquired by the anonymous company “R. L. des Journaux et Publications modernes.”⁶⁹ As we have seen, this weekly also appeared among the eleven periodicals that received preferential paper allocations from the German authorities at the end of 1941, which would allow it to reach a relatively modest circulation of 48,000 copies. The fact that its allowance was reduced a month later, while those of *La Gerbe* and *Je suis partout* were increased, can likely be explained by the new measures of restriction applied from the beginning of 1942. *Paris-Soir* and *Le Petit Parisien*, despite operating under German control, also suffered (they were forced to reduce their circulation by 150,000 copies).⁷⁰

Comoedia’s artfully maintained ambiguity allowed it to attract the prestigious signatures of writers who were little-suspected of sympathy with the occupant, like Jean Paulhan and Jean-Paul Sartre, into its cultural pages directed by Marcel Arland. Paulhan, the former director of *La NRF*, had been solicited by René Delange to take on the literary direction of the weekly when it was launched. Having declined, he recommended Marcel Arland.⁷¹ The informal role that Paulhan played by directing authors to *Comoedia* made it seem like an outpost of an *NRF* that had been progressively abandoned since Drieu La Rochelle was named its director. Competing with *La NRF* for the role of platform for “art for art’s sake,” *Comoedia* became the principal publication site for Gallimard authors who had remained in the occupied zone without engaging in ideological collaboration.⁷² The question of whether to publish in its pages led to debates within the literary Resistance, pitting Jean Paulhan, who unwaveringly defended it on principle, against François Mauriac and Jean Guéhenno who were resolutely opposed. The inversion of positions between *La NRF* and *Comoedia* (the weekly being, despite its ambivalence, progressively perceived as more “autonomous” than the review, a perception encouraged by Paulhan, as we will see) illustrates one aspect of the shuffling of reference points: the blurring of the opposition between the pole of small-scale production and the pole of large-scale production, toward which the weekly nonetheless tended due to the political and economic rationales to which it submitted. This shuffling largely resulted from the takeover of *La NRF*.

If we compare the evolution of the weeklies, on the one hand, and the reviews, on the other, taking them as rough indicators of the opposition between

the poles of large-scale production and small-scale production, we can see that the first pole was clearly less affected by the crisis than the second. The principal politico-literary weeklies survived the defeat, sometimes at the cost of emigrating to the Southern zone and printing significantly fewer copies. More fragile ventures, the reviews experienced a veritable slaughter starting with the “Phoney War,” for reasons that were, in most cases, not political (only the Communist cultural reviews, like *Commune*, were banned as a consequence of the German-Soviet pact).⁷³ While most of the ephemeral small reviews disappeared definitively between 1939 and 1940, the more established ones, those that, thanks to their circulation, their readership, their nonspecific character, and the networks of politico-social relations to which they belonged had more in common with the pole of large-scale production, like the *Revue des deux mondes* and the *Revue universelle*, reemerged in the unoccupied zone. Between these two poles, the fate of major literary reviews attached to a publisher, like *Le Mercure de France* or *La NRF*, that by their circulation (two or three times lower than that of the *Revue des deux mondes*, which printed close to 50,000 copies on the eve of the war) and their primarily literary vocation, remained nearer the pole of small-scale production, confirms that this pole was the most disturbed by the new conditions of production.

Wishing to normalize French cultural life, Otto Abetz, well versed in French culture, paid special attention to symbolic issues. Upon his arrival in Paris, he is credited with quoting Paul Bourget as follows: “I know in France only three powers: the bank, Communists, and *La NRF*.”⁷⁴ From the end of August 1940, he started negotiations to begin republishing the prestigious review under the direction of his friend Pierre Drieu La Rochelle. *La NRF* would be the only review authorized for republication in the occupied zone, to the great displeasure of Marshal Pétain who, according to a rumor spread by Jean Paulhan, apparently tried to obtain this favor for the very academic *Revue des deux mondes*, where he himself was a contributor (let us recall that he was a member of the French Academy): “They have banned *all* the other reviews. Even the *2 Mondes*, despite the insistence of the Marshal. It is after all retrospectively flattering,” the former director of the review wrote to André Lhôte, with a hint of bitter irony.⁷⁵ Certainly, although it had been resolutely anti-Munich, *La NRF* had never been anti-German, unlike the *Revue des deux mondes*. But this does not adequately explain its unique privilege. Making ideological pledges to the occupant would prove useless: Jacques Bernard would wait in vain for authorization to pursue publication of the *Mercur de France*, and neither Lucien Combelle nor Georges Pelorson would attain it to create new reviews.⁷⁶

During the summer Jean Paulhan, who was staying with Gaston Gallimard in Villalier, near Carcassonne, at Joë Bousquet's house, attempted to convince the editor to publish *La NRF* in the unoccupied zone. Gallimard wanted nothing to do with it. As he wrote to André Gide in early October, he thought that "accommodations" with the Germans would be "easier than with the Vichy government."⁷⁷ Drieu La Rochelle had recently sought him out to inform him of Abetz's proposition; raised the specter of a German takeover of the Gallimard publishing house; assured him that the review would be republished anyhow; presented himself, in short, as the house's savior. This is in any case the version that Gaston Gallimard broadcasted among his authors to gain their consent—he would visit André Gide on the night before he returned to Paris, October 21—and the version that Jean Paulhan adopted at the Liberation to justify his publisher.⁷⁸

Of course, the Gallimard house did not have a good reputation with the Occupation authorities. It appeared anti-Nazi, under Jewish influence, infiltrated by leftist writers and included the highest number of books banned by the "Otto list," with 140 works pulled from the market. Not coincidentally, it was shut down on November 9, by an order of the Propaganda-Staffel dated October 9, although Pascal Fouché suggests that this was a blunder.⁷⁹ Drieu La Rochelle explained the affair to Jean Grenier, who had come to see him on November 20: "The house has just been closed . . . because German officers billeted at the Gallimard castle in Mirande where the latter had sent editions had been scandalized by the anti-Hitler books they found. It is on their report that the Paris office was closed. But the German civilians have not been consulted and an important German will come to Paris today who will undoubtedly reopen it."⁸⁰ This closure was presented to Gaston Gallimard, summoned by Dr. Kaiser to Propaganda on November 23, as a warning for all French publishers. Since Gallimard had refused a German firm the right to acquire capital in his publishing house, the negotiations to reopen it were now resumed with the embassy, represented by Councilor Rahn. The right to reopen was granted on November 28, as Kaiser notified Gaston Gallimard, on the condition of "reserving for a duration of 5 years to Mr. Drieu La Rochelle [. . .] powers extended to the totality of the execution of the intellectual and political production of [the] house."⁸¹

Could the "important German" that Drieu mentioned be Gerhard Heller, in Paris since November 9, who convinced him during their meeting at the end of the month that he was responsible for the reopening of the Gallimard publishing house (even though negotiations were already in progress with the embassy)? In any case, on December 1 Kaiser was called back to Berlin, due to his

conflicts with Dr. Epting of the Institute, according to Gerhard Heller,⁸² who replaced him “temporarily” and could easily reopen Gallimard himself. Are we to relate, as chronological proximity suggests, Kaiser’s dismissal with the “blunder” committed at the initiative of the Propaganda-Staffel, a blunder that thwarted Abetz’s plans? The fact that Drieu was informed of Kaiser’s dismissal seems to confirm this.⁸³ Heller saw it as the translation of the political opposition between the Ministry of Propaganda and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and their respective subsidiaries: the Propaganda and the embassy. Was this Abetz’s chance to promote his old friend within the competing department? In any case, Heller would occupy this position until his transfer to the German Institute after an agreement in July 1942 limiting the Propaganda’s oversight of cultural matters. This transfer served as a promotion. Meanwhile, the director of the Institute, Epting, would be called back to Berlin.⁸⁴

Jean Paulhan, whom Drieu had summoned to Vichy in October, had refused to serve as coeditor of the review. The Occupation authorities opposed it, moreover, criticizing Paulhan for his article “L’espoir et le silence” [Hope and silence], which appeared in the last issue of *La NRF* in June 1940. “In the end,” he wrote to the Belgian critic Franz Hellens, “even if I had agreed to it and the Germans had accepted me, I could not have stayed in a review where the Jewish collaborators (Benda, Suarès, Wahl), and the anti-Nazis (Bernanos, Claudel, Romain) that I had called there were driven out.”⁸⁵ On October 1, Jean Giono had informed André Gide of a letter from Drieu La Rochelle announcing, to his great surprise, that *La NRF* would now be published under his direction, with an editorial committee composed of Eluard, Céline, Gide, and Giono.⁸⁶ During his visit with Gide, Gaston Gallimard floated the idea of an editorial committee composed of Drieu, Eluard, Giono, André Malraux, and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Gide declined—and we are to believe that the project failed for lack of volunteers, since *La NRF* reappeared on December 1, 1940, without an editorial committee—but Gallimard managed to extract a promise that Gide would contribute to the review’s first issue.

The links of interdependence between authors and publishers, which brought external constraints into the very heart of professional practices, thus constituted one of the essential links in the chain of involvement in the structures of the Collaboration. Added to these mechanisms of the process of loss of autonomy were the effects induced by the Vichy regime’s apparatus of constraints. Far from preventing it, the latter intensified the former due to its authoritarian nature and its competition with the powers of occupation over the authorities of cultural production.

THE SYSTEM OF “INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL REFORM”

Because of the concentration of publishing, cinema, and theater in the capital, the French state exercised only limited control over the majority of means of cultural production, with the exception of the press.⁸⁷ The Occupation forces did not miss an opportunity to remind the Vichy government of its limited oversight in this domain. Thus, in April 1941, the Propaganda suspended, in the name of “artistic freedom”—but really to declare its monopoly on censorship in the occupied zone—the ban on staging Jean Cocteau’s *La Machine à écrire* at the Hébertot theater; the French government delegate to the Occupation authorities, Fernand de Brinon, had pronounced this ban in the name of “morality.”⁸⁸ But unlike the occupant who had no desire to import German cultural models into France, the Vichy regime had a political program, the National Revolution, that accorded a significant space to “intellectual and moral reform,” although this program would be gradually abandoned due to the evolution of the war and the whims of internal rivalries.

