

Gary D. Mole

VOICES OF PAIN, CRIES OF SILENCE

*Francophone Jewish Poetry of
the Shoah, 1939-2008*



*Currents in Comparative
Romance Languages and Literatures*

In this groundbreaking study of Francophone Jewish poetry of the Shoah, Gary D. Mole engages with an extensive corpus of poetry by more than forty poets, all of whom were active after the war in France, Belgium, Switzerland, or Quebec but who came originally from Eastern Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East. Some were adolescents or adults during the war, either in hiding, interned or deported, first-hand witnesses to the Nazi persecution of European Jews. Others were hidden children, survivors writing of their buried traumatic experiences many years later. And a second-generation born after the war became postmemory proxy witnesses. Broadly chronological in approach, the book places the poetry in its various social, political, and historical contexts, underlines the specific geographical locations of the authors, and offers close thematic, formal, stylistic, and linguistic readings of the selected texts, highlighting some of the major aesthetic and ethical problems raised. Lucidly written, this book throws critical light, for scholars and nonspecialists, on a rich and unjustly neglected corpus, arguing convincingly for its inclusion in current debates on French-language literary representations of the Shoah and more widely in what is commonly referred to as “Holocaust Poetry.”

“Voices of Pain, Cries of Silence is a comprehensive, lucid, and erudite study of Francophone Jewish poetry of the Holocaust. Unlike the work of English-language Holocaust poets, French-language verse has been until now largely ignored. By ensuring that Francophone Jewish poets are finally heard, *Voices of Pain, Cries of Silence* constitutes an important scholarly intervention in the study of Holocaust literature.”

—Helena Duffy, Professor of French, University of Wrocław, Poland

“An astonishing, comparative, comprehensive, and powerful scan of the various forms of poetic writing in French about the Shoah, never presented in this scope before, by authors belonging to a large variety of national and cultural backgrounds, providing the foundation of texts to be considered in future scholarship on poetry of the Shoah in other languages.”

—Thomas Nolden, Professor of Comparative Literary Studies,
Wellesley College, Mass

GARY D. MOLE is Professor in Modern and Contemporary French Literature and Culture at Bar-Ilan University, Israel. He has published extensively on Emmanuel Levinas, Maurice Blanchot, Edmond Jabès, and Bruno Durocher, as well as on poetry of the Great War, poetry of the deportation, and French literary representations of the Second World War and the Shoah.

WWW.PETERLANG.COM

Cover image: ©iStock.com/piranka



Voices of Pain, Cries of Silence

Currents in Comparative Romance Languages and Literatures

Tamara Alvarez-Detrell and Michael G. Paulson

General Editors

Vol. 259

Gary D. Mole

Voices of Pain, Cries of Silence

Francophone Jewish Poetry of the Shoah,
1939–2008



PETER LANG

New York - Berlin - Bruxelles - Chennai - Lausanne - Oxford

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Mole, Gary D., author.

Title: Voices of pain, cries of silence : francophone Jewish poetry of the Shoah, 1939-2008 / Gary D. Mole.

Description: New York : Peter Lang, 2024. | Series: Currents in comparative romance languages and literatures ; vol. 259 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023040418 (print) | LCCN 2023040419 (ebook) | ISBN 9781636676142 (hardback) | ISBN 9781636676159 (ebook) | ISBN 9781636676166 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Jewish poetry--20th century--History and criticism. | French poetry--Jewish authors--History and criticism. | Belgian poetry (French)--Jewish authors--History and criticism. | Swiss poetry (French)--Jewish authors--History and criticism. | French-Canadian poetry--Jewish authors--History and criticism. | Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945), in literature. | LCGFT: Literary criticism.

Classification: LCC PN842 .M64 2024 (print) | LCC PN842 (ebook) | DDC 809/.19921296--dc23/eng/20231031

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023040418>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023040419>

DOI 10.3726/b21133

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek. The German National Library lists this publication in the German National Bibliography; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Cover design by Peter Lang Group AG

ISSN 0893-5963 (print)

ISBN 9781636676142 (hardback)

ISBN 9781636676159 (ebook)

ISBN 9781636676166 (epub)

DOI 10.3726/b21133

© 2024 Peter Lang Group AG, Lausanne

Published by Peter Lang Publishing Inc., New York, USA

info@peterlang.com - www.peterlang.com

All rights reserved.

All parts of this publication are protected by copyright.

Any utilization outside the strict limits of the copyright law, without the permission of the publisher, is forbidden and liable to prosecution.

This applies in particular to reproductions, translations, microfilming, and storage and processing in electronic retrieval systems.

This publication has been peer reviewed.

In memory of Max Fullenbaum, plastician of the poetic word

CONTENTS

Foreword	ix
Acknowledgments	xi
Introduction	1
Why This Book?	1
The Corpus	4
Poetry Matters	7
Critical Paradigms and Theoretical Considerations	11
Methodology	15
Chapter 1. The Jewish Poetry of Resistance, 1939–1946	23
O the Rotten Scoundrels	24
The “Invisible” Jewish Voices of Spiritual Resistance	28
Saying It as It Is: Voicing Jewish Persecution	34
Chapter 2. Shock, Accusation, Commemoration, 1946–1956	41
Betrayal and the Capital Defection of Humanity	44
Of Soap and Scream	67
Voices from the Camps	75
Voices from the Edge	101

Chapter 3.	Intermezzo, 1960–1964	111
	Return to Auschwitz and Treblinka	112
	Memories of Destruction	127
Chapter 4.	Memory and Anti-Shoah Denial, 1970–1996	141
	The Poetry of Chrestomathy	142
	Pursuing the Pedagogical Impulse	159
	The Adolescent Experience and Its Trace	168
	The Traumatized Child	202
	It Happened: Family Corpses and Sulfurous Sunflowers	225
Chapter 5.	Poetry at the Turn of the Millennium, 2001–2008	233
	Back to the War, Again and Again and Again	235
	Like Father Like Son	240
	Contrasting Voices of the Insatiable Fire	248
	Toward a New Idiom	259
Conclusion		283
	Bibliography	287
	Index	301

FOREWORD

This study concerns the poetry of some forty Jewish poets writing in French on the Shoah from 1939 to the first decade of the twenty-first century. To make the corpus more accessible to English-speaking readers, I have given translations of all the poetry quoted in French. It goes without saying that translating poetry is no mean task, and I have avoided the pitfalls of verse translations. All translations from the French are my own unless otherwise stated in the notes and follow the original French in square brackets with the original French pagination. On the other hand, for reasons of economy, I have given only the English translations of prose quotations in French, again my own unless otherwise stated.

I have taken a minimum of French for granted, however, and in the interests of assisting bibliographical research for fellow scholars, students, and enthusiastic readers, the titles of books and journals, poetry collections and individual poems, have been retained in French only and italicized.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Initial research for this study dates back more than twenty years and has sporadically found expression over the years in various articles devoted to individual authors, as well as a brief survey of the subject in “The Representation of the Holocaust in French-language Jewish Poetry,” in *Covenant: Global Jewish Magazine*, edited by Barry Rubin and Judith Roumani, The Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel, May 2008.

