

DEFENSE D’AFFICHER: THE WARTIME ART OF JEAN LURÇAT
AND JEAN DUBUFFET

by

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Abstract

Given the emphatic rupture with the past resulting from the invasion and occupation of France by Germany in 1940, the consequent censorship of any oppositional art or writing, the usurpation of the walls by Vichy and Nazi propaganda, and the defamiliarization of the social environment caused by dislocation and occupation, how and what could an artist -- one who wished to avoid cultural collaboration -- produce?

This thesis examines the works of two artists who, however secretly, executed works which took up concerns of a public nature during the Occupation. These gestures toward the growing resistance in France between retreat and liberation participated in a conspiracy of culture that arose in the period. Without public exhibition, and including a coded means of communication, these works nevertheless embodied a concern for testimony, and an opposition to propaganda -- a refusal to submit to words and acts of order.

What this thesis explores is the way in which Jean Lurçat, in the rural south (a 'free' zone until the end of 1942), and Jean Dubuffet, in occupied Paris, shared an obsession with the 'wall' as a public forum, thereby reclaiming that space that had been seized by the German and Vichy authorities. They also shared a preoccupation with language as a manifestation of *la vie intérieure*, the preservation of the realm of individual and social liberty. Yet Lurçat and Dubuffet differed, in part the result of their respective positions vis à vis Vichy or occupied Paris, in their artistic means, in their constructions of the 'primitive', and in the types of written language included in their works.

Lurçat, who had participated in the 1930's in the debates surrounding the issue of public art -- mural art, or art with a more public face than easel painting -- had begun a revival of France's ancient art of tapestry. During the war, Lurçat continued to practise this art for the wall, despite the seizure of the spaces which would receive it. Moreover, with his giant mural tapestries of the wartime period (Le Poète of 1939, L'Hallali of 1940, L'Apollinaire, Es la verdad and Liberté of 1942, Le Ciel et la Terre from 1944), Lurçat discovered a means with which to confront both Nazi and Vichy ideology. His endeavour

paralleled, in themes and imagery, the efforts of French contraband and militant poetry, and he included many of these poems in his tapestries.

Dubuffet, in the 1940's, took up the 'wall' and public spaces as the subjects of his series: Vues de Paris, Un Voyage en métro -- les dessous de la capitale, Messages and Les Murs, executed between 1943 and 1945. These works flowed from a subterranean, resistant current alive in the public arena and on the walls of Paris -- the underside of the world upside-down which formed the Parisian daily experience.

In both cases, these artists working during the Occupation cast in their lot with the 'outlaw': for Lurçat, the rural Maquisard; for Dubuffet, the urban guerrilla. As a result these images stood as the bearers of the spirit of opposition to the Vichy and Occupation regimes governing France, and combatted the Nazi 'barbarian'. Each artist reached out to a wider public in this period, one grown sensitive to coded forms of resistance. After all, at this time even the simple act of listening to the BBC was an act of defiance, and ordinary citizens were deemed outcasts from the *pays réel*.

In sum, the thesis examines both Dubuffet's and Lurçat's attempts to stake an obstinate claim for the wall as a space for artistic production, and traces their pursuit of the right to use their own means of expression, to speak that which was forbidden. In doing so both articulated, in the years 1940-1945, the concerns of a more general culture of resistance, one which included not only their own milieus of intellectuals, but a more widespread underground movement. This network constituted, in fact, a society within a society, a power within established powers, struggling to aright the topsy-turvy situation of the Occupation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	v
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: PERSPECTIVES ON THE CULTURE AND IDEOLOGY OF THE FRENCH RESISTANCE.....	8
CHAPTER TWO: JEAN LURÇAT AND THE DEFENCE OF FRENCH CULTURE	35
CHAPTER THREE: JEAN DUBUFFET AND THE STRUGGLE FOR PARIS.....	64
CONCLUSION.....	84
ILLUSTRATIONS.....	87
APPENDICES	115
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	119