To carry out this program, Vichy built an apparatus of control and propaganda that reached the height of centralization with the plan of “total supervision” instituted by Secretary of State for Information Paul Marion starting in 1941. In the literary domain, a moral censorship began to rage; this, undoubtedly more than political censorship, worried a number of writers and publishers, including the Parisian collaborationists. Two pro-German observers, Alfred Fabre-Luce and Paul Léautaud, expressed this concern:

The free zone “does virtue.” The bookstore windows blossom with works on Péguy. The windows flourish with works on Péguy. (He is no longer here, thank God, to get bogged down in this circumstantial success.) Newspaper editorials are in a moralistic vein. (In a state of armistice, discretion is necessary on many subjects; homily is sometimes only the welcome means to darken a white column.) Zealous municipalities purge their city libraries. A “vamp” on the cover of a magazine arouses emotion in the office of the Secretary of State for the Family. But censorship operates above all inside consciences. “I’m writing a romantic comedy,” a playwright says, “but, given the circumstances, my heroes don’t sleep together.” Actually, if you want to have a play performed, obtain paper, earn the favors of the government, it is preferable to celebrate virtue. But from the moment virtue brings these advantages, it no longer distinguishes itself from the previous corruption. Thus it will soon be systematically bled dry by some groups.⁸⁹

It is even accredited, on our side of occupied France, even by the publishers, that if you have to publish a book that is a bit daring in this sense, even a

bit immoral, you have to take advantage of the presence of the Germans, who only exert their censorship on politics and the war, a regime of Moral Order being what probably awaits us after peace and their departure, unless a political reversal and change of government occurs. [. . .] In any case, it is said that *Tartuffe* has been banned in the free zone, *Tartuffe* that Louis XIV allowed to be performed.⁹⁰

The apparatus of monitoring and propaganda was coupled with an apparatus of exclusion and repression. It was put in place at the advent of the regime, with the measures decreed in August 1940 against Freemasonry (dissolution of secret societies), then with the first Statute on Jews promulgated in October, which excluded them from any activity having an impact on cultural life. To these measures, we must add the ban on the Communist Party, maintained by the decree of September 1939 that pronounced its dissolution as a result of the German-Soviet pact (this ban was not repealed, unlike the government decree of April 21, 1939, forbidding hate speech in the press, that would be annulled on August 27, 1940). Such a legislative arsenal had, as in other domains, an immediate effect on the literary landscape, since a certain number of signatures disappeared: while Julien Benda, André Suarès, and Léon Werth were reduced to silence because of their Jewish origins, Communists such as Georges Sadoul and Léon Moussinac published under pseudonyms in the reviews of the Southern zone during the entire Occupation.

At the same time, the efforts of the Vichy government to retain oversight over cultural production and increase its domain of intervention ended up serving the politics of the occupant, who was only too happy to meet its goals through a discipline of self-censorship. Vichy's efforts also resulted in the consolidation of the chain of involvement of cultural agents in the structures of the Collaboration, by making this chain official and perfecting it. The development of the Office of Information and of the State Department for Youth, as well as the creation of organisms to oversee the publishing industry, offered in any case a new slate of jobs to those authors more or less devoted to the regime's ideology.

The relative subordination of the publishing industry to the Vichy political apparatus was achieved through the distribution of paper. To this end, measures were taken from the summer of 1940 that resulted in the creation, on May 3, 1941, of the Comité d'organisation des industries, arts et commerces du livre [Organizing Committee of Industries, Arts, and Commerce of the Book], attached to the Ministry of Industrial Production. The government's concern was twofold: to safeguard French prerogatives over cultural production and to give that production an orientation that conformed to its ideological line. These

concerns encountered the corporative and individual interests of cultural agents, publishers, and authors.

The new measures of control and the corporate structures put in place by the French state thus awakened age-old claims concerning the defense of literary interests.⁹¹ Writers from different sides returned to a project that had already been planned before the war, the creation of an organism or an official position that would represent literature in the government.⁹² “We must create a Department of Literature, or even better, a Ministry of Literature and Art,” Alphonse Séché exclaimed in Jacques Doriot’s daily, *Le Cri du peuple*,⁹³ calling for state intervention to provide for the needs of writers. *Le Figaro*’s literary critic, André Billy, formulated the same wish in the summer of 1940, as he worried about the fate of literature in the new regime :

First, what will be the legal and social status of the writer? Will the literary corporation be regulated? We hear again of a journalistic professional order: will there be an equivalent for writers and what will be the conditions for admission? Will anyone be able to write? Will this right be refused, not only to foreigners, but also to certain categories of the French?

And above all, what will we be able to write? There will obviously be a censorship of books and periodicals, and by the way, it has been happening for a year. Will they be satisfied with maintaining it by enlarging its orders? [. . .] Laws exist with the aim of punishing insults to morality by means of printed publications. They could suffice if it was decided to apply them, but insult to morality is only a weak aspect of the risk implied by the word literature alone under an authoritarian regime. It seems that a preventive censorship will remain indispensable since it will bear, for the writer as well as for the power, both the greatest chances for agreement and the greatest respective guarantees of security.⁹⁴

And yet, the prospect of a “directed literature” caused profound concern in the literary world. In *Le Figaro*’s inquiry in the autumn of 1940 asking, “What will literature be tomorrow?” the majority of writers, including those who considered that literature had “taken a wrong turn” before the war, according to the phrase used in the questionnaire, spoke against this prospect; they invoked, among other things, the risk of conformity that would result.⁹⁵

There would be neither a department of literature nor a corporation of writers. A commission was nonetheless created and charged with studying the needs of the writers’ corporation. From 1942 to 1944 this commission would include two members of the French Academy, Georges Duhamel and Paul Valéry, and it would in fact reexamine the project of a Caisse nationale des

écrivains,⁹⁶ envisioned since 1928.⁹⁷ Meanwhile, a form of compromise was reached to satisfy the demands of the literary publishers and writers who did not benefit from the new Comité de l'organisation du livre. On June 9, a book council was created under the direction of the State Department for National Education and Youth; this new council was responsible "for all the questions concerning the intellectual orientation to give the production of books, the development of public reading, and the diffusion of the French book."⁹⁸ Under the presidency of the new general administrator of the Bibliothèque nationale, Bernard Faÿ, the permanent secretary of the French Academy, André Bellessort, represented the corporation of writers with the expectation that it would be created. Other members included five authors: Octave Aubry, Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, Paul Morand, André Siegfried, and Jean Vignaud; an illustrator, André Dunoyer de Segonzac; four publishers including Grasset; and two representatives from the Comité de l'organisation du livre: its director, Marcel Rives, and the president of the publishing group, René Philippon.

Paul Marion, who had suggested creating the book council, would try in vain to obtain its affiliation with the General Secretariat for Information. As far as books were concerned, he would have to be satisfied with censorship or promotion. The Department of Information could thus ban books in the Southern zone that were authorized in the occupied zone, like Céline's *Les Beaux Draps*, or encourage publication by buying copies that they then distributed, especially in prison camps; this was the case for André-Paul Antoine's *Mémorial de France* (100,000 copies) and Robert Vallery-Radot's *La Franc-maçonnerie vous parle* (10,000 copies).⁹⁹

The new paper restrictions adopted by the Propaganda-Staffel in early 1942, which threatened to extend German control, and the attitude of certain publishers who did not hesitate to deal directly with German censors, led to the creation, in April 1942, of the Commission de contrôle du papier d'édition [Commission for the Control of Publishing Paper]. When, at the end of the month, a German ordinance took effect requiring every publication to have an authorization number, an agreement between the Comité de l'organisation du livre and the Propaganda allowed the new commission to make its own selection of manuscripts deserving to be published, according to the quantity of paper allotted each month, a selection that it would then submit for authorization by the Propaganda.¹⁰⁰ Composed of the president of the Conseil du livre, Bernard Faÿ; the director of the Comité de l'organisation du livre, Marcel Rives; the president of the publishers' union, René Philippon; and two authors, Paul Morand and Louis de Broglie, with Madame Robert Antelme (Marguerite Duras) as secretary, the commission used about forty readers for its purposes,

including Ramon Fernandez, Dionys Mascolo, Brice Parain, and André Thérive. A growing involvement, then, of cultural agents in the apparatus of control over cultural production, but also a concentration of responsibilities in the hands of “reliable” men: like Bernard Faÿ, a professor at the Collège de France, as well as an anti-masonry advocate; and Paul Morand, who held, as we saw, positions in the Conseil du livre and the commission (he would later be named ambassador to Bucharest, then to Bern).

The authoritarianism of the regime would hit the Southern zone particularly hard; until the German invasion of November 1942, this zone was under Vichy’s sole control. To exert its authority, the government could rely on the war measures taken in 1939, but as Philippe Amaury explains, “the regime of censorship of the press and publications, established in 1939, compatible with the freedoms of opinion and expression even though setting unusual limits for them due to the exceptional circumstances, bec[ame] a ‘regime of orientation’ that suppresse[d] those freedoms[. . .].”¹⁰¹ Control of information at the source by means of the official news agency, the French Office of Information (OFI); daily memoranda of information; instructions that go so far as to dictate the typography of titles; censorship and suspension, temporary or sine die, of newspapers; the centralized apparatus of supervision, which was founded by Paul Marion in 1941 and boasted its own training structure for propagandists, the École nationale des cadres civiques, only appeared to weaken after Laval’s return in April 1942 and the nomination of René Bonnefoy as general secretary for information in December. Actually, supposing propaganda to be more effective in a more diversified press, the latter passed an agreement in January 1943 that substituted the general instructions with a commitment on the part of newspaper editors to unflinchingly support the politics of the government; this was the institution of self-censorship.¹⁰² Furthermore, the Propaganda disposed of substantial credits. Worried about the possibility of their return to the capital, the government subsidized the nine dailies and thirty Parisian newspapers that were somehow being published in the Southern zone. *Action française* was one of the few periodicals to decline this offer, despite its support of the regime.¹⁰³ In fact, while the rightist weeklies *Gringoire* and *Candide*, published in Marseille and Clermont-Ferrand respectively, experienced only a relative decline—the first went from a circulation of around 600,000 copies before the war to 330,000, the second from more than 400,000 to 180,000—the sales of *Le Figaro* and *Le Temps* fell to 15,000 copies for the former, half as much for the latter, during the winter of 1940–1941.

