

Cultural (Pre)Occupation: Comoedia and French Identity, 1941–44

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With the fall of France in 1940, the French ‘imagined community’¹ seemed also to have collapsed, leaving a void which alternative definitions of national identity would attempt to fill. In the peculiar conditions of defeat and occupation, producers of both high and popular culture faced an initial and fundamental choice between ongoing participation in the public sphere, and silence signifying rejection of the Vichy and Occupation regimes. Jean Cocteau, for example, justified his continued visibility in Paris with the observation that ‘La France, sous l’occupation allemande, avait le droit et le devoir de se montrer insolente, de manger, de briller, de braver l’oppresseur, de dire: “Tu m’enlèves tout et il me reste tout”.’² In contrast, Jean Guéhenno chose silence, and was highly suspicious of those who continued to publish and perform:

L’espèce de l’homme de lettres n’est pas une des plus grandes espèces humaines. Incapable de vivre longtemps caché, il vendrait son âme pour que son nom *paraisse*. Quelques mois de silence, de disparition l’ont mis à bout. Il n’y tient plus. Il ne chicane plus que sur l’importance, le corps du caractère dans lequel on imprimera son nom [...]. Il va sans dire qu’il est tout plein de bonnes raisons. “Il faut, dit-il, que la littérature française continue.” Il croit être la littérature, la pensée françaises, et qu’elles mourraient sans lui.³

Setting aside the ideological and/or political implications of individual choices, it is clear that cultural life in France persisted during the war years, that creativity and innovation were not completely stifled by censorship and

penury, and that at the same time there were significant continuities in the cultural domain. The response of creators, promoters, journalists, writers, and critics during the Occupation raises interesting questions about the nature and significance of cultural activity in a time of national crisis, and about the role of culture,⁴ and representations of culture, in the conception of a national identity. Was cultural activity merely a kind of refuge, or a form of bread-and-circuses distraction, or a necessary and useful morale-builder for a population traumatized by defeat and oppressed by shortages of all kinds as human, industrial and agricultural resources were siphoned off to support the German war effort? Did plays and novels, articles on current cultural production or on the classical theatre of Racine and Molière help to ensure the survival of French cultural values and thus affirm the perennity of France itself? Or was silence in the face of enemy presence (for example, that of the exemplary young woman in Vercors' Resistance novel, *Le Silence de la mer*), the more appropriate response of those who represented and reported on French literature, arts and music, and whose ongoing involvement and participation in wartime France was solicited by both the German and Vichy authorities? As Jean-Pierre Rioux has pointed out, if cultural life during the Occupation must be seen as part of a longer continuum, it was also, in conditions of defeat, occupation, and the National Revolution of Vichy, 'singulièrement ambivalente, oscillant entre le "faute de mieux" (une culture-refuge?), le "mine de rien" (une culture-prise de conscience?) et le "gloire aux créateurs"(une culture-revanche?)'.⁵

These reminders of continuities in the midst of crisis, of ambiguities and ambivalence, inform a reading of *Comoedia*, the Paris newspaper which revived a prewar title and from 1941 to 1944 chronicled and commented on the theatre, music, plastic arts, literature, and fashion of occupied France. Most interpretations of *Comoedia*⁶ are located in historians' ongoing debates on the subject of collaboration and resistance; nonetheless, through its delineation of a relationship between self (France) and other (Germany), as well as its rather selective emphasis on French cultural tradition and renewal, it is possible to read a certain redefinition of a national cultural identity, tentative, cautious, and elliptical though its formulation might be. Moreover, its implicit modifications of the French literary canon underscore the perceived relationship between literature and nation as it was frequently redefined under conditions of the war and the Occupation.