My readings of individual poems by Marianne Cohn in Chapter 1, Paul Drori in Chapter 2, and Sylvain Kaufmann in Chapter 4, are extended adaptations from my brief previous commentaries in *Beyond the Limit-Experience: French Poetry of the Deportation, 1940–1945* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 81–2, 64–5, 121–2. My comments on two poems by Pierre Créange in Chapters 1 and 4 are indebted to my article in French, “Pierre Créange: ‘Un Juif à ne pas rayer,’” in *Perspectives, Revue de l’Université Hébraïque de Jérusalem* 6 (1999), 37–54. My discussions of the poetry of Maurice Honel, André Ulmann, and Bruno Durocher in Chapter 2 are extended reworkings of material in “‘The poet remained alone amidst the corpses of words . . .’: The Deportation Poetry of André Ulmann and Maurice Honel,” in *Critical Survey* 20:2 (August 2008), 78–87, and in French “Les Images irréelles de Bruno Durocher,” in *Dalhousie French Studies* 51 (Summer 2000), 132–43. Parts of my discussion of the poetry

of Pierre Katz in Chapter 4 were originally written for a *Festschrift* for Colin Davis under the title “Pierre Katz and the Daily Hell of Anxiety,” in Helena Duffy and Avril Tynan, eds., *Hermeneutics, Ethics, Trauma: Essays in Honour of Colin Davis* (Oxford: Legenda, 2024). Some of the material in Chapter 5 on the poetry of Karola Fliegner-Giroud, Tristan Janco, and Max Fullenbaum was also previously discussed, in French, in two articles: “Les ‘Gardiens de la mémoire’: la Shoah dans la poésie francophone contemporaine,” in *French Forum* 44:1 (Spring 2019), 103–18, and “‘L’événement n’était pas respirable’: la Shoah et la mort phonétique dans *mohair* de Max Fullenbaum,” in *Mémoires en jeu* 17 (Automne 2022), 54–60. I am grateful to the editors and publishers for permission to reuse some of the material contained in these publications. Finally, I would like to thank the Éditions Gallimard in Paris for permission to reproduce the 1947 poem by Isidore Isou *as is* in Chapter 2. All rights reserved.

I am extremely grateful to the general editors Tamara Alvarez-Detrell and Michael G. Paulson of the collection “Currents in Comparative Romance Languages and Literatures” at Peter Lang NY for allowing me to retain the original French with my English translations. A thank you too to Philip Dunshea, Senior Acquisitions Editor at Peter Lang NY, for supporting this book throughout its final stages, Abdur Rawoof, his Assistant, and Naviya Palani, Production Editor.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Israel Science Foundation for an Individual Research Grant from 2013 to 2016 (grant no. 746/13) to assist in carrying out essential research toward this book. To bring everything together and to write the initial draft of this book, however, I am grateful for the sabbatical leave from Bar-Ilan University, 2020 to 2021. This of course coincided with the pandemic Covid-19, and while the coronavirus prevented me from undertaking any further research abroad in archives and libraries, it at least gave me the focus to bring the first draft of this book to fruition. While not exactly grateful to Covid-19 for the deaths and global upheaval it has caused, I must at least acknowledge its part in this book.

Finally, *הכרת הטוב*, *hakarat hatov*, my deepest gratitude to Nicole, Rakefet, Pinhas, and Havatselet. They alone know why.

INTRODUCTION

Why This Book?

Poetry is tragedy through which the being of humankind transpires according to the modes of the Insurmountable. It is situated at the limit of the unsayable. Poetry is neither tears nor tearful song. It is the possible saying of impossible Events ...¹

Poetry of the Shoah² has been an established field of international scholarly research since the 1980s when *Holocaust Studies* came into their own as an academic discipline, yet there can be no doubt that the field has also become increasingly canonical. There are now numerous studies on the poetry written in many different languages—Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, German, Yiddish,

- 1 Tirvaudey, *Terre de douleur*, 7; for the next part of these ideas, see the epigraph to my Conclusion. For a reading of Tirvaudey's own poetry on the Shoah (2011), as well as that of the Quebec poet Louise Dupré in her *Plus haut que les flammes* (2010), see my "Les 'Gardiens de la mémoire': la Shoah dans la poésie francophone contemporaine." Neither author is Jewish or identifies as Jewish, and they are therefore excluded from discussion in the present study.
- 2 I use the Hebrew term Shoah (catastrophe) throughout this study rather than the more common English term of "Holocaust" from the Greek meaning a burnt sacrifice. It goes without saying that the word Shoah is hardly ever used itself by the poets I shall be concerned with prior to Claude Lanzmann's 1985 documentary film.

Hebrew, English—by *victims* such as Miklós Radnóti, Itzhak Katzenelson, and David Vogel; *survivors* such as Paul Celan, Primo Levi, Tadeusz Borowski, Dan Pagis, Abba Kovner, Abraham Sutzkever, and János Pilinszky, Jewish (and non-Jewish) non-deportees *contemporaneous* with the war or *second-generation* writers such as Nelly Sachs, Charles Reznikoff, Sylvia Plath, Tony Harrison, Ted Hughes, Geoffrey Hill, William Heyen, Lily Brett, Karen Gershon . . . Yet there exists too a considerable body of Francophone or French-language poetry that has been almost entirely overlooked or frankly ignored by literary historians and scholars.

One needs only to consult some of the major anthologies in English of “Holocaust Poetry” published at the end of the twentieth century, containing translations of poetry from many different languages, to ascertain how the existence of French-language poetry has been completely ignored,³ for example Stewart J. Florsheim’s *Ghosts of the Holocaust: An Anthology of the Second Generation* (1989), Hilda Schiff’s *Holocaust Poetry* (1995), Aaron Kramer’s *The Last Lullaby: Poetry from the Holocaust* (1998), and Marguerite M. Striar’s *Beyond Lament: Poets of the World Bearing Witness to the Holocaust* (1998).⁴ Even the more recent anthology by Jean Boase-Beier and Marian de Vooght, *Poetry of the Holocaust: An Anthology* (2019) contains no French poets except André Sarcq writing on the persecution of homosexuals during the war.⁵ In France or the Francophone world, such anthologies are either inexistent or, if they do exist, contain mainly poems translated into French from other languages.⁶

3 I am not excluding of course from this fact the problem of the ready availability or accessibility of such poetry in the original French, let alone the question of its translations into English, which is rare for most poets I shall discuss.