The elaboration and diffusion of the ideas of the National Revolution mobilized an entire fraction of intellectuals promoted by the regime. The creation of

the Musée des Arts et Traditions populaires as well as commissions of regionalist propaganda favored the involvement of specialists in the program of restoring and diffusing folklore.¹⁰⁴ In the literary domain, the cultural project of Vichy translated into a celebration of regionalism that culminated in the creation, in July 1942, of the Sully-Olivier de Serres Prize aimed at “encouraging, supporting, and rewarding literature devoted to peasant life.”¹⁰⁵ Whether they occupied an official function, like Henry Massis, Joseph de Pesquidoux, and the future minister of education Abel Bonnard at the National Council, or René Gillouin and Gustave Thibon at the Centre français de synthèse; whether they were “counselors to the prince” like Charles Maurras and René Benjamin; or whether they simply put their pen to the service of his glory, like Henry Bordeaux, Henri Pourrat, and José Germain, a good number of writers were organically linked, through their past or present engagements, to the authoritarian regime that aroused the “divine surprise” of Maurras, and that they all helped legitimate. In chapters 4 and 5 we will examine the nature of these links, through the example of two official literary institutions, the French Academy and the Goncourt Academy, along with the role of mediation that they were able to play between Vichy and Paris during this period.

Representing the traditionalist or reactionary side of the National Revolution, these literary notables reunited to purge the dead Republic and preach repentance while praising the head of state in the old structures that survived the debacle by emigrating to the Southern zone. Such publications included the very academic *Revue des deux mondes*, now a quasi organ of the regime under the direction of André Chaumeix; the *Revue universelle*, a forum for the Catholic intellectuals linked to *Action française* and directed by Henri Massis; or the weekly *Candide*, of a Maurrassian tendency. On the literary plane, they promoted a moralizing conception of literature that participated in the program of “intellectual and moral reform” called for by Marshal Pétain. A number of them, like Henry Bordeaux, Jean Guittou, Jacques Madaule, or even the Catholic critic of *Action française*, Robert Havard de la Montagne, would also contribute to the Catholic weekly *Demain*. Under the direction of Jean de Fabrègues, its mission starting in February 1942 was to gather Catholics of every opinion around the marshal.¹⁰⁶ Among the old structures, the extreme-right populist weekly *Gringoire* displayed an Anglophobia and violent anti-Semitism that brought it close, in style and ideas, to the Parisian collaborationist press where it was indeed well received. (*Gringoire* was the only weekly from the Southern zone that found favor with *Je suis partout*, which had distanced itself from *Candide* despite originally sharing close ties both on an ideological level, and because of its editorial team.)¹⁰⁷

New forums were created with the support of the Ministry of Information, circumstantial like *Demain*, or more doctrinaire and with a “revolutionary” pretense. The review *Idées* is a good example of the latter; a self-described “laboratory of ideas” for the National Revolution, it was also subsidized by the regime.¹⁰⁸ *Idées* was launched in November 1941 by a group of intellectuals who had belonged to the Young Right of the 1930s, animating the reviews *Combat*, *L’Insurgé*, and *Réaction*. In the wake of Paul Marion, representative of Vichy’s Fascistic circle, they would find themselves opposed to the traditionalist or reactionary wing surrounding Pétain. Let us note that being “freed from the meritocratic constraints which had until then formed the basis of civil service,”¹⁰⁹ the new administrations, the Department of the General Secretary for Youth, the General Secretary for Information, or even the Commissariat général aux questions juives (CGQJ), offered favorable conditions for the recruitment and advancement of those who had not followed the regular routes traditionally opening access to the state nobility: the *grandes écoles*[†] and civil service entrance exams.¹¹⁰ It is not surprising, then, that a number of young intellectuals and writers were drawn to this unexpected chance to attain high levels of responsibility.

A number of the contributors to *Idées*, promoted by Marion, thus held official positions in the regime’s propaganda apparatus. René Vincent, its editor in chief, who had been part of Marion’s cabinet since June 1941, became the head of the censorship department in late 1941. This was a position that he would hold until August 1944. Maurice Gaït, a graduate of the École normale supérieure[§] in philosophy who aided the review, was the first director of the École nationale des cadres civiques du Mayet-de-Montagne, which was created by Paul Marion in October 1941. In April 1942, he would become chief of staff to Abel Bonnard, the minister of national education, and then general commissioner for youth in February 1944. François Gravier, a member of the editorial staff and a certified professor of geography, succeeded him as the director of the École du Mayet-de-Montagne in January 1942, having left, like Jean Maze, the Office of the Secretary of State for Youth in order to follow Marion to Information. Jacques Laurent-Cély (Jacques Laurent) was still at Information; writing as Jacques Bostan in the review, as director of the research and development department he prepared “notes of orientation” meant for the press.¹¹¹ Pierre Dom-

[†] The *grandes écoles* are the most competitive and prestigious institutions of higher learning in France.—Trans.

[§] The École normale supérieure, located in Paris, is a *grande école* in science and the humanities. Its students are known as *normaliens*.—Trans.

inique, a writer and journalist, was named director of the Office français d'information in May 1941 after having been the head of the department of the press and censorship. Charles Mauban, a novelist, was a delegate for youth in Lyon, then director of the General Secretariat for Youth. Armand Petitjean, a literary critic and contributor to both the prewar *NRF* and its incarnation under Drieu La Rochelle, who also published regularly in *Idées*, codirected the propaganda bureau in the Office of the Secretary of State for Youth; then, after resigning in December 1940, was a leader in the Compagnons de France. He was Paul Marion's candidate to take over the Compagnons in May 1941 (he lost to a Catholic candidate),¹¹² before trying, again with Marion's support, to create the Jeunesses légionnaires.

They were joined by Jean de Fabrègues, a former contributor to the reviews *Réaction* and *Combat* who directed, as we have seen, the Catholic weekly *De-main*. Writers like Pierre Drieu La Rochelle and Jean de La Varende occasionally lent their prestige to the review. Experts like Louis Salleron, the theoretician of agrarian corporatism, who served on the Commission nationale d'organisation corporative [National Commission of Corporative Organization] from January to September 1941, exposed their views there; and the director of the Institut de formation légionnaire, Yves Urvoy, was invited to express himself in its columns.¹¹³

The review understood the National Revolution as the realization of a synthesis, eclectic if nothing else, that the Proudhon Circle had tried to sketch out at the beginning of the century¹¹⁴ between Joseph de Maistre, René de La Tour du Pin, Charles Maurras, Frédéric Le Play, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, and Georges Sorel, a synthesis that Jean de Fabrègues thought he recognized in Pétain's speeches.¹¹⁵ "The split between *Action française* and revolutionary syndicalism, whose alliance constituted before 1941 about the only chance for a fertile revolutionary explosion, was never reconsidered seriously in what followed, even by ventures like the Faisceau of Georges Valois. Certainly, we have had remarkable theorists of the Revolution like Proudhon or Sorel, of the Reaction like de Maistre, Le Play, or Maurras, and of the national popular like Péguy," Armand Petitjean proclaimed.¹¹⁶ While his colleagues at *Idées* flatly rejected parliamentarianism, capitalism, liberalism, egalitarianism, individualism, and materialism, they equally denigrated the "moral order" that Vichy's traditionalists tried to establish, the same order that banned Colette and alcohol, a "caricature of the Christian spirit," "personalist imagery illuminated in Saint-Sulpice."¹¹⁷ They refused to call it revolutionary—" [Paul] Bourget was not revolutionary and this order is purely bourgetian"¹¹⁸— contrasting it with "a moral of order" fueled by "virile virtues," by "greatness

and heroism,” whose roots reached to the Christian Middle Ages as well as the Revolution.