From the beginning, *Comoedia* traded on an image of continuity with a prestigious pre-war past, although its discourse was also that of renewal in response to the dramatically altered circumstances following 1940. It was a familiar title in cultural journalism:⁷ founded in 1907, the earlier, and highly respected *Comoedia* had appeared until 1937, when it ceased publication. Though its new editor, René Delange, had come from other prewar Paris newspapers, and had had no association with the earlier *Comoedia*, contributors listed in the inaugural issue of June 21, 1941, included a number of

reassuringly well-known intellectual and artistic figures: Anouilh, Jean-Louis Barrault, Bernard Grasset, Montherlant, Marcel Carné, Henri Mondor, Marcel Pagnol, Jean-Paul Sartre. Its announced objective was to ‘dresser un inventaire aussi vivant que possible [...] susciter un foyer de sympathie où l’attitude courtoise saura ne point exclure l’esprit de rigueur et d’indépendance absolue’.⁸ As the word ‘inventory’ suggests, *Comoedia* appeared to define its mission as an impartial and comprehensive coverage of cultural activity, in the belief that service to the cause of arts and letters could be politically neutral, while nonetheless reaffirming a French cultural identity. In practice, while the paper avoided explicitly political commentary, both its content and its composition responded to the evolving circumstances of the war and the Occupation.

It is useful to bear in mind the conditions imposed on all newspapers authorized to publish in Occupied France, which contributed to determining the language and silences of the press as of all other forms of cultural production. Content and expression of opinion were circumscribed by German censorship and editorial self-censorship, although on some issues there was a surprising measure of tolerance, particularly when it served German policy. Severely rationed newsprint supplies were controlled by the occupying authorities, and affected size, format, frequency and print run. German authorization was a pre-requisite for all publication, and was required for distribution in the unoccupied zone and in prisoner-of-war camps. Policies of racial exclusion and persecution had a direct, sometimes drastic, effect on available human resources. Inevitably, the dependencies and expectations inherent in these conditions played a role in the evolution of journalistic policy and practice. Interpretation of *Comoedia* must therefore be informed by awareness of this context of censorship as well as material and human constraints.

Interpretation is also affected by the lack of records relating to such things as funding, financial management, correspondence with contributors, or ongoing editorial dealings with the German authorities, particularly with the censors. The extent of direct German influence on content, layout, and length of articles is therefore difficult to determine. Nonetheless, it is clear that one section of the paper was controlled by the Institut Allemand, and records show that this page was reviewed regularly and in detail by the German censors.⁹ Little is known of the readership, though comparison with the print runs of other Paris newspapers¹⁰ suggests it was smaller and more circumscribed than that of much larger and more politically oriented Paris newspapers. Scattered through many diaries and letters of the period are references to *Comoedia* and to its director;¹¹ but they provide only a fragmentary image of reader response. In the immediate postwar period, and particularly during the purges of the print media and intellectuals, discussion of the paper was dominated by the fierce debate over collaboration with the Germans: testimony given during the trial of René Delange must therefore be interpreted with caution, since it was given by former associates of the

paper, or contributors to its columns. The fallibility of memory is a further complication in evaluating both participation in the paper and reader response to it, particularly in a context which tended to encourage self-justification on the part of both witnesses and participants.

Jean-Pierre Rioux notes that during the Occupation, the press could most accurately be interpreted only by reading between the lines,¹² and this caveat continues to be relevant. What is excluded? What is only indirectly suggested? What can be ‘read’ from the names of the contributors, the length, subject matter, and positioning of articles? What is implied by the style and tone of the publication? What can be inferred from any evolution in its content? What is the importance and extent of the ‘zones of freedom’ tolerated, sometimes surprisingly, in the context of what has been referred to as a ‘situation politique pour le moins liberticide’,¹³ and how do they affect interpretation of such things as, for example, occasional articles highly critical of Vichy’s cultural puritanism,¹⁴ or the announcement, in 1944, of the death of Max Jacob, Jewish poet and convert to Catholicism?¹⁵ What conclusions can be drawn, if any, from the number and increasing length, position, titles, and photographs related to the French literary and artistic tradition, especially in comparison to the gradually diminishing proportion of the paper devoted to German and European subjects?