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE

1.	Poster of Maréchal Pétain.....	87
2.	Photograph of baker with ‘Pétain’ cake, 1943.....	87
3.	Jean Lurçat, <u>Combat de coqs</u> , 1939	88
4.	<u>The Unicorn in Captivity</u> , c. 1515	89
5.	Jean Lurçat, <u>Le Poète</u> , 1939.....	90
6.	Jean Lurçat, detail from <u>Le Poète</u> , 1939.....	90
7.	Arno Breker, <u>Partei</u> , 1938	91
8.	Arno Breker, <u>Wehrmacht</u> , 1938	91
9.	Arno Breker, unnamed statue, 1942 exhibit.....	91
10.	<u>The Wild Condition</u> looseleaf, illumination, 1457-1521.....	92
11.	<u>Wild Folk Working the Land</u> , detail of tapestry, c.1480	92
12.	<u>Bal des Ardents</u> , illumination, end 15th century	93
13.	Jean Lurçat, <u>L’Hallali</u> , 1940-41	94
14.	Jean Lurçat, <u>Liberté</u> , 1942.....	95
15.	Jean Lurçat, <u>L’Apollinaire</u> , 1942.....	96
16.	Jean Lurçat, <u>Es la verdad</u> , 1942.....	96
17.	Jean Lurçat, <u>La Terre</u> , detail, 1944.....	97
18.	Jean Lurçat, <u>LeCiel et la terre</u> , 1944	97
19.	German road signs in front of Place de l’Opera, Paris.....	98
20.	Hitler in front of the Eiffel Tower, 1940.....	98
21.	1940 German poster in France	99
22.	Jockey wearing Gaullist Croix de Lorraine	99
23.	German V-sign on Chambre des députés.....	100
24.	World War II German poster in France, "La Puissance de l’Allemagne"	100
25.	Photograph of graffiti artist in Paris, World War II.....	101
26.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Métro</u> , 10 March 1943	102
27.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Métro</u> , 11 March 1943	102
28.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Métro</u> , March, 1943	102
29.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Métro</u> , 14 March 1943	102
30.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Vue de Paris</u> , 1943	103
31.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Vue de Paris avec quatre arbres et trois personnages</u> , 1943....	103
32.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Message</u> (. . . ma santé toujours excellente . . .), 1944.....	104
33.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Message</u> (Dubuffet est un sale con . . .), 1944	104
34.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Message</u> (Ledru-Rollin sortie en métro), 1944	105

35.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Message</u> (Toujours bien dévoués à vos ordres . . .), 1944.....	106
36.	Poster by André Derain, denouncing BBC, World War II France.....	107
37.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Mur et gisant</u> from <u>Les Murs</u> , 1945.....	108
38.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Pisseurs au mur</u> from <u>Les Murs</u> , 1945.....	109
39.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Mur et avis</u> from <u>Les Murs</u> , 1945.....	110
40.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Homme coincé dans les murs</u> from <u>Les Murs</u> , 1945.....	110
41.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Mur et homme</u> , frontispiece <u>Les Murs</u> , 1945.....	111
42.	Jean Fautrier, <u>Tête d'Otage, No. 3</u> , 1943.....	111
43.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Mouleuse de café</u> from <u>Matière et mémoire</u> , 1944.....	112
44.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Le Supplice du téléphone</u> from <u>Matière et mémoire</u> , 1944.....	113
45.	Jean Dubuffet, <u>Dactylographe</u> from <u>Matière et mémoire</u> , 1944.....	113
46.	Photograph of Resistants dismantling German signs, 1944.....	114

Introduction

In 1932, Paul Schultze-Naumberg, National Socialist ideologist and director of the United Institutes of Art Instruction (the former Bauhaus) declared:

A life-and-death struggle is taking place in art, just as it is in the realm of politics. And the battle for art has to be fought with the same seriousness and determination as the battle for political power.¹

The importance of art to the National Socialist programme cannot be overstated. Not only were attacks on art and literature precipitous following Hitler's succession as Chancellor of the Third Reich in 1933, but confiscation and destruction of works of art were accompanied by a ban on art criticism and discussion. Simultaneously, aesthetic concerns were placed in the hands of technocrats and an official art of the Third Reich began to be developed. This art was to be free of any trace of the 'modern', especially the twin anathemic modes -- abstraction and primitivism.² Instead, the new art was to be clear, simple, readable, unproblematic, and finished. There was to be no inclusion of aspects likely to cause controversy or provoke debate.³

Throughout the 1930's, many French intellectuals heeded the challenge of Hitler's 'new order' in art and politics, forming organizations whose purpose it was to defend culture. Especially during the years of the Popular Front government, from 1936-1938, aesthetic issues were the subject of many debates. The overriding concern of these was how best to create links with a larger public, to attempt to counteract the fascist threat. The defeat and subsequent occupation of France by Germany in 1940 brought the battle directly onto French soil. Artists were cut loose from their communities: some left France altogether, and many took refuge in the south, the so-called 'free' zone. The barrier of the Demarcation Line, erected in 1940, cut off normal communications between north and south, fracturing France's unity and, in practical terms, marking the boundary of the authority of the newly-formed Vichy regime with Maréchal Pétain, the former 'victor of Verdun', at its head.

During the Occupation, the usual forms of exhibitions of art were curtailed. If one wished to exhibit, one needed to practise a safe art, or encode any oppositional content.

Two forms of art were specifically encouraged: Vichyist art in the south promoted varieties of folkish, popular representation, since Vichy as much as Germany wanted an art which was emphatically un-modern, clear, readable and -- especially -- untroubled. Bucolic landscapes which extolled the virtues of the countryside were part of the genre, as was a plethora of images of Maréchal Pétain himself. In the north, monumental statuary on the German model marked the Occupation.⁴ Despite limitations, however, many artists continued to practise their art as before. However, for those who did not wish to be seen to collaborate with the authorities, such production needed to be executed in secret.