Taking inspiration from, among other things, the works of “experts” like the economist François Perroux, the review thoroughly developed the theme of “natural communities” in the framework of an organic society hierarchized on a corporatist basis, in which “the State must now be understood and served as the organ of a community.”¹¹⁹ Reflecting on “popular representation,” Jean Maze considered that the real question was not one of delegation but of the “mode of creation of new elites and their progressive participation in power.” Evoking the single party that constituted, in the twentieth century, a solution to the problem of the conduit “between the Executive and the masses, that the Parliament has shown itself incapable of ensuring,” he nonetheless specified that this solution should be sought once the “revolution” had been accomplished.¹²⁰

Understandably, the education of youth and the new “elites” was one of the review’s major preoccupations. Although it defended free education, along with the traditionalists, wishing that its representatives would sit on exam juries, it nonetheless demanded that education be placed under the control of the state and that its personnel hold a state-issued diploma.¹²¹ On the other hand, declaring their rivalry with the state nobility issued from the *grands corps* of the senior civil service as well as the technocrats who triumphed under Vichy,¹²² these newcomers asked for a reform of the system of *grandes écoles*.¹²³

For those “revolutionaries” who did not separate “thought” from “action,” the civic elites and political executives should be recruited from among the militants.¹²⁴ On this question of the recruitment of elites, *Idées* converged with other “revolutionaries” who expressed themselves, for example, in the columns of *France, revue de l’Etat nouveau*, born in 1942: “The principal enemy of the National Revolution is this: competition. Are we to believe that revolutionaries will be recruited from the stables of the State Council or the benches of Sciences Politiques?” wrote Michel Mohrt,¹²⁵ a young law school graduate (he was not yet thirty) descended from a family of merchants in Morlaix. He jumped into essay writing with *Les Intellectuels devant la défaite, 1870* (Corrêa, 1941), before becoming a critic and novelist (starting in 1952, he would be a reader at Gallimard). Here these revolutionaries converged with the program of Drieu La Rochelle, who noted in his *Journal*:

Purge the French Academy, suppress the Goncourt. Purge the whole Institute. Suppress Normale and the Agrégation.** Reduce secondary education,

** Teaching certification exam.—Trans.

suppress all means of exams, of grants, of compensation. Move the grandes écoles and the Sorbonne to the provinces. Suppress several universities. Crush the spirit of the Polytechnique and the Inspection.^{††126}

I will return at greater length to the anti-intellectualism that these “revolutionaries” shared with the Parisian collaborationists in the next chapter, in reference to the survey on “Intelligence and Its Role in the Polis” launched by *Idées* in February 1942. The nomination of Abel Bonnard as minister of national education in April 1942 can be considered a victory for anti-intellectualism. This period, marked by Pierre Laval’s return to power and the death of the National Revolution, was also marked by a radicalization of the collaborationism of these “revolutionaries” without a revolution who, disappointed by the regime’s achievements in terms of internal politics, from now on pinned their hopes on a “new Europe.” As Marc Olivier Baruch has noted, “the border was then tenuous between the collaborationist journals and an organ like *Idées*.”¹²⁷

Despite a constraining system, the Southern zone offered a larger and more diversified choice. Unlike the occupied zone, a number of literary reviews were authorized there and were able to survive in a semi-legality that included fewer risks, even after the invasion of German troops in November 1942. Proximity with nearby French-speaking regions opened up possibilities and alternatives that were not available to writers on the other side of the demarcation line. National sovereignty, although purely formal, also made participation in the literary press less compromising in the eyes of reluctant writers, and it was in the Southern zone that an opposition movement would be organized, speaking openly but in code.

THE CHOICE OF ARMS: “THE FRENCH SPIRIT” AT STAKE

In this state of over-politicization of the literary field, where freedom of expression was suppressed, where the majority of the authorities of diffusion and recognition were subject to political dictates, and where the subjugation of literature was supported by internal agents, what was the range of possibles offered to writers who refused compromise? Was the option of “art for art’s sake” as a mode of detachment from political and social constraints, and thus an affirmation of the writer’s autonomy, still legitimate, as the contributors to *La NRF* claimed, calling in its name for undecided or reluctant writers to emerge from their cloak of silence? Writing against voluntary abstention, *La NRF*’s con-

^{††} Polytechnique is a *grande école* offering training in the sciences and management. Inspection is a school that trains tax inspectors.—Trans.

tributors constantly invoked either the cause of art or the need to maintain the “French spirit.” An entire fraction of the literary field, including the *attentistes* but also the authors who made the best of the occupant’s presence without openly proclaiming their position, would need no other pretext to justify the pursuit of its activities without any distinction of forums and regardless of the transformed conditions of cultural production. Collaborationist publications, like *Le Petit Parisien* or *La Gerbe*, could thus take advantage of brilliant contributions: Marcel Aymé, Anouilh, Léon-Paul Fargue, and others.

But this was precisely why the writers of “refusal” criticized them. Jean Guéhenno judged his colleagues mercilessly:

The man-of-letters species is not one of the greatest human species. Incapable of living long in hiding, he would sell his soul in order for his name to be *published*. A few months of silence, of disappearance have done him in. He can’t go on. He quibbles only with the importance, with the size of the type in which his name will be printed, on his place in the table of contents. It goes without saying that he is full of good reasons. “French literature,” he says, “must continue.” He thinks he is French literature, French thought, and that they would die without him.¹²⁸

Michel Leiris made the same observation:

For several weeks already I have been reflecting on this true malady of “literary people” who do not conceive of the possibility of staying silent and for whom no longer publishing is equivalent to a kind of annihilation.¹²⁹

Didn’t such a choice actually mean playing into those German cultural politics that aimed to normalize the situation of occupation? This position would be denounced by the underground press. The director of *Les Lettres françaises*, Claude Morgan, thus tried to demonstrate that this assessment was accurate, taking as his example the political meaning that a harmless article on Burgundy that Colette gave *La Gerbe* took on when placed next to an article by Dr. W. Reimer entitled “Land between Rhine and Rhone.”¹³⁰

We can assert that the minimum code of conduct on which the writers of “refusal” agreed, implicitly or explicitly, was to not contribute to the Parisian press, with the notable exception of *Comoedia*, where opinions diverged. The maximum position would have few followers. Represented by the uncompromising code of conduct that Communist intellectuals, reduced to secrecy, tried to impose in 1941, it was summed up in the formula: “legal literature means literature of treason.”¹³¹ This position would soon be relaxed, moreover, at Aragon’s initiative, as we will see.

Despite the self-censorship agreement that the publishers' union had signed, the fact is that the question of book publication proved to be delicate. Few writers, in fact, abstained from all legal publication; they included Roger Martin du Gard, André Malraux, André Chamson, Jean Guéhenno, and René Char. Michel Leiris, who would publish *Haut Mal* in 1943, admittedly in the limited-edition collection "Métamorphoses" that Jean Paulhan directed at Gallimard, wrote in his journal on January 31, 1941:

At no time in my literary life did the idea come to me to "officialize" myself. Now is therefore not the time to begin. . . . The essential meaning that I attach to my poetic activity is that of a refusal. There is thus no question for me of publishing in conditions that would represent for me, implicitly, an acceptance of what is happening now in the political realm.¹³²

This position was delicate for at least two reasons. Would not the meaning of such an individual stance seem ambiguous, when it did not go unnoticed? In his *Journal*, Roger Martin du Gard evoked the difficulty of staying this course:

Even though I am constantly harassed to take, in present-day France, a definite political attitude, and some even try to intimidate me by calling me an attentiste, which in modern vocabulary means not only abstentionist but "without character, cowardly, prudently opportunistic," etc., I do not manage to weaken in myself the firm intention that I formed to remain silent, to not attach one more voice to the confused cacophony of the "partisans." [. . .] I do not know what the future holds for me, and if this private—essentially private—attitude will be possible to maintain if, tomorrow, the passions of the parties, which are only at the beginning of their agitation, tear apart and devastate my country. I will hold off as long as possible. If one day I have to, I do not say "choose" but "declare my choice," I will do it, at any risk. If one also has to bend before the violence of the strongest, I think I will be able to bend also [. . .].¹³³

And still today, Malraux is more often charged with his successive refusals of both the literary and the armed Resistance before going underground in 1944 than praised for his choice to publish nothing in France as long as the Occupation lasted.¹³⁴

The second reason is that for a number of "writers of refusal," the struggle to maintain the "French spirit" was also at stake, but a struggle to maintain it honorably, that is to say without compromising their principles (this is what separated them from the attentistes and those who were complacent). Rather than not publish anything, they wanted to maintain a presence—legal but

covert—that made their retreat from certain places like *La NRF* and their refusal to write for the collaborationist press the more obvious, by contrast. The idea that this could be only a form of self-persuasion seems to me without interest insofar as it is above all important to assert, against the thesis of “bad faith,” that belief in the power of *esprit* is, by definition, one of the principles that the producers of symbolic goods must interiorize in order to enter the game, to take it seriously. Even if they come to doubt it, they need all the hindsight of a François Mauriac approaching death to be able to state, after the fact, that is to say after having played the game, that “the resistance of the intellectuals was useful first of all to them, and that is not insignificant after all.”¹³⁵

Let us note that, except in the case of those who were entirely condemned to forced silence, suppressing the freedom of expression did not in itself constitute a reference point susceptible of guiding conduct. When Michel Leiris enjoyed the banning of *L'Afrique fantôme* by the Ministry of the Interior in 1941—“Setting aside the fact that this could end up provoking practical inconveniences, I can only enjoy this decision, that objectively situates me. ‘Objectively,’ that is to say: without my being at all involved, by the very essence of things”¹³⁶—it was because this ban reinforced a choice he had made a year earlier by refusing to contribute to authorized reviews. In contradistinction to this attitude, censorship, or fear of censorship, could lead others to multiply their tokens of good will toward the occupant, as we saw earlier in the case of Léautaud, who refused to publish in *Le Figaro* so as not to offend the German censors.

Furthermore, self-censorship did not represent only disadvantages for these writers who were specialists of a game with formal rules and constraints. The experience of history has moreover proven it, as Drieu La Rochelle explained in *La NRF* (October 1942): “The good literary periods are periods of censorship: the spirit is condemned to thinness.”¹³⁷ There is no reason to doubt his good faith, especially since he developed this idea privately at the same time, as Jean Follain reported: “In the period where one can say anything, Drieu said (around 1928), words lose some of their value, some of their weight. Eras when governments have monitored literary productions while encouraging them (patronage) have seen flourishing literature.”¹³⁸ And if we still doubted his impartiality, the reflections that André Gide published on the subject in *La NRF* (February 1941) confirm that this was a widely shared view:

If tomorrow, as must be feared, the freedom to think, or at least the expression of that thought, will be refused to us, I will try to persuade myself that art, that even thought, will lose less by this than in an excessive freedom.

We enter a period where liberalism will become the most suspect and the least practicable of virtues. But I try to persuade myself that it is during non-liberal periods that the free spirit reaches its most lofty virtue.¹³⁹

The recourse to coded language, to winks and insinuations, which became generalized after 1941 on the literary page of *Le Figaro* and in the young reviews of the Southern zone and the nearby French-speaking zones, illustrates the playful character—“Oh! We were having fun” Pierre Seghers would write at the Liberation¹⁴⁰—that the efforts at getting around censorship would take on, establishing a new complicity with the reader that could only reinforce literary belief. It is no coincidence that this practice would first be developed by poets.