Through its three-year existence, in its mediating role between its readership and the range of cultural activity it encompassed, *Comoedia* was both a consumer and a creator of culture. It published approximately 3,300 articles,¹⁶ both on current cultural production and on a somewhat restructured French literary and cultural canon which, although it includes Stendhal, Marivaux, Balzac, Vlamincq, Apollinaire, and twentieth-century French music, virtually ignores, except for occasional passing references, such other major figures as Zola, Gide, Voltaire or Rousseau. A number of articles chronicle cultural events in Germany and Austria (the Bayreuth festival, the Mozart festival in Vienna), and various efforts at Franco-German cultural collaboration, such as the tours in Germany of French actors and musicians. Each issue includes reviews of recent books, current theatrical productions, and artistic exhibitions – the exhibition of works by Arno Breker, Hitler’s favoured sculptor, is prominently featured in a succession of articles published early in 1942, of which the most notorious is by Jean Cocteau.¹⁷ In addition, each issue presents current plays, films, and concerts, and announces forthcoming books. For the most part, its ‘cultural space’ is Paris, although some recognition is given to the cultural activities of the unoccupied zone (before November 1942) and the provinces (after November 1942, following the occupation of all of France). The ‘social space’ appears to be intellectual, middle-class, and male: Colette is the only woman contributor, and, although a small number of regular advertisements (for perfume, lingerie, and products promoting ‘feminine hygiene’) suggest some female readership, references to women are confined to those prominent in

film, theatre, and music, and to the articles on fashion published in each issue.

Usually on or near the last page, is the section most often cited in discussions of journalistic collaboration with the Germans, 'Connaître l'Europe' [Presenting Europe]. This is the page most directly controlled by the German authorities. Articles on German culture, and on the culture of other countries of the New Europe, are published on this page in every issue. In his postwar appearance before the *Commission d'épuration* (the commission conducting the purge trials), René Delange claimed, in defense of *Comoedia* and its editorial policy, that the Germans had accused the paper of using this page as a venue for articles of lesser interest and appeal, placed so as to ensure lack of reader attention; he implied that 'Connaître l'Europe' was an unfortunate necessity unrelated to the tenor of the rest of the paper.¹⁸ Although little is known of reader response to this page, its regular publication is one unequivocal indication of the conditions under which the paper was authorized, and, at least in the first eighteen months of publication, of official attempts to lend credibility to the notion of the birth of a new cultural Europe dominated by Nazi Germany, and the place of France within it.

If the content of some parts of the paper is sometimes controversial in the context of the debate over collaboration, it must be noted that the style is for the most part very different from that of the more politicized, overtly collaborationist, Parisian press. With few exceptions, and these occurring in the first year of publication, there are almost no instances of the inflammatory and vulgar antisemitic invective typical of publications such as *Je suis partout* or *Au pilori*. In fact, Jean Cocteau remarked after the war that he had published in *Comoedia* precisely to escape from '[un] cauchemar, et [d']un style d'insultes',¹⁹ characteristic of Brasillach's *Je suis partout*. Another witness comments that 'nous lisons régulièrement *Comoedia*, le seul journal à Paris qui n'insulte pas les Juifs'.²⁰ Compared to the collaborationist press, *Comoedia* makes relatively little reference to the decadence and corruption of the Third Republic, though the vocabulary typical of the first year of publication is frequently that of cleansing, renewing, restoration to health, asceticism, self-denial, effort,²¹ a common lexicon in the discourse of Vichy's National Revolution.