4 Carolyn Forché’s 1993 anthology *Against Forgetting: Twentieth-Century Poetry of Witness* has a chapter on World War Two with poems by Max Jacob, Saint-John Perse, Paul Éluard, Tristan Tzara, Philippe Soupault, Benjamin Péret, Francis Ponge, Robert Desnos, and Jacques Prévert, but in the chapter titled “The Holocaust, the Shoah (1933–1945),” not one French-language poet is cited.

5 Boase-Beier is also the author of an excellent *Translating the Poetry of the Holocaust*.

6 Such as Rachel Ertel’s *Dans la langue de personne: Poésie yiddish de l’anéantissement* (1993) or Moshe Ben-Shaul’s *Écrits dans la cendre: Anthologie de la poésie hébraïque de l’après-Shoah* (1997). Most anthologies in French, however, are in fact centered around resistance and concentration camp poetry, making little difference between political deportation and racial genocide. I discuss these briefly in Chapter 3. On the other hand, there has been some study of French-language Sephardi poetry: see Lévy, *And the World Stood Silent* (also discussed in Chapter 3), and Roumani, “Sephardic Literary Responses to the Shoah.”

This striking absence or neglect is even more surprising given the specific historical, cultural, and intellectual context of France and its wartime past, the “Vichy syndrome” as the French historian Henry Rousso famously put it in 1987, the past that refuses to pass (away) or disappear. And indeed, occupation, collaboration, resistance, and deportation have become key interrelated terms when approaching any aspect of France’s experiences during the Second World War. The last forty years in France, for instance, have seen high-profile war-crime trials (Klaus Barbie, Paul Touvier, Maurice Papon, as well as the trial-that-was-not-to-be with the assassination of René Bousquet), contributing to the further erosion of the Gaullist myth of “la France résistante” already considerably shaken by the end of the 1960s. Ground-breaking French cinematic documentaries since the war (Alain Resnais, Marcel Ophuls, Claude Lanzmann . . .), while clearly reflecting and indeed shaping historiographical trends, have also maintained the war, deportation, and the Shoah on the French intellectual horizon, while Resistance poetry (Aragon, Éluard, Desnos . . .) is now both celebrated and institutionally consecrated. More importantly, French and Anglo-American literary scholars dealing with the war continue to privilege Jewish and non-Jewish French-language prose narratives and testimonies on the concentration and extermination camps by writers such as Elie Wiesel, Anna Langfus, Piotr Rawicz, David Rousset, Robert Antelme, Charlotte Delbo, and Jorge Semprun,⁷ as well as a younger generation of writers such as Georges Perec, Patrick Modiano, and Henri Raczymow,⁸ while the innumerable contemporary works of fiction in French on the Second World War and the Shoah have exacerbated the interminable aesthetic and ethical debates on the complex relationship between fiction, history, and memory (a debate relaunched after Jonathan Littell’s 2006 Goncourt prize-winning *Les*

7 Although translated from the Hungarian, Imré Kertész’s work has been the most recent edition to this pantheon, especially since his 2002 Nobel Prize for Literature.

8 As examples of the most recent studies which include substantial discussion of these authors, see Dayan-Rosenman, *Les Alphabets de la Shoah*; Coquio, *La Littérature en suspens*; Louwagie, *Témoignages et littérature d’après Auschwitz*; Horowitz, Bojadzija-Dan, and Creet, eds., *Shadows in the City of Light*; and Schulte Nordholt, *Georges Perec et ses lieux de mémoire*. It is worth noting that hardly any of these publications deal with French-language poetry of the Shoah, other than the occasional incursion into Delbo’s deportation poems contained in her trilogy *Auschwitz et après* and often labelled quite wrongly as “Holocaust poetry.” Colin Davis, for example, in his otherwise excellent *Traces of War*, frequently refers to Delbo and Semprun as “Holocaust survivors,” despite quite categorical comments by these concentration camp survivors that they were neither victims nor survivors of the “Holocaust.”

Bienveillantes).⁹ All of this, I would say, but still there has been no substantial study, in English or in French (or in any other language for that matter, to my knowledge), of Francophone Jewish poetry of the Shoah.

It is true that certain Jewish poets such as Benjamin Fondane have entered the French-language canon of what some critics increasingly refer to as “concentrationary literature” (though there is no evidence that Fondane was able to write anything at all during his internment and subsequent deportation to Auschwitz where he was gassed shortly afterward), while the large corpus of poetry composed in French mainly by non-Jewish Communists, Gaullists and non-politically affiliated resistance fighters incarcerated during the war in Vichy and Nazi prisons, transit camps and concentration camps, occasionally overlapping with that of Jewish poets, was subjected to close critical scrutiny by myself in *Beyond the Limit-Experience: French Poetry of the Deportation, 1940–1945* (2002). Indeed, the present research monograph, aiming to fill the gap in the literary historiography of French-language writing on the Shoah, was initially conceived while researching *Beyond the Limit-Experience* more than twenty years ago. In a sense, this is a belated complementary study to my earlier book and will, I hope, spur further research into at least some of the neglected poets I resurrect in the present corpus.

The Corpus

There is a corpus then, one I have patiently identified and assembled over the last twenty years to constitute a constructed object of study: *Francophone Jewish Poetry of the Shoah*. But what is it exactly? A few working definitions might clarify.

Francophone: because many of the authors discussed were born outside France (Poland, Romania, Russia, Germany, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia), or later settled in Francophone countries such as Switzerland and Belgium, or the province of Quebec, but they all chose to express themselves in French. There are of course poets in the corpus who were born and raised in France, even if their parents were originally born elsewhere. But the *transnational* aspect of this poetry is best captured in the term Francophone, by

9 Among the increasingly growing secondary material on the subject, see Dambre, dir., *Mémoires occupées*; Kitchen, *A Legacy of Shame*; Mole, “La Seconde Guerre mondiale et le roman français contemporain”; Duffy, *The Holocaust in French Postmodern Fiction*; Hanhart-Marmor, “L’Ère de la filiation inversée dans la littérature mémorielle contemporaine”; and Barjonet, *L’Ère des non-témoins. La Littérature des “petits-enfants de la Shoah.”*

which I mean French-language or French expression, and France, I recall, is *also* a Francophone country. On the other hand, even though many of the poets we shall encounter are bilingual (Polish-French, Romanian-French, German-French, Turkish-French), sometimes even trilingual (French-Arabic-Hebrew, Polish-French-English), this study does not take up the issue of multilingualism and remains firmly focused on the poetry the authors wrote in French.