Definitively, what would circumscribe these stakes was not so much censorship itself as the use that the writers most inclined to heteronomy threatened to make of it, in order to silence rivals that they loudly denounced. François Mauriac thus wrote to Drieu La Rochelle in July 1941: “[. . .] but, Drieu, recognize that in any case they [my friends] don’t have the occupier behind them, *they do not seek to put the occupier in the service of their vengeance*. That is what is unforgivable.”¹⁴¹ From then on, denunciation would constitute a reference point.

With all the precautions that the interpretation of retroactive testimony requires, we might quote Simone de Beauvoir’s summary of the code of conduct adopted by writers of “refusal” (with the caveat that we might harbor a doubt concerning Radio-Vichy, where she herself contributed, in order to make a living after her dismissal from national education in the summer of 1943):

The writers on our side of the zonal border had tacitly formulated certain rules and stuck to them. No one was to write for any journal or magazine in the Occupied Zone, nor to broadcast from Radio Paris. On the other hand, it was permissible to work for the press in the Free Zone and to speak on Radio Vichy: here it all depended on the content of the article or broadcast in question.¹⁴²

In fact, with some rare exceptions, the question of refusing to publish books was never really posed, despite what Édith Thomas suggests: “I resolved not to publish it [the novel that she had just finished]. I would have had to send press copies to the critics who had accepted to work at French-language Nazi newspapers, ask for their opinion and thereby prove them right for having put themselves in the service of the invader. Others, like Elsa Triolet who published *Le Cheval blanc* at that time, did not have the same scruples.”¹⁴³ In reality, her novel had been rejected by Gallimard.¹⁴⁴ This case matters less as an anecdote than for its exemplarity: for many of those engaged in underground endeavors, legal non-publication was not a choice. The choice that Jean Guéhenno made

to keep silent, which must be relativized due to his status as a high school teacher (he did not live off his writing), still remains meaningful in comparison with Jean-Paul Sartre, another teacher. Also meaningful were the choices made by Roger Martin du Gard and Malraux, who published *Les Noyers d'Altenburg* in Switzerland and not in occupied France. They were exceptions.

On another level, René Char (like Malraux) made an exceptional choice by preferring armed to literary resistance—the few (rare) other writers who engaged in active Resistance also participated in the intellectual Resistance. These limit cases traced the contours of possibles on the side of “refusal.” One of the artisans of the literary Resistance, Jacques Debût-Bridel, would summarize, although after the fact, what was at stake in these different choices, from the viewpoint of those who chose the weapons of the mind:

The best and most qualified of French thought could only answer by their abstention, by their silence or some private endeavors. Was this haughty and courageous dignity enough to safeguard the influence and renown of French thought in a world that, delivered from Nazism, was to strike down the new barbarism at the cost of harsh sacrifices? Would it not soon be forgotten, if it were ever known? More than the treason of a dozen writers engaged in the ranks of the enemy, the too-general renouncement of semi-complicity threatened to greatly endanger French literature, the intellectual [*spirituel*] influence of France.¹⁴⁵

For most of the writers on this side, the issue concerned the defense of the values of the spirit [*esprit*]. The first issue of *Confluences* that came out after the Liberation began with this theme: “It was a matter then of opposing the venture of systematically enslaving the mind, by the Nazis and their servants, with the silent, but effective action of free thought.”¹⁴⁶ In its political version, it can be summarized as follows: this war being an ideological war, the opposition took the form of a defense of the universal values of the spirit [*esprit*] against racist particularism and the enslavement of thought. These universal values of the spirit [*esprit*] came from a French humanist tradition born of the Enlightenment and those siding with the new powers attempted to misappropriate them in favor of the “European ideal,” or discredit them in favor of a particularist nationalism that drew from the sources of counterrevolutionary tradition. This is why, in its more spiritual and more patriotic version, which was the one that drew the most followers, the struggle took the form of a defense of national cultural heritage and an effort to reappropriate the “French spirit” through the themes and symbols misused to the advantage of the new dominant ideologies, from Joan of Arc to Péguy. Faced with the proclaimed patriotism of nationalists

supporting the National Revolution, it was easy to respond: “Strange patriotism sometimes when it calls for revolution without worrying about independence.”¹⁴⁷ Faced with those who intended to exploit the defeat in order to flout the values of the national heritage by denouncing the past faults that supposedly led to disaster, according to the rhetoric of contrition inaugurated by the head of state, the motto of “not disowning oneself” following the title of an article published by François Mauriac in *Le Figaro* of July 23, 1940, became the rallying cry for the opposition: “And, for example, there is no point in blushing for having cherished freedom, but only for having defended it badly [. . .]. And similarly, there is no reason to blame ourselves; we must, on the contrary, be proud of ourselves for having the cult of the human being.”¹⁴⁸ Voices in exile, who said openly what could only be inferred in metropolitan France, came to the aid of the opposition. On August 17, 1940, Mauriac was harangued by Maurice Schumann on the London radio waves between two of General de Gaulle’s appeals.¹⁴⁹ In New York—where several had taken refuge, including André Maurois; Jules Romains; Julien Green; the editor Jacques Schiffrin, who published works in French there; and a number of teachers including Georges Gurvitch and Claude Lévi-Strauss—the Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain wrote *À travers le désastre*, which circulated illicitly in the Southern zone as early as 1941, before being reissued the following year by the underground Éditions de Minuit. It constituted an accusation of the Vichy regime and an indictment of the culture of disavowal: “It is utterly irrational to see in the sins of the French the direct and decisive reason for that defeat when the sins of their conquerors cry to heaven.”¹⁵⁰ The moral censorship that raged in the Southern zone raised fears of the worst attacks against cultural heritage: “The hardest will be to give up Stendhal,” declared René Lalou, pleading for the great works of the past in the literary pages of *Le Figaro*.¹⁵¹ But it was above all the accusation launched in the summer of 1940 against the “bad masters,” namely the recognized writers from the interwar period, rendered responsible for the defeat, which provoked a veritable outcry among the targeted authors, their critics, and their allies. Since they could with good reason equate the defense of their works to the safeguarding of the national heritage, they were all the more disposed to convert their personal indignation into an active opposition.

Formed around the literary page of *Le Figaro* and a group of newer reviews—*Poésie 40, 41* in Villeneuve, *Fontaine* in Algiers, followed in 1941 and 1942 by *Confluences* in Lyon, *Les Cahiers du Rhône* in Switzerland, and *Messages* in Paris—on the side of small-scale production, a struggle was engaged to regain literary autonomy. The conditions of occupation lent this struggle the form of a reaffirmation of national tradition (“French spirit”) like a universalism, in the

tradition of the Enlightenment. It was the exercise of thought and art that took on a patriotic value in the struggle against the obscurantism and barbarism of the forces destroying thought. In Algiers, the issue of the review *Fontaine* published in July 1940 was seized. It opened with these lines:

The French victory is to be able to answer with names. Are we conscious enough of our poets? [. . .] At an hour when the confusion of planes attains an abusive power, France, to be worthy of its mission, has a duty to reestablish the true hierarchy. What makes its pure greatness has not been vanquished, and could not be vanquished except if, by ignorance of itself, by the misdeeds of a repentance not without phariseism, and also by the action of those who have long called out against the heights of its arts, for the only reason that they can't reach them, it came to disown itself [. . .].¹⁵²

These newer reviews, which played a subversive role, would contribute to the symbolic reunification of the shattered literary field, giving voice to the writers of “refusal” and to banned authors (writing under pseudonyms) or those who were exiled like Bernanos (*Fontaine* would thus reproduce fragments of his *Lettre aux Anglais* in the November–December issue, during the coup d'état in Algiers). At the instigation of Aragon in particular, they formed networks that would promote recruitment for the literary Resistance, without the move underground being automatic.

The struggle for the reappropriation of the “French spirit” would be the banner of the intellectual Resistance, from the Communists to the Catholics, by way of the humanist generation that discovered patriotic feeling. It made possible the alliance between Communists and non-Communists that characterized clandestine recruitment: “*French thought must become legal in France*” demanded the underground Communist review *La Pensée libre* in February 1941.¹⁵³ “We will save the honor of French literature with our writings. We will castigate the traitors sold to the enemy [. . .]. We will defend the values that have made the glory of our civilization,” declared the manifesto of the Front national des écrivains, future Comité national des écrivains (CNE).¹⁵⁴ The defense of the national cultural heritage would also be the vocation of the underground Éditions de Minuit, in order to signify that “to be French is before all else a state of mind,” according to James Steel’s expression. On this subject he would evoke the library of the uncle and niece in the first novel published by Minuit, *Le Silence de la mer*, which describes the silent refusal attitude of the niece in front of a German officer, a “true pantheon of French culture, in the face of which the German officer billeted at their house is amazed.”¹⁵⁵ In protest of the use that the flatterers of the National Revolution made of the author of

Jeanne d'Arc, the Éditions de Minuit published selected excerpts showing that “the intransigent and revolutionary patriotism of Péguy had discerned with an extraordinary lucidity the capitulations to which the spirit of cowardice can lead a government of treason.”¹⁵⁶ Rallying in the name of maintaining the “flame of French thought,” while claiming universal values that established France’s prestige in foreign lands—“Once again France has *her word* to say. Her word: Liberty,” wrote Forez alias François Mauriac in *Le Cahier noir*¹⁵⁷—also offered the advantage of reconciling different political tendencies. The editorial project of the Éditions de Minuit, as analyzed by Anne Simonin, was thus inspired by an “idealistic and ideal” vision of the fatherland which,¹⁵⁸ thanks to the primacy of the unitary line and the common designation of Vichy as the enemy, allowed for a compromise between two conceptions of the Resistance: the attitude of “non-violent refusal” faced with the occupant that belonged to the humanist and pacifist generation, and the armed struggle advocated by the Communists.¹⁵⁹

The Literary Foundations of Political Allegiance

While the conjuncture of national crisis and the literary field’s loss of autonomy led to a redefinition of the stakes, that redefinition did not appear *ex nihilo*. It operated largely according to rationales that predated the crisis and were specific to the literary world. The tendency of writers to intervene on the political scene, the internal struggles, and their underlying structural opposition were not born of the defeat. The statistical approach—and especially factorial analysis—will allow us to understand all that writers’ political attitudes during the Occupation owed to a field effect.