What constituted resistance in art, and how would it have been construed? This thesis will explore that question through an examination of the works of two artists whose art did not fulfil official proscriptions, yet whose works were very different -- so different, in fact, that they are today seldom held up to the same light, despite the coincidence of their production. It will be the contention of this thesis that these artists participated, in very specific ways, in a virtual conspiracy of culture arising in France during the Second World War.

On first appraisal, the wartime arts of Jean Lurçat and Jean Dubuffet could not seem more unlike. Lurçat, in the rural south of France produced mural tapestries, while Dubuffet, in occupied Paris, created series of small works, primarily gouaches. However, while acknowledging their disparate means, these works can be seen to share some important aspects, elements common to a more general culture of resistance, born during France's occupation. This underground culture involved not only a large part of France's intellectual community (some regrouped in the South by 1942) but included as well a much larger public. For, as historian H.R. Kedward has observed, the Resistance offered ". . . an alternative way of life within occupied France, a society within a society, a power within and against the established powers of Vichy and German authorities."⁵

When Dubuffet's gouache works of 1942 to 1944 were exhibited immediately after the war, there was no question of their subversive import.⁶ Yet today, art history seldom looks at these as circumstantially produced. However, as I will argue in this thesis, during

the crisis of war and occupation when art and politics were so inextricably bound, the use of simple sign -- a word in literature, or a colour in painting -- was enough to trigger a chain of associations which might run awry, 'out of control'. Thus, in Dubuffet's gouaches, for example, sly, painterly manoeuvres present Parisians under a facade of order in both the 1943 album Un Voyage en métro, les dessous de la capitale (la connaissance de Paris par son sous-sol) and Vues de Paris, 1943. The series Messages, 1944 and Les Murs, 1945, tread the borderline between the articulate and the inarticulate, and what could and could not be said in the Occupation years.

In contrast to Dubuffet's production, Lurçat's tapestries (along with selected aspects of French writing) have come to be viewed as paradigmatic of French Resistance art. Indeed, these works were taken to signify opposition at the time of their production, and if one accepts the deadly seriousness of contravening aesthetic dicta, it is not surprising that the Germans set fire to Lurçat's atelier in 1944.⁷ Yet as I will demonstrate, these works are considered more transparent today than is warranted, for they are interpreted only in terms of Lurçat's use of patriotic symbols -- the suns, the French roosters -- and the inclusion of Resistance poetry. When such poetry had often the appearance of ambiguity, when Vichy too encouraged patriotism and unity, and since tapestry could hardly be considered a 'modern' art, one might wonder why these works presented a threat to the regimes.

Chapter One of this thesis will address the network of relations which draw these two artists together: the general culture of resistance which embraced a unity of diverse arts. Within this context, a set of resistance themes emerge: freedom of individual expression, concern with self-esteem and social solidarity, the upholding of a kind of universal humanism, the importance of testimony, and republican patriotism. These ideals are intertwined and involve other features, subthemes such as language strategies as weaponry, an emphasis on the 'outlaw' and the contraband, and the concept of the 'wall', which was peculiar chiefly to the visual art of the period. With the exception of the wall, these themes have been discussed in recent research into the period, especially in the fields of literature and poetry. This scholarship will be examined in some detail in the first

chapter, both as it provides analogies -- in my view -- to what was happening in the visual arts, and also because this recent body of work retrieves some of the complexities of the lived experience of and attitudes toward that oppressive period. In particular, this research is a response to a recent current in scholarship that has emerged to challenge the old, heroic version of French resistance. *La mode rétro*, as this challenge has been called, seeks to redress an imbalance its adherents feel is remiss in historical analysis, by contending that most of France opted for collaboration rather than resistance during the Occupation years. Unfortunately, this view (which will be discussed in the first chapter) would seem to be as simplistic and totalizing as the old. Others have commented critically on this trend. As writer Alan Morris explains, whereas Resistance accounts may seem to have presented a black-and-white version of history, *la mode rétro* has resulted in a counter-mythology no more historically accurate, an orthodoxy encouraging ". . . the belief that there were no heroic resisters and no totally despicable collaborators".⁸ Margaret Atack, who along with Morris has contributed to a new and more balanced account of the period, writes that this tendency substitutes "a handful of Resisters for a handful of traitors."⁹ This view, of which Atack and Morris are but two representatives, neither subscribes to the more cynical *mode rétro*, nor does it accept Resistance legends as uninvestigated 'facts'.¹⁰

Chapter Two will focus specifically on Lurçat's tapestries, and the ideology of Vichy with which Lurçat contended in his effort to reclaim French culture for the Resistance. Lurçat represents a side of the artistic spectrum, one which upheld a continuity of practice from the previous decade when Lurçat was an active participant in the struggle to create a 'public' art. During the 1920's and 1930's, walls became an open forum for artistic endeavours. These public spaces were used not only for accessible decoration, but experimented upon to make grandiose public statements. There was a collective aspect to such enterprises that opposed the isolation, or what has been called the 'ivory tower' situation of easel painting. The mural tapestries made by Jean Lurçat and others during the 1930's were team-based efforts of designer and weaver, artist and architect that attempted to achieve an art 'for all and by all', while avoiding transparent propaganda or

blatant social realism. Throughout the war, Lurçat continued to produce mural tapestries, works such as L'Hallali (1940), Liberté, Es la verdad, and L'Apollinaire (all from 1942) and Le Ciel et la Terre (1944) despite the lack of destination for them at the time.