Jewish: the present study does not engage with the interminable questions raised since the 1960s related to the literary debates on expressions such as “Jewish writer of the French language,” “French writer of Jewish origin,” “French Jewish writer,” or even “Jewish writer” in general.¹⁰ This study, rightly or wrongly, cuts through such quandaries and takes as *Jewish*, authors who were born as such (through matrilineal descent, according to traditional orthodox Jewish law—there will be one exception), or were considered as such by others (Nazis and antisemites on the whole, in Sartrean terms the Jew in the eyes of the hostile other), regardless of their personal identification with the Jewish people or religion. In fact, Albert Memmi’s passing footnote in his 1962 *Portrait d’un juif* in which he suggested distinguishing between *judéité*, *judaicité* and *judaïsme*,¹¹ is now largely accepted, and indeed many authors in this study would identify with Memmi’s description of *judéité*, the fact and manner of being Jewish. Others grew up observant, sometimes abandoning Jewish practice and sometimes resuming it, while yet others were born to totally assimilated Jewish parents and held at best a tenuous relationship to Jewish personhood and its cultural, ethnic, religious, political, and genealogical dimensions. Yet

10 Nolden gives a succinct overview of these questions in his *In Lieu of Memory*, 35–55, and in his summary on the same subject in “À la recherche du Judaïsme perdu: Contemporary Jewish Writing in France,” 120–3, but see also Lévy, *Écritures de l’identité: Les Écrivains juifs après la Shoah*, and her “Le double lien entre écriture et identité: Le Cas des écrivains juifs contemporains de langue française”; Decout, *Écrire la judéité*; and Dainese and Quaglia, dir., *Contourner le vide: écriture et judéité(s) après la Shoah*. Some of these issues are also discussed in recent publications from 2023, once the manuscript of the present book was practically completed, notably the co-edited issue of *Europe* 1125–6 (janvier–février 2023), “Enquêter sur la Shoah Aujourd’hui,” by Maxime Decout and Yona Hanhart-Marmor; Wolf, *Le Juif imaginé, d’Elsa Triolet à Romain Gary*; and Decout, *Faire Trace: Les Écritures de la Shoah*.

11 “Since the existing vocabulary is very imprecise, I propose to distinguish between *Judaity*, *Judaicity* and *Judaism*: *Judaity* [Jewishness] is the fact and manner of being Jewish; *Judaicity* includes everyone who is Jewish; *Judaism* is all Jewish *doctrines* and *institutions*” (Memmi, *Portrait d’un juif*, 28).

by personal or familial experience, by the fact of *being* Jewish, whether or not they *felt* Jewish, all the poets herein discussed, generational differences notwithstanding (and even when certain poets, as we shall see, were deported as political resistance members and not as Jews), take the Shoah or their personal deportation as a subject of their poetry.

And finally, the *Shoah* (1933–1945): the systematic persecution, marginalization, discrimination, and killing in Europe by Nazi Germany and its collaborators of six million Jews condemned to death by starvation, forced labor, bullets, hanging, deadly injections or gas, for the sole reason of being born or considered Jews.

In a word, the poems in this study were written in French; their authors were (or are) Jewish; and they wrote either during the war or after it, either dealing with their own demons and personal histories or with the Shoah in general.¹² Some of these poets were deported. Some were murdered. Some survived. Others were hidden children or young adolescents in France or elsewhere.¹³ They belong to what Steven Jaron has termed the “liminal generation” whose members share in common a condition at once historical, existential and psychical, occupying a Freudian *Zwischenreich*, an “in-between”—between childhood or adolescence and adulthood, Judaism and Christianity, memory and history, fiction and historiography, French citizenship within the Republic and Jewishness.¹⁴ For her part, Susan Rubin Suleiman has coined the term of the “1.5 generation,” referring to child survivors of the Shoah who were “too young to have had an adult understanding of what was happening to them, and sometimes too young to have any memory of it at all, but old enough to have *been there* during the Nazi persecution of Jews,”¹⁵ subsequently identifying these writers, psychoanalysts, and historians as Georges Perec, Raymond Federman, Berthe Burko-Falcmán, Boris Cyrulnik, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, and Saul Friedlander,¹⁶ but there are many more. Other poets belong to the post-Shoah

12 Such poems belong to what Claude Mouchard has termed “œuvres-témoignages” in his *Qui si je criais?* Both Coquío in her *La Littérature en suspens*, and Louwagie in her *Témoignage et littérature d'après Auschwitz*, comment and develop Mouchard's terminology and problematics.

13 As we shall see, other children of the same generation were relatively untouched personally by the Shoah by virtue of living outside the European theater.

14 Jaron, “Autobiography and the Holocaust: An Examination of the Liminal Generation in France,” 209. Jaron takes as examples the philosopher Sarah Kofman, the writer Georges Perec, and the historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet.

15 Suleiman, “The Edge of Memory: Experimental Writing and the 1.5 Generation,” 179.

16 See Suleiman, “Orphans of the Shoah and Jewish Identity in Post-Holocaust France: From the Individual to the Collective.” There are certain poets in my corpus who were born

or second generation (born after 1945), though to complicate matters the latter term has been adopted even by some poets who were born in the decade before the war but were not deported and who do not consider themselves “survivors.”¹⁷ As we shall see, finally, there are poets who used poetry to testify to their experiences during the war or to express their assessment of the Jewish genocide in the immediate post-war period, and others who would wait thirty to forty years before revisiting their past in poetic form.

A final word here on the main part of my title, *Voices of Pain, Cries of Silence*. Depending on the subject-positions of individual poets, their personal experiences and geographical locations, the poetic voices we shall encounter in this study oscillate between expressing and stifling the pain of suffering, allowing the cries of silence to reverberate simultaneously in what is articulated and remains unsaid. There is of course a measure of generalization in these remarks in a corpus that is far from homogeneous and cuts through critical categorization, as we shall see, but the notions of voicing pain and crying silence nevertheless best encapsulate, I believe, some of the many contradictory positions assumed and challenged by Francophone Jewish poetry in relation to the Shoah.

Poetry Matters

There is of course one further key-term in *Voices of Pain, Cries of Silence: Francophone Jewish Poetry of the Shoah* that I have not just addressed: *Poetry*, and why it matters. The various compilers and commentators of the previously cited English-language anthologies on poetry of the Shoah have all attempted in their own way to answer this seemingly disingenuous question. Gerald Stern, for example, in his foreword to Stewart J. Florsheim’s anthology of poetry by the second generation of English-language poets poses a whole series of paratextual but also aesthetically related questions regarding such poetry, not just concerning what a Shoah poem is or should be, or what demands and freedom the Shoah as an unprecedented cataclysm allows it, but how readers

during the war itself, experiencing either life in a ghetto or deportation, but as babies or toddlers (less than three years-old) they admit to having very little recollection of their first-hand experience but consider themselves nevertheless traumatized, subsequently “recollecting” through family stories, reading, and research. I am thinking of Guta Tyrangiel Benezra and Pierre Katz; we shall encounter them in Chapter 4 and they are perhaps better referred to as belonging to a “0.5 generation.”