THE STRUCTURAL FACTORS BEHIND WRITERS’ POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

The over-politicization induced by the circumstances should not mask the fact that writers’ engagement under the Occupation also depended on endogenous factors of the literary field’s “politicization” that preceded it. The ethical responsibilities that were associated, on both the right and left, with the figure of the intellectual since the Dreyfus affair, as well as the experience of the first worldwide conflict, during which the influence of Action française in intellectual circles reached its peak, contributed to the relative discredit of art for art’s sake, and its corollary, the “ivory tower.” I will come back to the debates surrounding the responsibility of the writer in the next chapter. In the absence of comparable data for earlier periods, it is difficult to know if writers’ degree of involvement in

public life really increased during the interwar period. Historians and witnesses nonetheless agree that the 1930s, especially after February 6, 1934, were a moment of widespread mobilization. Yet this mobilization is often explained by the raising of the international stakes, to the detriment of structural factors: the conditions of production, conditions of professional practice, the political supply, morphological evolutions, and the repertoire of representations were all transformed. The widespread mobilization of writers had, in fact, no equivalent among artists or musicians. Montherlant explained the constraint weighing on writers: “A painter, a sculptor, a composer of music is not expected to always *say his piece* on everything and nothing [. . .]. But a writer, yes. If there is reluctance, he will be reputed to ‘shirk his duty.’”¹⁶⁰ Even though existing works, notably on the conditions of writers’ professional practice, do not yet allow me to draw conclusive arguments, I will propose here an initial assessment of the convergence of these different factors, based on a few observations.

We can list multiple signs of this “politicization” of the literary field, and its accompanying radicalization of options. On the left, it runs from the reconciliation in the late 1920s between the surrealist group and the Communist Party, followed by alliances and divisions, to the position taken in favor of Communism by Gide, the archetypal intellectual hidden in his ivory tower, in 1932. On the right, it can be illustrated by the political hardening of the conservative right, which rallied the neo-pacifist camp, as well as by the political evolution of the young generation of Action française that sought out more “revolutionary” routes including Fascism. In 1930, Marcel Arland noted:

I don’t see a lesser danger in the contamination that politics imposes on literature today. The attacks of Mr. Julien Benda [*La Trahison des clercs*, 1927] don’t change anything. A writer, whether he wants to or not, is forced to contend with political parties. He cannot write a book that is not immediately judged to be on the right or the left.”¹⁶¹

In fact, as during the Dreyfus affair,¹⁶² politics became a way of defining positions in the literary field. The time of literary schools had passed. While they still experienced a real profusion during the Belle Époque, few lasted. Even though it formed against the symbolism that had produced some of its contributors, *La NRF* defied any affiliation with a school from its creation in 1909. The adoption of an aesthetic concept defined by formal procedures and privileged thematics, which had characterized group strategies of distinction throughout the nineteenth century, was now almost entirely limited to the avant-gardes; even then, it was no longer enough: cubism and Dadaism certainly marked the

period of the Great War, but the surrealist group would affirm its identity and establish itself in the 1920s through an ethical engagement.¹⁶³

In the disappearance of literary schools, we can see the effects of the novel's domination; at the end of the nineteenth century, it had ousted poetry (this domination should itself be related to the expansion of the book market and the decline of the traditional forms of patronage). Literary schools made way for movements that united new or marginal writers on the basis of identity: the regionalist literature movement, the "Catholic literary Renaissance" movement, the populist literature movement, the proletarian literature movement.¹⁶⁴ While these forms of categorization most often expressed unfortunate power relations within the literary field—writers from the province who could not manage to establish themselves on the Paris scene, newcomers more or less deprived of the economic, social, and/or cultural resources necessary to attain the most prestigious authorities of legitimization such as *La NRF*, or even gain entrance to salons and society—they also included ethical, even political claims that gave them greater visibility and allowed them to take their place in editorial production by targeting a specific audience. Evidence of this includes the multiplication of specialized literary anthologies—*Le Nouvel âge littéraire* (1930) by Henry Poulaille at Valois, *L'Anthologie de la renaissance catholique* (1938) by Louis Chaigne at Alsatia, the numerous anthologies devoted to regional literature or rural life and so forth—the creation of reviews, collections such as the "Roseau d'or" at Plon or "Romans de la vie nouvelle" at Valois, and specific authorities of consecration such as the Province Academy (1924) or the Populist Prize (founded in 1931 and reinstated in 1939).

The appearance of politico-literary weeklies and of reviews, groups, and circles oriented toward the construction of a new world and with which writers were largely associated (including *Europe*, *Commune*, *Esprit*, *Réaction*, *Ordre nouveau*, *Combat*, etc.) constituted another indicator of this process of "politicization."¹⁶⁵ They competed on one hand with general interest reviews like the *Revue des deux mondes* and on the other with big literary reviews like *La NRF*. The growing space allotted to current events in *La NRF* starting in the 1930s, due to pressure from Gaston Gallimard and André Gide, is significant in this regard.¹⁶⁶ Politics had indeed become a mode of demarcation and differentiation in the literary field.

The launching of the politico-literary weeklies, where writers played a leading role, was closely linked to the strategies of the publishing houses: it followed transformations in the publishing market, increased competition, and the search for new advertising methods¹⁶⁷ to reach a cultured audience who had

grown thanks to generalized instruction.¹⁶⁸ In 1924, to counter *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, created two years earlier with the support of the publisher Larousse, and whose links with *La NRF* worried competitors, Fayard founded *Candida*. Directed by the Maurrassian Jacques Bainville, *Candida* set itself apart from its rival through its treatment of current events alongside its cultural pages, and through its avowed political coloration; its innovative formula would meet with great success. It reached 265,000 copies in 1930 and saw its circulation peak at 465,000 in 1936.¹⁶⁹ Following this model, the Éditions de France launched *Gringoire* in 1928. This weekly of the extreme right with populist accents was directed by Horace de Carbuccia and would reach a circulation of 650,000 copies in 1938. Its two star writers were Henri Béraud and Roland Dorgelès. *Je suis partout* first came out in 1930; also by Fayard, it united Pierre Gaxotte with the young Maurrassian guard who would evolve toward Fascism (see above). In 1932, Gallimard launched *Marianne* under the direction of Emmanuel Berl; he wanted a left-leaning review to compete with the two large weeklies on the right, but this project would fail (after maxing out at 120,000 copies, circulation decreased, and Gallimard did away with it altogether in 1937).¹⁷⁰ Meanwhile, Plon responded with an extreme-right version the following year, with the participation of Maurice Bardèche, Brasillach, Abel Bonnard, and Henri Massis (named after the current year: 1933, 1934, and so forth). Finally, in 1935, the weekly *Vendredi* was founded and directed by two writers, the radical-Socialist André Chamson and Jean Guéhenno, an SFIO (French Socialist Party) sympathizer; they were soon joined by the journalist and Communist sympathizer Andrée Viollis. *Vendredi* meant to embody the union of the left against Fascism in the intellectual field.¹⁷¹ Thanks to the participation of renowned writers like André Gide, Romain Rolland, Alain, and Julien Benda, it printed 100,000 copies.

On both the right and the left, contributions were brilliant, and social recruitment showed that substantial socioeconomic and educational resources were necessary to join them. The writers who contributed to these periodicals were most often born in Paris, or they emigrated there at a younger age than most of their cohort.¹⁷² They were more likely to have attended the grandes écoles than their colleagues (one out of three versus one writer out of four for the whole of our population). *Je suis partout* attracted the highest number of École normale supérieure (ENS) graduates (six, or twice the average of the other weeklies), for whom criticism and journalism were potential careers.¹⁷³ Failing their *agrégation* exams was not the only factor that determined these students' turn toward the literary field: it is hard to know the extent to which the failure of someone like Robert Brasillach was due to his decreased involvement in

favor of literary journalism (he had just begun contributing to *Action française*). As Robert Smith has shown, ENS students' move away from education was most frequent (about a third) in the fraction of sons best endowed in economic capital (their fathers were property owners, senior civil servants, in the liberal professions), especially those of Parisian origin. This is a sign of the devaluation of teaching careers with the new competition from the universities, but also a sign of the resources necessary to plan on a career that was at once more prestigious and more risky, in the case of the literary field (Jules Romains and Jean-Paul Sartre would only leave teaching when their literary career was settled, while Jean Guéhenno would stay his whole life). These relatively atypical properties of ENS graduates who moved away from teaching¹⁷⁴ perhaps explain the phenomenon, already described,¹⁷⁵ of the connections that a number of them maintained with the politico-social networks of the right and with the French Academy, where they constituted a quarter of the membership. Let us remember that this was a period when the ENS passed for a bastion of Republican ideology.