Broadening its coverage from the more traditional theatre, concerts, literature and plastic arts, the paper accords new attention to sports and their relationship to a healthy culture: several early articles discuss Jean-Louis Barrault's staging of a new 'sports drama' entitled 'Le 800 mètres' [The 800-metre race] at the Roland-Garros stadium.²² Even Jean Giraudoux comments, albeit in rather implausibly extravagant terms, on the relationship between sport and culture: 'Il n'est pas un héros de Racine qui ne soit sportif.'²³ Other more popular forms of culture are also recognized: fashion, music-hall and popular singers. The return to the land and rural values, so prevalent in the ideology of the National Revolution, is represented in articles by and about novelist Henri Pourrat. In an article published after

Pourrat was awarded the Prix Goncourt, the writer is called ‘un parfait exemple de santé: littéraire, morale, humaine et vraiment française’, whose work demonstrates that the soil will not deceive him.²⁴ Such a statement echoes Pétain’s well-known dictum that the soil does not lie. Indeed, the image of the leader is present, though allusions to Pétain himself are infrequent: the ideal French hero is a virile figure like Saint-Exupéry, ‘un de ceux en qui la France espère’.²⁵ Aside from very general references to the conditions prevailing as a result of the occupation, the paper contains virtually no explicit allusions to current events – the anti-Jewish laws promulgated by the Vichy government, the return of Laval in April 1942, the arrests of thousands of Jews in July 1942, the German invasion of the unoccupied zone in November 1942, or even the Allied landings in June 1944. In fact, the most explicit reference to political events is found, not in journalists’ contributions, but in an advertisement on 8 July 1944: Conté, the manufacturer of pens and artists’ supplies, promises a high-class pen ‘for after the war’, and apologizes for having available only a few inferior ‘wartime’ versions.²⁶

Expression of values consonant with those of the National Revolution and of collaborationist circles in Paris may be a result of conviction on the part of conservative contributors to the paper, or the pressures of censorship, or an editorial strategy of superficial conformism. In any case, these values are counter-balanced by articles criticizing Vichy censorship,²⁷ and questioning the view that writers like André Gide had been responsible for the fall of France.²⁸ At the same time, the importance of a new political context, and its inevitable impact on culture, is underscored, though such statements are often ambiguous and must be interpreted in the context of the ideology of the National Revolution and the realities of the Occupation.

Tradition dominates much of the discourse of the paper, but the French capacity for innovation is also underscored, especially in articles on the theatre, music, and fashion, where creators worked under particularly stringent material conditions. Cinema is presented as one of the most important of contemporary art forms, and after 1943, as restrictions on electricity become ever more stringent, a number of articles point out the negative implications for a creative and productive cultural industry. Focus on the French literary and cultural past is balanced by the attention given to the literary innovations of contemporary younger writers like Sartre, Camus, and Marguerite Duras, and by articles on the current and future directions of the novel. In several issues in 1942, even advertising emphasizes the coexistence of continuity and new creation: ‘La tradition française est de créer.’²⁹ Creativity and inventiveness, as well as more basic resourcefulness, are presented as peculiarly French characteristics, enduring despite constraints which with considerable circumspection are referred to in general, non-political terms, if indeed they are referred to at all.

Some tendencies persist throughout the publication history of the paper. Maintaining an appearance of intellectual and political neutrality and balance

would seem to be an important aspect of *Comoedia's* editorial practice. If Sartre and Jean Paulhan are published, so too are Marcel Jouhandeau and Jacques Chardonne, both collaborationist sympathisers. With the exception of Jewish writers, the paper publishes texts by or about a wide range of significant literary figures, both past and present. Though there are noticeable omissions, the list includes contemporary writers such as Paul Eluard and Robert Desnos, whose political sympathies would certainly have been suspect to the Occupation authorities and the Vichy government. Occasional issues are criticized by the German censors for including reference to individuals seen as anti-German: for example, the Polish musician Paderewski, featured in an article published on 9 August 1941. While the novels of Robert Brasillach, ultra-collaborationist editor of *Je suis partout*, are reviewed favourably, Lucien Rebatet's virulent diatribe, *Les Décombres*, is reviewed in only twenty-eight lines in *Comoedia*,³⁰ in marked contrast to the lengthy and adulatory attention devoted to it in much of the rest of the Paris press. There is no clearly-articulated editorial stance other than that of the inclusiveness suggested in its initial statement of purpose.