17 The case in particular of Max Fullenbaum; see Chapter 5.

are supposed to react to a whole series of feelings expressed: intensity, passion, anger,¹⁸ to which I would add mourning and visible or between-the-lines trauma. In her more general anthology of twentieth-century poetry of witness, *Against Forgetting*, Carolyn Forché argues that “poetry of witness reclaims the social from the political and in so doing defends the individual against illegitimate forms of coercion. It often seeks to register through indirection and intervention the ways in which the linguistic and moral universes have been disrupted by events.”¹⁹ Such poetry would serve a social function. Hilda Schiff’s better-known anthology *Holocaust Poetry* would go one step further and assign such poetry an historical function. “While the contents of this book,” she writes,

in no sense mirror an historical survey of what occurred during the Holocaust, they are nevertheless a fundamental aid to historical understanding. The more or less contemporaneous literature of any period of history is not only an integral part of that period but it also allows us to understand historical events and experiences better than the bare facts alone can do because they enable us to absorb them inwardly. In involving ourselves in the authentic literature of the Holocaust, we come as close as we can to entering psychologically into those unique events as they were actually felt by those individuals who experienced them.²⁰

Such a position would evidently exclude from the category of the “authentic,” poems written by second or third-generation “postmemory” poets, a notion to which I shall return shortly and which Schiff fails to address. For her part, Marguerite M. Striar not only defends poetry as a legitimate response to the Shoah but echoes the psychological element of Schiff’s assessment, writing that

Many poets have probed their subconscious, their memories, or drawn from their dreams. Although there is ideological content in these poems, their primary effect is emotional, whether the poet speaks from personal experience or in the persona of someone who was there but cannot speak for him- or herself.²¹

As with Schiff, Striar would indicate that a poem of the Shoah is intimately connected to the question of presence (at the scene of the crime, so to speak), again neglecting issues of postmemory or post-generational memory, and all the ethical problems raised by the vicarious witness, as we shall see shortly. Finally,

18 Stern, “Foreword,” 16.

19 Forché, ed., *Against Forgetting*, 45.

20 Schiff, ed., *Holocaust Poetry*, xii.

21 Striar, ed., *Beyond Lament*, xxvi.

Boase-Beier and de Vooght explain that for them, with perhaps some measure of deeply ingrained (or desired?) humanist thought, poetry of the Shoah “might help readers who are less familiar with the many people who suffered, and are still suffering. Perhaps—because poetry engages the reader’s emotions in a way that documentary writing cannot—it might also help us examine our thoughts and ways of behaving.”²² Perhaps the most eloquent response, however, and certainly the most engaging and intellectually challenging, as to why poetry matters in the context of the Shoah, belongs to Susan Gubar in her 2003 *Poetry After Auschwitz: Remembering What One Never Knew*. While lamenting at the time of her study the lack of critical assessments of poetry of the Shoah (and notably of course of the English-language corpus she studies), Gubar writes that poetry “abrogates narrative coherence and thereby marks discontinuity. By so doing, it facilitates modes of discourse that denote the psychological and political, ethical and aesthetic consequences of the calamity without laying claim to experiencing or comprehending it in its totality.”²³ Poetry of the Shoah, she continues, or at least the post-Shoah English-language corpus she is concerned with, provides “spurts of vision, moments of truth, baffling but nevertheless powerful pictures of scenes unassimilated into an explanatory plot,”²⁴ yet it also uses “interpretive insistence” and a sustained “act of attention” in order “to respond to or analyze preexistent literature; to fill in lacunae in the historical record; to curse evil or praise good; to witness against wrongdoing; to caution against ignorance and amnesia, which result in unteachability; and to underscore the central significance of what is deemed to be a decisive convulsion in culture.”²⁵

I should state that my reading of much of the post-war Francophone Jewish poetry of the Shoah often tends to concur with some of Gubar’s insights. One can find, for instance, as we shall see, a similar accusatory and imprecatory quality in the verse by child survivors, a comparable particularity of details and an awareness by certain poets, as I shall argue, of linguistic limitations, yet at the same time the recourse to familiar rhetorical figures or specific Jewish liturgical and scriptural traditions. Moreover, many poems in my own corpus would correspond to Joseph Brodsky’s view about what distinguishes poetry

22 Boase-Beier and de Vooght, eds., *Poetry of the Holocaust*.

23 Gubar, *Poetry After Auschwitz*, 7.

24 *Ibid.*

25 *Ibid.*, 11.

from other forms of literature, distinctions mentioned in passing by Gubar²⁶ but which subsequently structure her whole approach to her subject.

Verse, writes the Russian-born poet and essayist Brodsky in his essays *On Grief and Reason* (1995), taps three kinds of cognition: analytical, intuitive, and what he calls the “prophetic mode of revelation,” while “gravitating primarily toward the second and third.”²⁷ Brodsky’s first cognitive distinction, the analytical, will become apparent in the chapters that follow in poems that clearly lay claim to the documentary; the second, the intuitive, seeps through in verse that strives to recreate an atmosphere, often by impressionistic touches; and the third, the prophetic mode of revelation, would manifest itself in the poetry most rooted in Jewish scriptural tradition. Although I have adopted a very different methodological approach to that of Gubar *via* Brodsky, as I shall set out in the final section of this introduction, it is certainly worth mentioning that the latter issue of Jewish scriptural tradition (biblical or literary paradigms) is raised too by the Yiddish literature specialist Rachel Ertel in her *Dans la langue de personne: Poésie yiddish de l’anéantissement*, which I have already noted. Analyzing the aesthetic and moral problems encountered in the poetic representation in Yiddish of the genocide of European Jews, “the lack of concepts,” writes Ertel, “the incompatibility between words and forms to express this event have forever taken hold in the conscience of all those who broach it. Because whatever one does, whatever one says, one is led to use preexistent forms of expression to express an unprecedented cataclysm.”²⁸ Morally, adds Ertel, citing Adorno as a point of reference (more of whom shortly), the risk in question for poetry, “through its function of catharsis and sublimation, is to become complicitous with the same barbarism”²⁹ it seeks to express. To try to resolve this contradiction, Ertel continues, Yiddish poetry, well-versed in the Jewish “tradition” of persecution and suffering, often has recourse to biblical and historical paradigms: the Flood, the sacrifice of Isaac, slavery in Egypt, the breaking of the Tablets of the Law, the wandering in the desert, the sufferings of Job, the lamentations of Jeremiah and other apocalyptic visions of Israel’s prophets, exile, persecution, pogroms—all of which, by analogy, will have allowed these Yiddish poets to say the unsayable: “The more the reality to express was beyond the grasp of language, the more it was unsayable, the more the poets felt disconcerted by their inability to formulate the unformulable, the

26 Ibid., 8.

27 Brodsky, *On Grief and Reason*, 58.

28 Ertel, *Dans la langue de personne*, 10.

29 Ibid., 11.

more they felt the need to have recourse to a culturally coded writing, a sort of refuge for their word, a password between the community of the dead and survivors.”³⁰

While we shall certainly encounter such paradigms in Francophone Jewish poets of the Shoah, we should not lose sight of what distinguishes my corpus from those of Gubar (English-language post-war poetry) and Ertel (Yiddish poetry), namely the fact that the French-language corpus is not only dominated by former internees, deportees, and child survivors—begging the question of course, as we shall see, of the future of “generational memory” and Francophone Jewish poetry of the Shoah—but that much of it (but not all) is written in a very particular French historical, cultural, intellectual, and national context. All of which leads us to further questions.