Chapter Three will discuss the somewhat different situation of occupied Paris and Jean Dubuffet's art as it is circumscribed within that context. That chapter will also explore Dubuffet's view of culture, different from that held by Lurçat, although Dubuffet remained no less opposed to an imposed regime of 'order'. Dubuffet began art production anew during the war, after a decade hiatus, and his output of several series of small pieces, from 1942 to 1945, was prodigious. Dubuffet sought to reclaim contested public spaces such as the metro, in Un Voyage en métro -- les dessous de la capitale, 1943, the neighbourhoods of Paris pictured in Vues de Paris, 1943 and the walls of the streets in Messages, 1944 and Les Murs, 1945 (illustrations for the wartime poems by Resistance writer Eugène Guillevic).

Although their artistic language differed, both Lurçat and Dubuffet responded to propaganda and censorship by making use of unofficial language, coded words and imagery to represent expression forced underground. This use of codes was shared by all working in opposition: poets, spies, graffiti artists, and also citizens who -- to cite one example -- frequently displayed contraband insignia to register resistance to the occupying forces.

In solidarity with the 'outlaw', whose image formed an important component of resistance culture, Lurçat and Dubuffet, in differing ways, posited an image of a primitive outcast, one who confronted both the Nazi 'barbarian' and the French collaborator. It is through the lens of these kinds of shared themes, that Lurçat and Dubuffet (and other disparate artists and writers) can be seen to form an alternative to the official structure of culture. Thus, after some discussion of the differences between these two artists (differences which would, after the war, obscure their connections), I will conclude by bringing these works together under that umbrella of resistance whose unity, and indeed, eventual victory in overthrowing the 'new order' depended on precisely such alliances.

My approach to this material may be clarified by the following note on the origins of

this study. Despite the location of the discussion of a general culture of resistance at the head of this thesis, the framework for my analysis evolved from the discovery of the elements of that culture within the arts of Lurçat and Dubuffet. These aspects emerged from a series of specific questions stimulated by Lurçat's and Dubuffet's works themselves: what did it mean for Lurçat to repeatedly weave an image of a kind of 'generic' man? Why did he use poetic references, and why did the tapestries seem to demand an iconographic unravelling? And with regard to images like Dubuffet's Messages, what kind of wall is depicted? And what could this signify in occupied France? There were other questions that informed this topic, of course, but what I mean to convey here is that it was from relatively simple questions such as these that a large and complex web of connotations and conclusions soon enveloped the study.

A remark about terminology needs also to be made. Throughout this thesis, I will use 'Resistance' wherever that describes either the movement or organization itself, or to describe whatever subject has been defined elsewhere as denoting the Resistance (e.g. Resistance poetry). When I refer to a more general opposition, be it within French society itself or encoded within an art not so clearly historically aligned with the Resistance, I will use the (small-case) term 'resistance'.

Because too, I subscribe to a current critique of the concept of universal humanism, primarily for its historical exclusion of women, I will capitalize the word Man. It must be noted that those who embraced the philosophy then, did so in good faith, in response to an immense threat to *all* who did not conform to the narrow definitions of humanity posed by fascist doctrines.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The quote is from Schultze-Naumberg's book, Kampf um die Kunst (The Battle for Art); cited by Berthold Hinz, Art in the Third Reich (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), p. 45.
- 2 These aspects formed two of the nine categories of artistic transgressions which divided the Degenerate Art Exhibition of July 18, 1937. Barbarism was the first category, abstract painting or 'sheer madness' number 9. The equating of modern art with madness is important, and will be discussed in Chapter One. These forms of 'degenerate art' were formulated from a speech Hitler gave just prior to the opening of the exhibit. See Werner Haftmann, Banned and Persecuted: Dictatorship of Art under Hitler (Cologne: Dumont Buchverlag, 1986), p. 23.
- 3 The programme for a Third Reich art form was framed by Hitler when, in selecting art for the first exhibition of German art at the House of German Art in Munich in 1937, he stated, "I won't tolerate unfinished paintings!" And Minister Wagner, state commissioner for the House of German Art, declared at the opening of that show: "Problematic and unfinished work is not and will never be acceptable in the House of German Art." Both cited by Berthold Hinz, Art in the Third Reich, p. 9.
- 4 See Laurence Bertrand Dorléac, Histoire de l'Art: Paris 1940-1944, (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1986), Chapter Three, "Occupation et modèle allemand," pp. 83-99.
- 5 H.R. Kedward, Occupied France: Collaboration and Resistance 1940-1944 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1988), p. 55.
- 6 Dubuffet's works of the period, exhibited at the Galerie Drouin in Paris, were accompanied by a text by Louis Parrot and were subsequently that same year reviewed by Pierre Seghers in his L'Homme du commun ou Jean Dubuffet (Paris: Editions Poésie, 1944). Seghers was himself a Resistance poet and spoke of Dubuffet's art as existing in a state of "permanent insurrection" (page 13). This passage is included in this thesis, p. 71 of Chapter Three. Parrot's description is on p. 70 and other reviewers' comments, in similar vein, are on p. 65, Chapter Three.
- 7 See Claude Roy, Jean Lurçat (Genève: Editions Pierre Cailler, 1956), p. 105.
- 8 Alan Morris, "Attacks on the Gaullist 'Myth' in French Literature since 1969", The Second World War in Literature, Ian Higgins, ed. (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Academic Press, 1986), p. 80.
- 9 Margaret Atack, Literature and the French Resistance (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 167.
- 10 For a survey of such studies, see Chapter One, note 2.