Although there is no dramatic change in content and tone after early 1943,³¹ there are signs of evolution. The number of generally atemporal feature articles, the great majority of them devoted to French writers, artists, and musicians, increases, and the articles are generally longer. There are fewer topical articles on current cultural production, with the exception of theatre and film reviews – this change no doubt also reflects the gradual reduction in the level of activity resulting from the material difficulties associated with the course of the war. Increasingly, the first page of the paper highlights French topics, whereas in the early months of the Occupation, equal or greater space was reserved for articles on cultural events in Germany, or German performances in France. Classical theatre – Racine, Corneille, Molière – is regularly reviewed, not only because of its current popularity, but also because of its frequently-stated importance for traditional French values. Nineteenth and twentieth-century French musicians – Massenet, Debussy, Fauré, Louis Vierne, Poulenc – are the subjects of lengthy commentary. Commemorations are frequent: centenary and other anniversaries are a regular, if selective, reminder of the prestigious French cultural past, components in the maintenance of a collective cultural memory.

A passing comment by Jacques de Lacretelle succinctly, if somewhat simplistically, invites closer consideration of the relationship between *Comoedia's* representation of culture, particularly literary culture, and identity in crisis: 'Si la France avait été victorieuse, que de gens n'auraient lu Péguy?'³² In other words, response to literature and culture in general was conditioned by the trauma of defeat and the exceptional circumstances of the Occupation. Representations of literature tended to measure its worth in terms of the extent to which it could offer compensatory values to replace those discredited by defeat. In such a context, cultural journalism could frequently be

manipulated for ideological purposes. Though Lacretelle's quip makes no mention of other realities such as those of censorship and lists of forbidden books (the 'liste Otto', for example), it offers a partial explanation for some of the choices apparent in the content of *Comoedia*, as well as in the length and placement of its articles, announcements, and advertisements. Beneath its surface of relative neutrality is a more ambiguous subtext, evolving with changes in external circumstances.

Of the authors and works given a privileged place in *Comoedia*'s inventory, some are presented as monuments of an illustrious literary past which, in the case of the classical theatre, is perpetuated through the ongoing repertoire of that other monument, the Comédie-Française. Others, more contemporary, evoke a conception of culture as an instrument of civic values, reinforcing the ideals both of the National Revolution and of eternal France. Of these, as noted above, Henri Pourrat and Saint-Exupéry are presented initially as exemplars: Pourrat, in his reiteration of the rootedness of the peasant in the unchanging soil, Saint-Exupéry, representing the contemporary chivalric hero in whom culture and action coexist, linking a mythical France of the past to that of an anticipated though undefined future. Pourrat continued to publish in the paper until the spring of 1944. When Saint-Exupéry's *Pilote de Guerre* appeared, it was greeted by an enthusiastic but ultimately ill-timed review: when outraged criticism from ultra-collaborationist reviewers in other Paris newspapers led to the banning of the book in 1943, *Comoedia* made no further mention of its author.

Dramatists Giraudoux, Montherlant, and Claudel are present throughout the three-year wartime history of the paper. Giraudoux and Montherlant contribute a number of texts; extracts from several of their plays are published, and each of their new productions receives extensive attention, both during rehearsal and after the initial performance. Claudel's theatre, particularly *Le Soulier de satin*, is reviewed in considerable detail. In the midst of an array of new plays and new stagings of the classics, the criteria for according particular attention to these three representatives of pre-war theatre are never explicit. Their prominence in the paper may be the result of official German policy intended to foster the illusion of German liberality in allowing French culture to flourish, but it may also reflect an editorial choice to emphasize the durability of French culture in the face of exceptional challenges.