Critical Paradigms and Theoretical Considerations

The aforementioned comments on why poetry matters all point explicitly or implicitly to the fundamental problematics and highly theorized issues at stake in all poetry of the Shoah (and no doubt of all its literary representations), namely the relation between language, reality (mimesis), aesthetics, and ethics. The problematics of representation certainly dominated the majority of the groundbreaking studies of literature of the Shoah in the 1980s and 1990s, such as those by Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, Berel Lang, James Young and, broaching also the question of historical narratives, Saul Friedlander,³¹ but it is not my intention here to offer an overview of the reception, theorization, and canonization of the literature of the Shoah in general.³² Still, it would be amiss not to mention Theodor Adorno’s oft-quoted and even more misquoted 1949 remark that “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.” Adorno did not quite write that it was *impossible* to write poetry after Auschwitz, and as David Miller has demonstrated, Adorno frequently returned to his own statement to retract, qualify or nuance it, such as in his 1966 *Negative Dialectics*: “Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it

30 Ibid., 17.

31 See DeKoven Ezrahi, *By Words Alone*; Lang, ed., *Writing and the Holocaust*; Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*; and Friedlander, ed., *Probing the Limits of Representation*.

32 In her recent *Témoignage et littérature d'après Auschwitz*, Fransiska Louwagie does exactly this.

may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems.³³ In a word, Adorno's misgivings were initially about art, artistic forms, the inherent beauty of the lyrical form, the "aestheticization" of suffering, the reification of art as a cultural ware, as if the descent into utter barbarity by a highly cultured nation such as Germany had changed nothing of the value and significance of "culture." Culture and all cultural criticism, argued Adorno, needed urgently to rethink themselves. But Adorno's famous dictum was itself reified into a cultural given, often stultifying criticism of the plethora of poetry of the Shoah emerging after the war in many European languages. In their introduction to a special issue of *Critical Survey* on "Holocaust Poetry," Antony Rowland and Robert Eaglestone cite the fascinating article from 1948 by the former deportee Robert Antelme on the deportation poetry of the Auschwitz survivor Maurice Honel concerning how concentration camp poetry was able to represent the "truth" of the camps as opposed to the supposed photographic objectivity of prose accounts, commenting with both regret and relish that if only Antelme's comments had come to be regarded as maxims instead of Adorno's polemics, then the "development of Holocaust poetry and criticism could have been very different."³⁴ Certainly food for thought.

In any case, while Adorno's problematic adage may have stymied critical appraisals of poetry of the Shoah—which, regardless, continued to be written and published from the 1950s onward in all major European languages, including of course in French, eloquently demonstrating that even were Adorno to have written of its impossibility, such publications empirically proved quite the opposite—by the 1990s trauma studies in relation to the Shoah were forging their way into mainstream academic and critical discourse.³⁵ No less than a decade or so later, however, the emerging field of memory studies was building

33 Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 362. See Miller, "Impossible Histories: Adorno and the Question of Lyric," and James Schmidt's ironic comment that Adorno retracted "the statement he never actually made," in his "Poetry after Auschwitz—What Adorno Didn't Say," <https://persistentenlightenment.com/2013/05/21/poetry-after-auschwitz-what-adorno-didnt-say/>. For excellent succinct accounts of these questions, see also Rowland, "Re-Reading 'Impossibility' and 'Barbarism': Adorno and Post-Holocaust Poetics."

34 Rowland and Eaglestone, "Introduction," 4. Rowland takes up the same argument in his *Poetry as Testimony*, 7–10. I shall return to Antelme's comments and the poetry of Honel in Chapter 2 of the present study, but see also my contribution to Rowland and Eaglestone's *Critical Survey* volume, "'The poet remained alone amidst the corpses of words . . .': The Deportation Poetry of André Ulmann and Maurice Honel."

35 I am thinking in particular of Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*; Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy*; and Shoshana Feldman and Dori Laub, eds., *Testimony*.

on the psychological and psychoanalytical insights and assessments of traumatic experiences and developing a more overt political agenda while continuing to explore the Shoah's historical, literary, social, and cultural contexts. Notable here would be Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory* (2009) with its ambition to explore the memory of the Shoah and decolonization from a postcolonial perspective, Max Silverman's *Palimpsestic Memory* (2013) on the Shoah and colonialism in French and Francophone fiction and film, and Debarati Sanyal's *Memory and Complicity* (2015) and what she calls the "migrations of Holocaust remembrance."³⁶ At the same time Marianne Hirsch has decidedly forged the now oft-cited notion of postmemory in her *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (2012), echoing Susan Gubar's subtitle to her book on English-language poetry of the Shoah, "remembering what one never knew."

Meanwhile, in English-language academia at least, Antony Rowland, previously mentioned, has been at the forefront of work specifically on poetry of the Shoah, from his groundbreaking *Awkward Poetics* (2005) in the post-Shoah British poetry of Sylvia Plath, Geoffrey Hill, Tony Harrison, and Ted Hughes, in other words their self-conscious, self-castigating poetic strategies, to his no less engaging study of *Poetry as Testimony* (2014) with chapters on, in relation to our present concerns, the deportation poetry of Tadeusz Borowski, Charlotte Delbo, and Primo Levi. The "important characteristics of this errant poetry as testimony," argues Rowland, include the metatext, the demand for hyper-attentiveness from its readers, an engagement with a dialectics of in/articulacy, and attracting its readers into its narrative while resisting any attempt at the colonization of the victim's experience,³⁷ many points that will find an echo in the present study.

36 While commentaries too numerous to mention have celebrated these highly influential publications, there are significant dissident voices, the most eloquent of which is that of Bruno Chaouat in his *Is Theory Good for the Jews?* (2016) and his critique of what he sees as the "shortcomings" in particular of Rothberg's multidirectional hypotheses and theoretical underpinnings (123–39), notably the ways in which, for Chaouat, Rothberg, "in his eagerness to de-provincialize and globalize the memory of the Holocaust, in turn provincializes the history and current manifestations of antisemitism. In other words, by reducing it to its Christian and/or racial manifestations, Rothberg seems oblivious to extra-European and non-Western avatars of antisemitism, both diachronically and synchronically" (125).

37 Rowland, *Poetry as Testimony*, 122–3. As previously mentioned, Rowland is also the co-editor with Robert Eaglestone of the issue on "Holocaust Poetry" of *Critical Survey* 20:2 (2008), as well as a co-editor with Jane Kilby of *The Future of Testimony: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Witnessing* (2014).