Chapter 1

Perspectives on the Culture and Ideology of the French Resistance

Both popular and academic interest in the phenomenon of French resistance has been sustained since the liberation of the country in 1944. These range from the initial outpourings of recollections, encyclopedic histories, and anthologies attesting to and emphasizing the existence of a great depth of oppositional activity -- both military and cultural -- to a more recent body of research, known as *la mode rétro*.¹ This latter approach seeks to counter a certain perceived one-sidedness in the former traditional accounts, by balancing these Resistance 'legends' with evidence of deep divisions existing in France during the Occupation years, both within society and within the Resistance itself.

Recent studies, however, in the fields of history, poetry, and fiction take an alternate direction. Acknowledging that while indeed such divisions existed, these analyses argue that from 1940 to 1944 a very complex ideology of resistance was constructed -- one which in turn involved a relatively large portion of French society. Research by Margaret Attack, J.H. King, John Flower and Ray Davison on the fiction of the period; Ian Higgins' study of Resistance poetry; H.R. Kedward's analysis of the history and ideology of the Resistance, and the investigations concerning ideology and culture of Vichy and the Resistance provide, in my view, the most profitable sources for an understanding of the phenomenon of French resistance and its culture during this period.²

As this research has shown, several themes constituted an ideology of Resistance. These included the defence of (French) culture and a universal humanism, issues of unity, testimony, republican patriotism, and the preservation of individual freedom. These concepts and their significance to the art of Lurçat and Dubuffet will be discussed in greater depth later in this study. However, it is important to stress that these and other related concerns need to be seen in direct relation to other ideologies with which they do battle -- those of Vichy and Nazism -- and the cultural products of these dominant or, at least, legally-constituted forces. Any discussion of the ideology and culture of French

resistance needs, and emphatically so, to be based on the understanding that the cultural forms did not 'reflect' or accompany events, but were catalysts -- indeed weapons -- in a war which, for the most part, was not fought militarily on a physical battlefield, with a clear-cut enemy behind a "wall of fire" (as Jean-Paul Sartre put it).³ This battle, necessarily chiefly underground, was fought with words, emblems, and images through which a figure of the enemy needed to be continually defined, reconstructed with each volley.

The visual art of the period has been rather less well-reviewed than other forms of culture, until the publication in 1986 of Laurence Bertrand Dorléac's Histoire de l'art: Paris: 1940-1944. While Dorléac provides a comprehensive study of all the art production of the era, official and otherwise, the author concentrates in large part on the oppositional side of the ledger, on the group of painters called the Jeunes peintres de tradition française, or Jeunes peintres sous le signe de l'esprit. Dorléac discusses how the painting of this group was able to construe 'resistance' when, in many ways, its basis was similar to the aesthetic philosophy that Vichy promoted. Both art forms had a spiritual or religious slant, both aimed to integrate artist and community, and both upheld French tradition. The revival of past art forms and an interest in murality and monumentality served these ends. However, many of these concerns exhibited in the work of the Jeunes peintres predated the war, and were in fact associated with the government which was the political enemy of Vichy: the Popular Front, in power from 1936-1938. The Jeunes peintres, however much seeming to fulfil some of Vichy's mandates, used forms such as abstraction (disfavoured by both German and Vichy doctrines), and deliberately departed from verisimilitude. As Dorléac puts it, they used a "cocktail of genres of modernity", arguing that they were:

. . . participating less in modernism . . . than in modernity taking place in chaos and rupture, its actors could only appear as those who preferred the unknown of the fields of liberty to the more sinister 'state of things'. And if their weapons were incomparable, unequally efficient, they each affirmed in their style the *beau refus* to submit to established order.⁴

Dorléac does much to redress the imbalance between the study of visual art and that of other arts produced during the war. She also makes the important contribution of investigating areas of ambiguity and resistance, toward an understanding of the way that

aesthetic language addresses concerns and issues outside the realm of the 'merely' cultural. However, this study, and the other new writing I have mentioned, makes little or no attempt to link the arts of poetry, fiction, and painting and sculpture together with a profile of the publics for them. So, despite nearly fifty years of unflagging interest in the subject, an overall analysis of the culture of French resistance has yet to be written.