The politico-literary weeklies' new editorial supply reinforced the introduction of a journalistic logic into the literary field, at the very moment when journalism was undergoing increased professionalization. Widely practiced in the nineteenth century, the recourse to journalism as a means of subsistence and as a stepping stone toward a literary career was disavowed by those writers who came from the most privileged segments of society. At the turn of the century, fictional representations of journalists oscillated between sordidness and venality.¹⁷⁶ Unlike the traditional, "noble" press that regularly hosted great writers, the emergence during the Second Empire of the "little press," the cheap popular press that recruited a new category of journalists with more modest origins, had deepened the divide between journalists and literary men. Starting at the end of the nineteenth century, "among the famous journalists, from now on one out of three ha[d] nothing in common with the literary man, versus one out of five thirty years earlier" according to Marc Martin.¹⁷⁷ The relative decline of traditional literary journalism (criticism and column) in the daily press was nonetheless compensated by two phenomena: on one hand, the appearance of in-depth reporting as a literary genre, in which writers like Joseph Kessel, Paul Morand, Pierre Mac Orlan, and Roger Vailland would distinguish themselves; on the other hand, the development of cultural weeklies that invited writers to comment on events. Big Parisian dailies like *L'Écho de Paris*, *Le Figaro*, and the *Journal des débats* continued, moreover, to attract articles by academicians and high-society writers like André Chaumeix, André Bellessort, Abel Hermant, Abel Bonnard, Henry Bordeaux, and François Mauriac. The opinion press also

had its stars: Charles Maurras, Léon Daudet at *Action française*; Aragon and Jean-Richard Bloch at *Ce Soir*, starting in 1937.

Journalism therefore remained both a means of accessing the literary field and a means of subsistence, whether mediocre for the writers of news items and other “articles” who did not benefit from a fixed income, or substantial—often exceeding royalties—for established writers, due to the great disparity in salaries.¹⁷⁸ Half of our population of 185 writers contributed regularly to a daily (*Le Temps*, *L'Écho de Paris*, *Action française*, *Le Figaro*, *Paris-Soir*, *Ce Soir*, etc.) and nearly two-thirds wrote more or less regularly for the major outlets. Journalism was the main source of income for one out of four writers.

Thus if editorial and journalist supply and working conditions seemed to elicit writers’ intervention in public affairs, the phenomenon of solidified political oppositions in the 1930s was also, more broadly, a social phenomenon that would be exacerbated by international issues. We must also take into account the generational effect, at a time when the “generation of fire” was establishing itself in French society: “In 1930, veterans constituted most of the men between 30 and 60 years old,” explains Antoine Prost.¹⁷⁹ In the politico-literary weeklies, this generation was overrepresented (two-thirds of our writers who contributed to *Candide*, *Gringoire*, and *Je suis partout* were born between 1880 and 1899, whereas they represent 40 percent of the overall population studied). This observation coincides with Bernard Laguerre’s assessment of the weeklies *Marianne* and *Vendredi*, where the “generation of fire” was the best-represented age group in both cases (more than half for *Marianne*, a little less than half for *Vendredi*).¹⁸⁰ Moreover the theme of “action” was privileged by veterans’ associations, even if it never resulted in concrete political content.¹⁸¹ In the intellectual field, the banalization of this theme doubtless favored the rejection of the “ivory tower,” already amply encouraged by Maurrassism through its critique of idealism and the “gratuitous games” of the mind.

But what characterized perhaps even better the morphological transformation of the literary field during this period was the newfound recognition of writers emerging from the second “generation of fire,” those who experienced the first war when they were very young and were mobilized after patriotic fervor had died down, according to the distinction established by Robert Wohl.¹⁸²

This was the generation—of Aragon, Breton, Eluard, Drieu La Rochelle, Montherlant, Céline, and Giono—who had not mapped out their career before being mobilized; the war was their first socialization in the adult world. Making their entry into the literary field during the 1920s, they established their presence in the 1930s. Their aesthetic project was marked by the search for a frame of reference, for an ethical system, in order to analyze the event as writ-

ers.¹⁸³ Whereas the war experience formed the basis of the surrealist revolt,¹⁸⁴ it also inspired Montherlant's aesthetic of "virility" (*La Relève du matin*, 1920; *Le Songe*, 1922) and Drieu La Rochelle's thematics of "action," which furthermore allowed him to generalize his individual (familial) experience of social decline through the leitmotif of French "decadence," widespread in the discourse of the right since the beginning of the century (*Mesure de la France*, 1922). It also formed the stylistic violence and the nihilist philosophy of Céline (*Voyage au bout de la nuit*, 1932), the integral pacifism of Giono and his condemnation of the misdeeds of industrial civilization (*Le Grand Troupeau*, 1931). This generation would contribute to the politicization of the literary stakes and give direction to junior writers who, jealous of their elders' wartime decorations (those same elders initially seemed like their brothers), compensated for their lack with political escalation.

Evidence of the establishment of the "generation of fire" could be found in publications on the war, especially novels and narratives, that appeared around 1927–1928, and peaked in 1930.¹⁸⁵ This new production on the war distinguished itself from the first wave of witness literature that broke between 1914 and 1922–1923 by its historical spirit,¹⁸⁶ its will to understand the past in order to prepare the future. The intrusion of History into individual destinies by means of the war made it a fruitful theme for the bildungsroman in the 1930s. Starting in the late 1920s, the novel of analysis and manners, still predominant at the beginning of the decade, gave way to an exploration of contemporary history that proposed both a philosophical, historical, or psychological interpretation of the era's sociopolitical conditions, and an attitude toward them. Massive social frescoes marked the literature of those years: *Les Thibault* (1922–1940) by Roger Martin du Gard,¹⁸⁷ *Les Hommes de bonne volonté* (1932–1946) by Jules Romains, *Le Monde réel* (1934–1944) by Aragon. Whereas, from Henri Barbusse's *Le Feu* to Céline's *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, the experience of modern industrial war had discredited the epic and heroic genre in favor of derision, civil war with a revolutionary vocation offered a favorable frame for the rehabilitation of war heroism, thanks to both its ideal of fighting for justice and the original nature of its urban guerilla warfare.¹⁸⁸ Rehabilitated by a newcomer who did not fight in the war of 1914, André Malraux (from *Les Conquérants*, 1928, to *La Condition humaine*, crowned by the Goncourt Prize in 1933), novels of war heroism found a new source of inspiration in the Spanish Civil War, for both the left and the right, paired with the author's engagement. Examples include *L'Espoir* (1937), a report-novel by Malraux and *Gilles* (1939) by Drieu La Rochelle.

In a shifting literary field, the reconversion of André Gide, which began in 1927 with *Le Voyage au Congo*, no doubt owed something to his concern over

maintaining his position there. This was all the more clear since it coincided with the end of a properly literary production, an effect of the twin processes of social aging and consecration: in 1932, his collected works began to appear, and Gide began dedicating himself almost exclusively to his autobiographical writings and, occasionally, to political essay (*Retour de l'URSS*, 1936, and *Retouches à mon "Retour de l'URSS,"* 1937, marking his break with Communism). Gide's statement of support for Communism in 1932 stupefied the literary world. It led to an indignant uproar from his friends—"[it is] strange to see them all, those great bourgeois of *La NRF* [. . .] throw themselves into the mouth of the Bolshevik Eugène," wrote François Mauriac¹⁸⁹—and this strange "public trial" at the headquarters of Union de la vérité, where he agreed to appear in order to justify himself to his peers. The tendency of the new generations toward political radicalization largely determined the engagement of a writer who was always concerned about cutting himself off from young people, whose expectations he sensed. His peers' exhortations certainly influenced his decision as well. Léon Daudet, who held Gide in high esteem, "predicted" during the very year of his engagement that he would soon find a cause worthy of his gifts.¹⁹⁰ Such injunctions seemed to multiply at that time, indicating the politicization of the literary field. After his election to the French Academy in 1933, François Mauriac was heralded as a future journalist, both in a tribute by Daniel Halévy, and by André Chaumeix, who returned to this theme in his response speech during Mauriac's reception.¹⁹¹ Paradoxically, these injunctions emanating from the intellectual right would end up creating his most formidable adversaries. Gide's engagement would, in return, contribute to the legitimation of the "prophetic" model—both for François Mauriac, who started making his turn toward anti-Fascism in 1935, and for Ramon Fernandez who, after having almost followed Gide in 1934, made a radical turn the following year to join Drieu La Rochelle on the path to "Fascist Socialism," then into the ranks of the PPF—and, more specifically, the practice of fellow-traveling that people like Louis Martin-Chauffier, Jean Cassou, and Jean-Paul Sartre would illustrate into the 1950s.

In the end, we must relate this evolution to the transformation of the political supply, which simultaneously favored the realization of the "prophetic" option in the literary field and the solidification of ideological oppositions. The rising generation found fuel for its tendency toward political radicalization in the modern ideologies of Communism and Fascism. The ephemeral reconciliation between the surrealists and the PCF (French Communist Party) in 1927 turned into a lasting engagement in the party ranks for people like Aragon and Georges Sadoul, while Breton turned to Trotskyism. At a time when the

leagues' rise to power embodied the ambient anti-parliamentarianism that exploded on February 6, 1934, the PCF's line of openness to the intellectuals, facilitated by the Communist International's reversal of tactics in 1935,¹⁹² enabled new forms of engagement that required neither submission to party discipline nor support of its program. The party encouraged or initiated mobilization efforts in the struggle against capitalism and Fascism, such as the Association des écrivains et artistes révolutionnaires (AEAR), and took an active part in anti-Fascist intellectual movements like the Comité de vigilance des intellectuels antifascistes (CVIA) and the Congrès pour la défense de la culture.¹⁹³ Among writers, at least one out of ten was a member of the AEAR, and almost as many belonged to the CVIA. Between 1930 and 1934 the proportion of fellow-traveling writers doubled in comparison with the 1920s (from 2.7 percent to 5.4 percent); after 1934, it was the number of party members that increased (from 3.2 percent between 1930 and 1934 to 5.9 percent between 1934 and 1939), at a time when the PCF experienced tremendous growth (from less than 30,000 at the end of 1933 to 87,000 at the end of 1934, then 328,000 in 1937) and unprecedented electoral successes.¹⁹⁴ The call for bids created by the union of the left after February 6, 1934,¹⁹⁵ and especially by the struggle against Fascism, which Hitler's rise to power presented as a threatening danger, favored a much more widespread mobilization of intellectuals around the Congrès pour la défense de la culture, held at the Mutualité in July 1935, and around the weekly *Vendredi*: anti-Fascism and "the defense of culture" were immediately declared a universal and nonpartisan cause.