Moreover, in their co-edited issue of “Holocaust Poetry” for *Critical Survey*, Rowland and Eaglestone identify what they consider “the critical paradigms now in place for the study of Holocaust poetry [which] include the concept of postmemory writing (Marianne Hirsch); secondary witnessing (Dominick LaCapra and Dora Apel, among others); proxy-witnessing (Robert Jay Lifton and Susan Gubar); received history and the vicarious past (James Young); and awkward poetics (Antony Rowland).”³⁸ I agree, but to these paradigms I would add two more that have offered new and interesting lines of inquiry, both of which I mobilize in my readings of certain poets in the present study. Firstly, Colin Davis’s recently forged concept of “traumatic hermeneutics” in his 2018 *Traces of War*, bringing together readings of certain texts by Sartre, Beauvoir, Camus, Ricœur, Althusser, and Levinas, as well as by the hidden child Sarah Kofman and the deportees Delbo, Semprun, and Wiesel, all of whom, claims Davis, would share a central concern, namely: “how to perceive, experience and recount the war, how to integrate it into an intellectual and aesthetic project, when it is simultaneously elusive, intangible and all-pervasive.”³⁹ Davis teases out this concern through the notion of the trace in a Levinasian and Derridean sense of “an elusive sign which is effaced but still legible if not ultimately intelligible.”⁴⁰ Secondly, the notion of *analogy*, while not new in itself—as we have seen, the recourse to previous models of trauma, catastrophe, inhumanity and atrocity was present from the very earliest testimonies of experience in the camps, whether biblical or literary—has grafted onto the Shoah more recent phenomena such as the slaughter of animals for food, specism, Aids, hemophilia, Covid-19 . . . Can they all be assimilated or be compared to the Shoah?⁴¹

It is my contention in this study that while elements of trauma and memory studies (whether the memory be multidirectional, palimpsestic or trans-migrational), as well as the notions of postmemory, poetry as testimony, the *first-hand witness* or *proxy witness* in Gubar’s terms, or *vicarious witness* in those of Froma Zeitlin,⁴² the hermeneutics involved in uncovering the present/absent traces of the war, or the question of analogy, may all have a bearing on the

38 Rowland and Eaglestone, “Introduction,” 1–2.

39 Davis, *Traces of War*, 2.

40 Ibid., 4.

41 See the recently co-edited issue of the journal *Mémoires en jeu* 17 (2022), “Écrire la Shoah face au démon de l’analogie,” by Maxime Decout, Nurit Levy, and Gary D. Mole, bringing together articles tackling this very question.

42 My main points of reference for this concept in the present study: see Gubar, *Poetry After Auschwitz*, 23, and Zeitlin, “The Vicarious Witness: Belated Memory and Authorial Presence in Recent Holocaust Literature.”

reading of Francophone Jewish poetry of the Shoah, no one single critical paradigm can be adopted or adapted to cover the diversity of poetry written over a seventy-year period constituting an incredibly heterogeneous corpus. All of which brings me to the question of the methodology and organization of the research study at hand.

Methodology

In the course of preparing this book, a number of possible scenarios presented themselves regarding its presentation and organization. First was the formal typology suggested by Joseph Brodsky (the analytical, the intuitive, and the prophetic mode of revelation), largely taken up by Gubar in her *Poetry After Auschwitz*, as we have seen.⁴³ The second was to group together the poetry according to the experience of the individual authors: testimonial poetry by internees and deportees (some of whom did not survive), the poetry by former hidden children (written many years later), the poetry by non-deportee contemporaries of the war, and poetry by the second generation (born after 1945). The third was to adopt a largely thematic approach similar to how some of the anthologies to which I have previously referred present their raw material (without discussion and analysis, it goes without saying): the Nazi threat, alienation and persecution, internment and deportation, liberation and readjustment, the postmemory of the second generation, humanist and religious responses. But just as no one critical paradigm would suffice to build a conceptual framework for the whole study, all these approaches struck me as unsatisfactory to account for the diversity of the material discussed and the wealth of themes, stylistics, and rhetorical tropes employed by the poets coming from vastly different geographical locations with very different experiences, as we shall see.

In the end, I have opted for a broad chronological approach from 1939 to the new millennium, based principally on the publication dates of the works discussed and not on the dates, if known, of composition.⁴⁴ The perceptible disadvantages of the risk of repetition have been offset, I believe, by the possibility

43 It should be noted that while Gubar chose what to include in her corpus according to the “marks of aesthetic ambition or historical seriousness,” she also adds that she could adopt no “capacious theoretical models for understanding trauma in general”: “the specificity of details I was encountering [in putting together her corpus] stymied and humbled answers to generalized questions,” Gubar, *Poetry After Auschwitz*, xvii.

44 On the other hand, individual poems and volumes within the chapters are not necessarily discussed in the strict chronological order of publication of the given timeframes.

of offering a panorama of the many texts constituting the corpus according to the designated periods in which the historical, societal, political, and cultural changes in post-war France have often been crucial to the motivations behind the very composition of the poems concerned.

This choice, however, has meant that some chapters are longer than others: readers will note that Chapters 1, 3 and 5 are somewhat shorter than Chapters 2 and 4, for the simple reason that my extensive research has shown that the periods concerned (respectively: 1939–1946, 1960–1964, 2001–2008) produced and published less poetic material, either for historical reasons (the constraints of the actual war period, for example), or shifts in public interest and editorial preferences (for prose accounts on the Shoah rather than poetry).

I should add too that I have resisted the temptation to write a purely author-driven study based on a selection of what I might consider the four or five best “professional” poets, separating the supposed wheat from the chaff, in order to better reflect the extreme diversity of styles and approaches brought to the subject of the Shoah by many Jewish authors who in no way saw or see themselves as professional poets, far from it. Furthermore, in the event any one author has published more than one volume of poetry in which the Shoah is a dominant if not exclusive feature (and this is often the case), I have opted for their first volume as the principal object of study, regardless of any question of impact on the poetry-reading public, extremely difficult to gauge in any case, depending on a wide array of factors such as the publishing house, the print run and distribution, reviews in newspapers or specialized literary journals.

This study is chronological then, but not *evolutionary*. The poetry analyzed does not simply trace out a linear trajectory from a supposed initial documentary realism to what might be considered more modern or progressive crises of representation and a move toward abstraction (though it does end up with two contemporary poets representing this). As Fransiska Louwagie has written in her own account of the vagaries of the relationship between testimony and literature, the dynamics and changes in critical paradigms have constantly demonstrated “the presence of important continuities, overlaps or reversals.”⁴⁵ The present corpus then is constantly oscillating, depending not so much on post-war French poetic trends but on the individual author’s personal, aesthetic and/or ethical intentions in writing poetry on the Shoah.