The reason for this lack, or so it seems to me, is manifold. On the one hand, for the original participants in the Resistance any discussion of the period remains a loaded topic, one that remains personal, painful, and politically-charged even today. As poet Pierre Seghers wrote in his introduction to an anthology of Resistance poetry in 1978:

For me and for plenty of others the ashes are still -- and will always remain -- hot, whether they are those of my family, or of murdered friends . . . this history is still very much alive, red with blood that spurts out at your face.⁵

On the other hand, while the rewriting of history should not involve a betrayal of its actors, the tendency to mythologize Resistance exploits and some of its culture (especially the poetry), is an important issue to address. In the period under study, there actually existed a variety of expressions of 'resistance', and within these are many complexities, even ambiguities, which belie the notion that there was one single language of resistance -- one easily recognizable, readable code or form. For example, writers, artists, and other citizens opposed to the Vichy government and the Occupation regime looked to a disparate range of histories and traditions to authenticize their position. These could be political or religious, could be earlier rebellions, local traditions, past cultural forms associated with periods of 'just' uprisings. Periods, such as the medieval or Roman, could provide sources of moral values, and were recalled and quoted in juxtaposition to the current oppression. The ruling regimes were engaged in similar practice. Hitler attempted to bypass the twentieth century altogether, by 'purifying' art, reverting to representation which upheld ideal forms. Maréchal Pétain and Vichy's aesthetic arbiters similarly eschewed modern art practice and called for an art which would serve the 'new' nation. This was not to be a new art, but a nostalgic return to the past wherein the making of images was thought to have been practised with care and respect. Pétain thus declared in 1940:

The France of tomorrow will restore traditions which in the past made its fortune and glory. A country of quality classicism, it would know how to give all its production this finish, this delicacy, this elegance, of which it has no rival.⁶

While it can be argued that the official art of the war years was by no means simple - as it operated in its own persuasive fashion -- it can be said that its aim, or philosophy was to achieve a kind of uniformity. The 'masses' or the nation were to view the world in the same way, and their vision was to be healthy and wholesome as a result. It was this fixity of viewpoint which the modern in art challenged, since so much of the art of the late 19th and 20th century implied multiple or unusual points of view. So it may not seem surprising that oppositional art of the period took up variety and difference, distortion, complexity, or ambiguity in its practice.⁷ The tendency to view cultural production as an undistorting mirror to history, or a simple, straightforward transcription of events is an obstacle to investigation of visual representation in the period. Today, for example, interpretation of Lurçat's tapestries as self-evident compilations of symbols minimizes their complexities. To simply locate his use of the French roosters or other loaded imagery as marks of patriotic resistance begs the question of how the sum of such disparate elements interact. Indeed, as will emerge in the following chapter, the symbols *were* part of the language of resistance, but when the whole array of imagery is examined, the interpreting process relies on choices and associations. This aesthetic language, and the emphasis on it *as* a language, insists on viewing art not as simply picturing events, but as experiencing them. In contrast, Dubuffet's wartime art is seldom taken as emblematic of resistance, for it lacks those obvious elements shared with other paradigms of French Resistance. But as has been already noted, at the time this art was considered to be as audaciously resistant as Lurçat's, and was extolled by such notorious Resisters as Pierre Seghers.⁸

Margaret Atack has discussed a similar issue in relation to the study of the literature of the French Resistance, which has been generally bracketed as 'war literature'. As she notes:

What would bear further analysis . . . is the assumption, frequently found in literary criticism of the period, of the transparent nature of the relations between literature and the event . . . this presents the language of fiction as a screen through which we can interrogate the world which is radically outside

it . . . What needs to be examined is the unspoken presupposition of the identity between the literary and the historical events.⁹

In arguing that art and its historical circumstances are involved in a complex, interactive relationship, Attack states that the novel is "a purposeful, active, transformative reading of society. There can have been few periods of history when this vision of narrative as a dynamic reading of the social can have been more apt than during and immediately after the Occupation."¹⁰ In approaching the field in this way, Attack's study widens the scope of the body of literature produced in France during the war, an effort which had not before been attempted. "Poetry", she explains, "has been studied much more than the fiction, perhaps because at first, together with Vercors' Silence de la mer, it functioned as a paradigm of the French (national) Resistance so enthusiastically espoused after the Liberation".¹¹ I cite Attack here because I would contend that her analysis pertains equally to visual art: that is, all cultural material produced during the Occupation years needs to be investigated with the same attention to its role, both active and reactive, in historical events. The visual arts of the period were no less diverse than the varieties of writings which Attack has analyzed, and such diversity has to be considered a value in the face of the imposition of a single, narrow and uniform viewpoint. Indeed, this variety of expression had a social parallel, in the varied composition of the Resistance.