Given postwar discussion of *Antigone* and *Les Mouches* as Resistance drama, reviews of both plays by an ostensibly apolitical newspaper are of interest. Sartre's *Les Mouches* attracts considerable attention: the dramatist is interviewed before the first performance, and the play is reviewed twice. Although the performance was authorized, the dramatist's summary of the theme of the play must have lent itself to various interpretations: 'l'homme [...] ne deviendra libre en situation que s'il rétablit la liberté pour autrui, si son acte a pour conséquence la disparition d'un état de chose existant et le rétablissement de ce qui devrait être.'³³ The ensuing review in *Comoedia*,

though it does not address this issue, reveals some discomfort with the production; at the same time it is clear that public reaction has been intense. The promised debate on the play did not take place, perhaps because of its potentially controversial nature. Similarly, in its review of *Antigone*, *Comoedia* makes no mention of the political implications of the opposition between Antigone and Creon, focusing instead on negative criticism of Anouilh's use of popular language, costumes in which Antigone's brothers resemble the sons of a neighbourhood butcher, the dramatist's alterations of the original narrative, and the lack of originality of a work which, according to the reviewer, owes too much to Bataille, Cocteau, Giraudoux, and Pirandello; overall, the reviewer summarizes the play as 'unbearable nattering'.³⁴ Although *Comoedia* offers no explicitly political comment on either play, the mixed review of *Les Mouches* and the negative reception of *Antigone* underscore the ambiguities of journalism in occupied Paris: as Serge Added has suggested, ideology can permeate even ostensibly literary and esthetic journalistic commentary,³⁵ and influencing reception becomes a political issue.

Even when *Comoedia* appears quick to recognize a genuinely new literary voice, as with the publication of Camus' *L'Étranger* in 1942, the significance of its response is somewhat ambiguous. Marcel Arland's review appears to be one of the few in the three-year history of the paper to focus exclusively on a traditional 'literary' analysis of theme and character. A similarly literary analysis of Camus' *Le Malentendu* is published on 27 May 1944, at a time when allusion to external circumstances must have been particularly difficult to avoid. Yet the review limits itself to comment only on Camus' version of the Absurd, pointing out that is precisely because the world is absurd that it is so intoxicating. The reviewer goes on to comment that the characters are little more than symbols in a play that is too abstract, but concludes that although the play is a dramatic failure, it may be preferable to many a so-called success. Are these reviews simply a means of avoiding even a suggestion of political undertones? Or do they indicate a will to demonstrate that even in the critical situation in which France finds itself, the practice of literary journalism continues?

Because *Comoedia* was an authorized publication, its multiple references to cultural tradition and its appeals to collective memory of 'true French values' are perhaps predictable. But it may also be noted that similar references may also be found in the wartime *Figaro littéraire*, as well as in some clandestine newspapers, such as *Les Lettres françaises*, and in the poetry of Resistance writers such as Louis Aragon and Paul Eluard. In fact, similar allusion to tradition, and to the enduring features of France and French culture, is to be found in many attempts to define national identity by means of both traditional popular culture and well-known figures of the literary canon and of French letters in general. Exactly what constitutes the traditional French values exemplified by these figures is not clear, though comments made in *Comoedia* after the death of Giraudoux furnish a typical example of their

formulation: Giraudoux was ‘la figure la plus française des lettres contemporaines [...] par son élégance, sa grâce précise et dure, l’éclat, la pudeur aussi de son intelligence.’³⁶

The interplay between *Comoedia*’s representation of tradition, innovation, adaptability to new realities, and the dominant memory of defeat is of particular interest, for it suggests something of the role culture played in defining national identity during the traumatic years of the Occupation. In the early years of the paper, cultural production is presented as an ally of the National Revolution, an integral part of a new France, reborn in a new German-dominated Europe. Yet this discourse of rebirth frequently coincides with that of survival of France’s past cultural greatness, which will preserve the uniqueness of France in the future. At the same time, the quantity and variety of cultural activity as reported in the press testify to its role as a refuge, to use Rioux’s term. Furthermore, the regular inclusion of what might be called popular culture suggests both an appeal to a broader readership, and an increasingly less elitist conception of culture. The traditional image of the cultural mission of France remains strong, though it too is expressed in terms of offsetting the ignominy of the defeat, in a reference to the need to ‘sauvegarder sa suprématie littéraire et artistique – qui pourrait enrayer les conséquences de la défaite’.³⁷ Culture is compensation, but also a means of ensuring the survival of a French identity recognizable because it is based, at least in part, on a commonly-acknowledged past. Through its three-year wartime history, *Comoedia* demonstrates some of the ambiguities which Dominique Borne identifies as inherent in any social revolution: since the future is not easily imaginable, visions of it may easily be coloured by nostalgia.³⁸ It may be noted as well, somewhat ironically, that the identity reaffirmed through repeated reference to French values, French culture, French creativity, is in a sense a purged identity, one from which, in keeping with the official ideologies of the period, and in a sense complicit with them, all foreign elements have been removed.