And it is from the point of view of authorship that I have chosen to present a brief biobibliographical portrait of the poets concerned before discussing

45 Louwagie, *Témoignages et littérature d’après Auschwitz*, 5.

their poetry, rather than placing such metatextual information in a footnote or in an annex. It has seemed appropriate and extremely important to me in writing this book that the corpus of works analyzed should be accompanied in the body of the text by some knowledge, no matter how cursory, of the very real persons whose lives, deaths, and writing intersected and intersect still with the Shoah.

To allow readers to follow the general arguments and lines of thought, each chapter has been divided into sections, numbering from one to five depending on the length of the individual chapters, and each section contains a discussion and analysis of the work of two, three, four, sometimes five or more poets, with the exception of the first section of Chapter 1 and the first two sections of the final chapter in which only one poet's work figures under the respective headings.⁴⁶

Chapter 1 (1939–1946) opens with a curious deliciously satirical pamphlet of anti-Nazi poems written in Morocco as war broke out in the European theater (Isaac D. Knafo). The pamphlet quickly disappeared from circulation with the establishment of the Vichy regime and its anti-Jewish legislation extending to French North Africa. Accordingly, the chapter then fast-forwards in the second section to France's defeat in 1940, the subsequent German Occupation, Vichy collaboration, resistance, Jewish persecution, arrest, imprisonment, internment, and deportation. It is against this background that I proceed to read several individual poems (Claude Sernet, Benjamin Fondane) that were published either clandestinely during the Occupation (in Paul Éluard's celebrated *L'Honneur des poètes* or *Europe*) or shortly after the liberation and the end of the war (Marianne Cohn in Gabriel Audisio's anthology *Écrivains en prison*, Claude Sernet in the poetry review *La Tour de feu*, Pierre Créange in the review *Hillel*). Most of these poems tend overall to join the ranks of resistance poetry in general, calling for intellectual, spiritual or even armed resistance to the enemy, with their Jewish authors mostly evacuating any reference to their specific situation as Jews and the fate reserved for them by Nazi ideology and Vichy's racial laws. There are, however, exceptions, and sometimes by the same poets previously discussed (Camille Meunel, Max Jacob, Claude

46 All poems are cited as punctuated in their original publication, unless otherwise specified. It should be noted too that all page references in the body of my text refer uniquely to the poems or volumes of poetry being discussed as referenced in the "Primary Sources" of the Bibliography. Given the section breaks, there can be no ambiguity. All references outside the corpus itself are placed in the notes.

Sernet, Benjamin Fondane, Pierre Créange), and these poems are given due consideration in the third section of the chapter.

Chapter 2 (1946–1956) turns to the poetry published by Francophone Jewish poets in the decade that followed the war. This immediate post-war period offered both introspection and retrospection on Jewish persecution and deportation in a Fourth Republican context of an apparent official amnesia in the interests of reconstructing a unified France. Yet many Jewish poets quite understandably continued to harbor ill-feelings (perhaps an understatement), seeing France as having abandoned and betrayed its Jews to the occupying power, delivering them often zealously to the death camps in the East. The first section of the chapter attempts to show how certain poets simply could not swallow such a bitter pill, and rather than concerning themselves with rebuilding a post-war French Republic turned their attention to the Zionist dream of a sovereign State in the ancestral Jewish homeland that had become British Mandate Palestine in 1920 (Elie Siches, Paul Drori). At the same time but in the same vein, other poets would see in the genocide of European Jews and France's betrayal of its Jewish nationals (and Jewish non-citizen immigrants) not only the culmination of Christian antijudaism-cum-racial antisemitism, but also the death-knell of Western civilization and certainly of the illusion of French assimilation. These poets are disillusioned, angry, and accusatory and offer little horizon of hope or a redemptive perspective emerging from the Shoah (Benjamin Goriély, Arnold Mandel, Pierre Morhange). The second section turns its attention to two poets who carried such conclusions to an absolute extreme, with a categorical refusal to countenance any form of redemption for Western culture and its Christian anti-Jewish persecution (David Scheinert) or simply offering in response a barely articulated scream (Isidore Isou). The third section brings together three volumes of testimonial poetry written in the camps by former Jewish deportees (Maurice Honel in Auschwitz, and André Ulmann and Bruno Durocher in Mauthausen) which while largely abstracting any Jewish referent are incredibly inventive and linguistically exploratory. The final section concludes the chapter by moving outside the European theater of the war to discuss the work of poets hailing from Tunisia (Ryvel) and Turkey (Marcel Chalom) in whose poetry, written shortly after the war, Jewish referents on the contrary figure large.

Chapter 3 (1960–1964), titled *Intermezzo* as a way of reflecting the relative paucity of poetic texts in French on the Shoah published during this period as compared to the preceding and subsequent decades, brings together four volumes of poetry by Jewish poets whose personal trajectories and experiences

before and during the war could not be more different. The first section groups together the volume of poetry by the former Auschwitz deportee Raph Feigelson who combines verse he composed during the Occupation, clandestinely during his deportation, shortly after his liberation, and in the years following the war, testifying to an indomitable socialist faith in humanity and in what he calls the metallurgical power of poetic writing, and the poetry of Michel Salomon whose poems are almost entirely centered on the extermination camp of Treblinka. In the second section I address certain poems by Oliven Sten and Élie Bénacher whose poetry is largely put to the service of settling scores with the past (the Shoah, the persecution of Jews in general, even Judaism or Jewish faith) or on the contrary to reaffirming Jewish identity. As proxy witnesses (except Feigelson), each poet employs a very individual and at times innovative poetic language in engaging with the Shoah and its ramifications, even if their work would be totally eclipsed in the mid-1960s by the emerging non-generic books of Edmond Jabès and the attention they would draw from critics and theorists such as Derrida and Blanchot.

Chapter 4 (1970–1996) opens with a discussion of the political context of the 1970s and the pernicious rise of revisionism, Shoah denial, and antisemitic discourses in France and how they directly (or indirectly) stung certain survivors into poetic creativity. I then turn to changes in historiographical and publication trends and to the phenomenon of poetry anthologies in French, what I call the poetry of chrestomathy,⁴⁷ which witness a considerable upsurge throughout the 1970s and 1980s through to the mid-1990s, mostly dealing with French resistance and deportation poetry, but there are anthologies and essays too more specifically devoted to Jewish poetry (but not necessarily written in French), and it is from the pages of some of these anthologies that I excavate the poems on the Shoah originally written in French and appearing for the first time in publication. I discuss seven poems in this context, four written during deportation (Pierre Créange, Sophie D. Rubinstain-Virolleaud, Sylvain Kaufmann) and three composed after the war by non-deportees who nevertheless suffered personal family loss during the Shoah (Moshé Macchias, Anne Quesemand, Lydie Blumenthal). In the second section of the chapter I explore how two poets (Jacques Taraboulos in Egypt, Greece, France and

47 The term chrestomathy is rarely used today; it indicated particularly during the Third Republic a collection of literary passages (usually by the same author) as an aid in learning a subject, with therefore a pronounced pedagogical intent, which is why I reprise the terminology here.