On the right, as the Action française league became more academic and formed alliances with conservative fractions, its prestige was diminished in the eyes of the new literary generations. After February 6, 1934, young militants from Action française left a Maurras who was at once too lyrical and too nostalgic to be the spokesman for Fascism in France (which also recruited from the left). At this time, the Fascistic circle of influence represented between 5.4 percent and 8.6 percent of our population, depending on whether we include the leagues of the extreme right (excluding Action française, which totaled 4.3 percent of the whole). But the advent of the Popular Front, the Ethiopian war, and the Spanish Civil War would unite the intellectual forces of the conservative right and the extreme right in a neo-pacifist struggle for the "defense of the West" against an anti-Fascist movement led by other intellectuals. The formation of these two well-defined camps, each of which assembled about a quarter of the whole of our population (meaning that one out of two writers was directly involved in this confrontation), simply revealed the constitutive structural oppositions of the literary field, whose foundations—as we will see—were as

much literary as political. Despite the shuffling brought about by the dissensions surrounding the politics of nonintervention in Spain and surrounding the Munich agreement, then the German-Soviet pact, these were essentially the same two camps that existed under the Occupation. One side rallied to the new powers, while the other formed the literary Resistance.

THE RELATIVE WEIGHT OF SOCIAL PROPERTIES

While they do not, by themselves, account for the political choices of writers under the Occupation, the global distribution of social properties (age, social origins, educational capital) among different political possibilities offers an initial template for the relationships between dispositions and political tendencies. Thus, close to two-thirds of the sixty-four writers of our population who were engaged in civil or armed Resistance were less than forty years old, and almost the totality (90 percent) were less than fifty years old in 1940. On the other hand, more than two-thirds of the Vichyist writers were then over fifty years old, and almost half were over sixty (they represent between 14 percent and 20 percent of our population depending on whether we include those who would eventually develop a more favorable attitude to the Resistance). These figures only reconfirm the relationship between social aging and conservatism on one side, between youth and protest on the other, along with the propensity for taking risks (clandestinity, in this case) which decreases with age. The writers who were more or less involved in the Collaboration (forty-four, or 24 percent of our population) occupied, from an age standpoint, an intermediary position between these two extremes: half were between forty and sixty years old, the average age for reaching the peak of one's literary career, while the rest were equally divided between the other age groups.

To a certain extent, we can also socially characterize each of these three positions, keeping in mind that intermediary zones subsisted between the extremes. Thus, among the Vichyists, the sons of senior and mid-level civil servants (including military but excluding teachers) were overrepresented (at close to a third, their rate was twice that of our entire population), whereas they were underrepresented among the resisting writers (6 percent). A minimal interpretation of this statement could translate an inherited disposition toward allegiance to the state as the ultimate guarantor of order, and thus a lesser propensity for dissidence among those writers with a civil service background.¹⁹⁶ According to a maximal and more historical interpretation, comparing this characteristic to the age of the people concerned and to the fact that they were also more likely on average to have provincial origins than their colleagues (two-thirds versus half of the whole of writers),¹⁹⁷ we can view these writers as the direct

heirs of those former “elites” who used to form the “France of the notables” and that the Third Republic had deprived of social and political power in favor of the new Republican “elites.”¹⁹⁸ Nostalgic for a rural France and for the local ecclesiastic power with which their fathers were allied, they chiefly constituted the traditionalist extreme of the Vichy regime. The first definition could apply to someone like Georges Lecomte, the son of a postmaster in Mâcon, descended from an old Burgundian family; and the second to someone like Charles Maurras, the son of a very Catholic civil servant from Martigues, descended from an old Provençal family; both men were over seventy years old in 1940. But these examples have only a general indicative value: the extreme case of Maurras clearly shows that family values were not reappropriated wholesale by sons who did not follow in their fathers’ social footsteps, especially for intellectuals who, out of scholastic habit as well as their propensity to stand out, subjected these (reappropriated or rejected) values to a rationalization and a systematization that made them unrecognizable.

The Resistance writers were, on the other hand, most often the product of intellectual and artistic fractions, including teachers (this was true of almost one in three Resistance writers, versus one in four for the whole of the population), whereas these social fractions were represented three times less often among the writers close to the Collaboration. While the latter were the most Parisian of writers (since their childhood), they were globally less well endowed in all kinds of assets, especially inherited or acquired cultural capital. They were most often recruited from the petty bourgeoisie (a third as compared to a little more than a quarter of the whole of writers); almost a quarter of them held a degree inferior to the baccalaureate, which is twice the rate of the whole group (they were also twice as likely to have attended an upper primary school or to have had no post-primary education—16 percent versus 7 percent). Among them, 41 percent had no higher education, versus 30 percent of the whole group; finally, they were more likely to have had an “incident” during their academic career. Whether for material reasons, health reasons, or due to a relative academic failure, this statement applies to 40 percent of them (with 18 percent experiencing an academic failure) versus less than 20 percent of the Resistance writers and 30 percent of the whole group (who experienced academic failure at the rate of 9 percent and 13 percent, respectively).¹⁹⁹ This phenomenon would probably have been more pronounced if our sample included those numerous collaborationist journalists with literary pretensions but no body of work and who were therefore situated on the edge of the literary field, like Henri Poulain. The son of a locksmith, he was a secretary at *Je suis partout* who distinguished himself in the newspaper’s literary pages during the Occupation before retiring

along with Brasillach in 1943; in his memoirs, Rebatet described him in these terms: “The only one on our team who was talentless as a writer, a Norman, nitpicky, curlicued, animated by a proletarian hatred toward Lesca [the administrator of *Je suis partout*].”²⁰⁰

The relationship to school partially explains the development of anti-intellectualism among a number of collaborationist writers, particularly the “disinherited” heirs, that is to say those who deviated from the career their family intended for them due to an academic failure. They tended to contrast the “intellectualism of ‘ace test takers’” with the aristocratic values of action, the cult of the body, and sports, which were favorite themes in the works of writers like Montherlant or Drieu La Rochelle.²⁰¹ Their propensity for anti-intellectualism was undoubtedly inspired more by the relationship between an academic failure and a declining family situation, as in the two cases cited, than by the academic failure itself, since this was a relatively frequent step on the path leading to the writing profession.

Among the intellectuals of the first generation, whose loss of status came from above, anti-intellectualism could be born of confrontation with certified agents of authorized language, and from the feeling of inferiority it engendered. Born in 1913 in Rouen to a working-class family (on his father’s side, he was the grandson of a manual laborer who was also a militant Socialist; on his mother’s side, of a bistro owner), Lucien Combelle, who described himself in his memoirs as “a kid with a primary school degree whom Maurras, the Sorbonne, and Gide united to disorient,” evoked both his fascination and his uneasiness with respect to those whom he thought—although he was usually wrong (notably about Petitjean)—to be graduates of the ENS:

Ah the guys, how could I forget them? Those captivating normaliens, fascinating products of a hypertrophied intellectualism, with sophisticated mechanisms catapulting them right and left [. . .]. But how do I look, talking like this about a “caste,” when some of its members have tolerated my presence? For they knew that I was not one of them, not even the hardworking fuddy-duddy from the neighboring Faculty! [. . .] But this is how, thanks to them, I learned at my expense what it cost to love rhetoric, especially when it is seasoned with plebeian words.²⁰²

A former Camelot du roi who was repelled by Maurrassian neoclassicism, he turned to Gide and Rémy de Gourmont, adopting the position of “art for art’s sake” in the review *Arts et idées*, which he founded in 1936 while attending the Sorbonne and working as a teacher in a private high school, before becoming Gide’s secretary from 1937 to 1938. “Art without labels” quickly proved to be an

illusion, or at least an untenable position for a young pretender during this period, as suggested by the reference to Malraux that Combelle made while reconstructing his career: “But Malraux still makes your pen tremble, which proves that politics prowls around your little chapel of *Arts et idées*. Gourmont and Léautaud are alibis, aristocrats that placed you more to the right than the left, anti-democratic diplomas; with them, you were sure to find the Republic vulgar.”²⁰³ An anti-Communist and anti-Semite, filled with resentment toward his class of origin, he was hardly receptive to Gide’s influence (although he would remain very grateful to him);²⁰⁴ he found his prophet in Céline, who reconciled him to his awkward position in the social circles that had adopted him and which he would hold responsible for his political evolution toward Fascism. The desertion of the Parisian scene under the Occupation gave him the unhoped-for chance to stand out: he grew closer to Drieu La Rochelle, contributed to *La Gerbe* and *Je suis partout*, and obtained first the chief editorship, then, in June 1942, the direction of *La Révolution nationale*, voice of Eugène Deloncle’s Mouvement social révolutionnaire (MSR), which had become a “political and literary” weekly.²⁰⁵

Social properties in the form of dispositions thus seem to have had a certain influence on political attitudes. But their weak contribution to polarization in factorial analysis, aside from age, illustrates the effect of refraction exerted by the literary field. In fact, they only act through the mediation of positions occupied within the field.

POSITIONS AND POSITION-TAKINGS

Indicators of the social, literary, and political trajectories of the population of 185 writers who were active during the war were submitted to Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA).²⁰⁶ It reveals the structure of the literary field under the Occupation, which was organized around four clusters (see figures 1.1 and 1.2): writers who enjoyed notoriety in the temporal order (on the left), writers who had achieved notoriety in the symbolic order (on the bottom), avant-garde writers (on the right), and writers who were weakly endowed with symbolic capital (on top). Factorial analysis also sheds light on the homology between positions occupied in the field and political position-taking. We will work to understand this homology by interpreting the two first factors of MCA, which present its major tendencies.

The first factor of the analysis refers to the volume of notoriety in the temporal order. It opposes the writers occupying a temporally dominant position to the writers occupying a temporally dominated position, an opposition that merges on this (horizontal) axis with the split between a pole of large-scale