Like other elements of the French cultural domain during the Occupation, *Comoedia*’s history was marked by compromise and ambiguities. It was never explicitly collaborationist, nor did it overtly support the cause of the Resistance. Like other newspapers of the period, it chronicled and commented on cultural production, but without the explicitly ideological framework of the more politicized press. It took full advantage of the ‘zones of freedom’ allowed by German cultural policy and the censors, though as François Mauriac pointed out, there was a certain futility in cultural journalism in such critical circumstances: ‘en temps d’occupation on ne peut rien dire sur l’essentiel’.³⁹ In its validation of a certain French cultural past as well as its attention to the productivity of the present, in its ongoing, if obligatory commentary on the European cultural context, as well as its cautious and allusive evocations of the changing dynamics of the war, *Comoedia* exemplified both the ambivalence and the caution of the cultural sphere in its focus on survival in time of crisis.

Notes

1 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, 1991), cited in Jill Forbes and Michael Kelly (eds), *French Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (New York, 1995), p. 2.

2 'Under the German occupation, it was the right and the duty of France to be insolent, to eat, to distinguish herself, to face up to the oppressor and to say: "You take everything from me, yet I lose nothing".' Jean Cocteau, *Journal 1942-45* (Paris, 1989), p. 557, quoted in Philippe Burrin, *La France à l'heure allemande* (Paris, 1995), p. 329. All translations are mine.

3 'The man of letters is not one of humanity's finest species. Unable to live without publicity, he would sell his soul for his name to *appear*. He cannot bear even a few months of obscurity. He quibbles only about the size of the type which will be used to print his name [...]. Of course he has good reasons for publishing. "French literature must continue", he says. He believes himself to be the incarnation of French literature and French thought, that without him they would die.' Jean Guéhenno, *Journal des années noires* (Paris, 1947), pp. 80-81.

4 'Culture' is used to refer to the domain of literature and the fine and performing arts, augmented in the case of *Comoedia* by fashion, popular music, and film.

5 '[N]otably ambivalent, shifting from a kind of culture-as-refuge to culture as realization and self-awareness to culture as a way of rising above defeat.' Jean-Pierre Rioux (ed.), *La vie culturelle sous Vichy* (Paris, 1990), p.10.

6 Cf. for example Pascal Ory, *Les Collaborateurs* (Paris, 1976); Janine Verdès-Leroux, *Refus et violences: politique et littérature d'extrême droite des années trente aux retombées de la Libération* (Paris, 1996).

7 Claudé Bellanger, *Histoire générale de la presse française*, Vol. III (Paris, 1975), pp. 381-82.

8 '[C]reate an inventory of cultural activity as up to date as possible [...] to foster a climate of understanding in which courtesy will not exclude rigour and independence of thought.' *Comoedia*, 21 June 1941, p. 1.

9 Archives nationales, F/41/1748, AJ 40/1005.

10 In his unpublished *Mémoire de maîtrise d'histoire*, (Paris I, 1992), Olivier Gouranton indicates some biweekly circulation figures: June 1941, 45,000; December 1941, 44,000; April 1942, 35,000. In contrast, the daily circulation of *Paris-Soir* was 833,190 on 28 August 1940, and 300,000 in July 1942. Cf. Michèle Cotta, *La Collaboration* (Paris, 1964), p. 322.