The heterogeneity of the Resistance itself -- both of the network of activists and intellectual community -- could perhaps present some difficulty in ascribing to the movement an all-embracing, seemingly overdetermining ideology. However, this variety, this unity-in-diversity, can also provide an extended, complex field for study and can lead, in my opinion, to a greater understanding of the promulgation, dispersion, and acceptance of Resistance principles. As well, this understanding can explain more accurately the reasons for the ultimate victory for the Resistance.¹² Populist roots of resistance, according to historian H.R. Kedward, lay in individual and emotional responses to daily occurrences. Through these, he argues ". . . [people] both discovered and expressed the values of justice, patriotism, individual freedom, human dignity, democracy, and equality that eventually formed the composite ideology of the Resistance . . . discovered and experienced as if for

the first time . . ."13 Furthermore, Resistance movements could perpetuate this basis in their organizations, evolving a network which excluded no one of 'good conscience'. As Kedward notes:

No movement was politically exclusive, and the other side of collective motivation is the political heterogeneity of the Resistance . . . the argument of this study [of resistance in Vichy France] is that the Resistance could never have been a homogeneous, tightly-knit group, since the very phenomenon known as the Resistance was developed between 1940 and 1942, by a plurality of groups in a plurality of ways.¹⁴

Diversity, toward unity, was encouraged in some of the writings of the Resistance. For example, even the group most strongly identified with the Communist Party, the Front National, in its organization of a literary wing, wrote in its manifesto, published in Les Lettres françaises, September 1, 1942:

Representatives of all political tendencies and all faiths: Gaullists, communists, democrats, Catholics, Protestants, we have all come together to form the FRONT NATIONAL DES ECRIVAINS.¹⁵

This embracing of all divisions is important, both for an understanding of the pervasive action of resistance themes within the public sphere, and also because the concepts of unity and of commonality are represented within the cultural production of the period. Attack, for example, succinctly describes the ideological circumstances which are crucial elements of an analysis of cultural forms in those years:

The Occupation is . . . a period traversed by conflicting political discourses, and the ideological battle is inescapable, for it permeates all aspects of life -- the home, the schools, the streets. It is in this context that the Resistance writings should be read . . . it is difficult to see how, without public expression, there could have been a Resistance.¹⁶

The combative nature of the situation made acute the necessity of establishing a common basis for participation. The unity which gathered together groups and individuals appears as the structure or theme of a common humanity against alien inhumanity in resistant literature, and this common 'humanity' served to paper over differences in an overriding concern to confront a common enemy. A shared understanding between artist and public is implicit in the construction of this element. In analyzing the opposition fiction of this period, Attack has claimed:

Resistance fiction depends on a structure of unity . . . the positive resolution

of the narrative conflict depends on a well-defined and homogeneous group distinct from the enemy . . . the theme of unity returns time and again in Resistance writings, not only to spread the Resistance message, but also as an expression of the movement toward unity which characterized the history of the Resistance.¹⁷

It was precisely because of the many political and other divisions within resistance that such unity was not only a real, strategic expedient, but became a positive value and a true thematic principle, articulated within the writings and -- I contend -- within the visual art as well. Unity, community, basic humanity are notions which will be seen to be central to images like Lurçat's generic Man in Le Poète and Le Ciel et la Terre, and also Dubuffet's Parisian community evoked in his images of Le Métro and Vues de Paris. The theme is also evident in Lurçat's alliances of poet/intellectual/peasant/artist and also in Dubuffet's 'common man'.¹⁸

One way of expressing this solidarity, which is common to these cultural forms in general, is the construction of an 'other', against which all resistance values are opposed. This enemy figure was set up as the spectre of inhumanity, bent on the destruction of all the basic human values which the Resistance sought to embody. In a chapter, "The Figure of the Enemy", Attack states that during the Occupation years, this construction was not so much present as a subject, but served as a "function" -- that is, as the "negative other opposed to the Resistance."¹⁹ Thus it is, when considering Resistant images of humanity, or Man, one must consider definitions of these provided by the dominating regimes.