11 Paul Léautaud, *Journal littéraire* (Paris, 1986), contains 55 references to *Comoedia*.

12 Jean-Pierre Rioux, 'Ambivalences en rouge et bleu: les pratiques culturelles des Français pendant les années noires', *La Vie culturelle sous Vichy*, p. 50.

13 '[A] political situation which was the very antithesis of freedom.' Henry Rouso, 'Politique, idéologie et culture', in Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La Vie culturelle*, p. 22.

14 Cf. *Comoedia*, 26 July 1941, report on Vichy censure of Sacha Guitry.

15 Arrested as a Jew, though he had become a Catholic many years before, Max Jacob died in the transit camp of Drancy, the point of departure for transports of Jews to eastern Europe.

16 Olivier Gouranton, *Mémoire*, p. 67.

17 *Comoedia*, 23 May 1942. Cocteau's article concludes with the statement that 'dans la haute patrie où nous sommes compatriotes, vous [Breker] me parlez de la France.'

18 Archives nationales Z^e NL N° 5102/15070, *Dossier d'instruction de la procédure suivie devant la Cour de justice de la Seine contre Paul GREGORIO, René DELANGE et Jean DUBAR, responsables du journal Comoedia*.

19 '[A] nightmare, and a style based on insults.' Jean Cocteau, *Le Foyer des artistes* (Paris, Plon, 1947), p. 5, quoted in Janine Verdès-Leroux, *Refus et violences: politique et littérature à l'extrême droite des années trente aux retombées de la Libération*, p. 216.

20 '[W]e regularly read *Comoedia*, the only Paris newspaper that refrains from insulting Jews.' Jacques Biélinky, *Journal, 1940–42* (Paris, 1992), p. 174, quoted in Janine Verdès-Leroux, *Refus et violences*, p. 216.

21 Cf. *Comoedia*, 15 July 1941, 'Pour une restauration poétique'.

22 *Ibid.*, 28 June 1941.

23 'There is no hero in Racine who is not an athlete.' *Ibid.*, 5 July 1941. In similar vein, Giraudoux states that 'Les peuples qui ont le pourcentage le plus considérable de revues d'art sont ceux qui comptent le pourcentage le plus fort de gymnastes: l'Allemagne et la Finlande.'

24 '[A] perfect example of health: literary, moral, human and truly French.' *Ibid.*, 27 December 1941–3 January 1942.

25 '[O]ne of those who gives hope to France.' *Ibid.*, 9 January 1943.

26 *Ibid.*, 8 July 1944.

27 Cf. note 9 *supra*.

28 *Comoedia*, 19 July 1941.

29 'French tradition is based on innovation.' *Ibid.*, 20 June 1942.

30 *Ibid.*, 24 October 1942.

31 The German capitulation at Stalingrad in February, 1943, marked a turning point in the course of the war.

32 'If France had won the war, how many people would never have read Péguy?' *Comoedia*, 1 August 1942, p. 2.

33 '[M]an [...] will become free only if he re-establishes freedom for others, if his actions lead to the disappearance of an existing situation and its replacement by what ought to be.' *Ibid.*, 24 April 1943.

34 *Ibid.*, 19 February 1944.

35 Serge Added, 'L'euphorie théâtrale dans Paris occupé' in Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La Vie culturelle*, p. 323.

36 '[T]he most French of contemporary intellectuals [...] by his elegance, his precise and steely grace, the brilliance and discretion of his intelligence [...]'. *Comoedia*, 5 February 1944.

37 '[S]afeguard its literary and artistic supremacy – which could mitigate the consequences of defeat.' *Ibid.*, 27 November 1943.

38 Dominique Borne, *Histoire de la société française depuis 1945* (Paris, 1992), p. 55.

39 '[I]n a time of occupation it is impossible to comment on anything essential.' François Mauriac, *Nouvelles lettres d'une vie* (Paris, 1989), p. 224, quoted in Janine Verdès-Leroux, *Refus et violences*, p. 217.

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