Configurations of resistance values were at first, at least, complicated by certain ambiguities arising from the ideological battle with Vichy. Then, some of the themes of resistance culture traversed and overlapped Vichy ideology. For example, the call for unity, the evocation of tradition, and the emphasis on the values of the countryside were themes stressed by Vichy and Resistance adherents alike. Vichy ideology (and its cultural manifestations) was itself the product of an amalgam of sources. The doctrines of Charles Maurras formed one important part, emphasizing the rural unity of the country, and reinvoking the traditional Republican values of *Travail, Famille, Patrie*.²⁰ Paradoxically, the glorification of the countryside, the interest in folklore, a disdain for individualism and industrialized modernity were aspects of the ideology of Vichy's predecessor and political

enemy, the Popular Front. The dislike of modernity was illustrated in Vichy's disapproval of modern art practice. Vichy despised apparent individualism, laxity, and decadence in art as much as had the left-leaning artists of the 1930's, upholding art forms which the Popular Front period had previously espoused -- mural art, for example, or any art which would ostensibly be available to a large public.²¹

Both the Resistance and Vichy battled over certain heroic emblems and symbols. Kedward gives some examples:

The cult of Joan of Arc, the respect for Charles Péguy, a sense of French tradition, the call to patriotism were . . . common to the cuisine of the Hotel du Parc at Vichy, to the furtive Resistance meals in the cellars of the Croix-Rousse in Lyon and to the long evenings round the smokeless fires of the Maquis.²²

To interpret these shared symbols in a pejorative sense, as confusion, lack of clear focus -- or worse yet, as a 'buying into' Vichy mythology on the part of the Resistance, is not to understand the battlefield over which such ideals were waged. Brought to the fore in the Occupation years was the question of whose right it was to speak for France's cultural values. Who were the rightful heirs to that culture? This is not to say that the Resistance use of Joan of Arc stood for the same values as the Joan of Arc of Vichy, but that the national heroine or the writings of Péguy could both be subject to a redemptive process in Resistance culture. Also, the means, the language used to invoke the ideals was seen to differentiate between a Vichyist version of a theme or a resistant one. For example, there is a great deal of difference between an image used in a public speech and one manipulated in a literary form, such as a poem.

The first premise that can be stated about the culture of French Resistance is that French culture was itself considered to be under siege. The threat to culture was perceived long before France's defeat, in the 1930's, when European fascism was seen to have placed all culture in peril. French intellectuals, in the 1930's, had begun to organize themselves in alliances with writers and artists of other nationalities to fight fascism. For example, one association, the International Writers' Congress for the Defence of Culture in 1935 brought together writers of differing political views to discuss the impact of fascism upon culture.²³

Previously, the French organization, L'Association des Ecrivains et Artistes révolutionnaires (AEAR), in 1934 boasted a membership of 550 from all the arts, and a magazine, Commune. The Maisons de la culture (cultural activities and debates organized by the AEAR) had some 96,000 members in 1936.²⁴ The fascist riots in Paris in February 1934 brought the conflict home and, for some artists, changed the way they thought about the practice of art. Edouard Georg and André Lhote are said to have expressed the impossibility of their painting in the same way after February 4, 1934.²⁵ The victory of the Popular Front in 1936 provided a brief optimistic moment, but generally speaking, this alliance was beleaguered, set within a situation of crisis in Europe. Its adherents were not complacent, but wary. Serge Fauchereau, in his introduction to the collected papers of the 'Querelle du réalisme', one of the important artistic debates in 1936, stated that the "worried isolated artist was the reflection of the period", and that "inquietude is a leitmotiv of the epoch".²⁶ During the Popular Front period, cultural activity increased as money and energy was put toward cinema, theatre, and other 'popular' arts. This was motivated by a desire to reach out to the public, and also to demonstrate that French culture was, if embattled, still thriving. The insistence on a public face for art would culminate in the programme for the 1937 World Exposition -- the last stand for the Popular Front, which would soon meet with electoral defeat in 1938.²⁷

The concern for the protection of French cultural traditions persevered after the eruption of the war and France's defeat. French intellectuals in opposition to the situation even in the early years of the Occupation saw, as J.H. King has noted, "their role to be that of guardians, curators of the national heritage."²⁸ However, to say that the safeguarding of French culture was an act of simple patriotism is to miss a larger point. French culture was seen by many as universal, its defence the rescue of Western civilization itself.²⁹ In some aspects, this effort of preservation was directed toward a continuity of culture yet, in Atack's reading of the literature of the period, it goes deeper. In that literature, France was articulated as a value, ". . . the tangible embodiment in the present of the universal and eternal ideals of humanism."³⁰ Culture, she argues, served on its own as a means to oppose

Nazism:

There are many instances whereby national oppositions as such are not primarily and necessarily at play, given the definition of Nazism as being anti-humanist, monstrous and barbarous, as committed to the destruction of German culture as it is to that of the French. That is to say that the defence of culture, and specifically French culture, is *de facto* ideological opposition to Nazism. . . .³¹

Ian Higgins, who explores the concept of 'France' as it arises in Resistance poetry, concurs with this view:

French territorial integrity, for the majority of the Resistance poets, is not an end in itself, but a mediation for *l'homme* -- humanity, not as an essence to be preserved, but as an ideal fraternité requiring ever-renewing realization.³²

This understanding, this meaning of *patrie*, explains for Higgins, how it was that many French poets turned to traditional forms in their works, and wove these with popular elements in order to, as he says, ". . . affirm the vitality and flexibility of the French tradition."³³

The concern for continuity of culture was shared by painters as well. In a special issue of the journal Confluences, entitled Les Problèmes de la peinture (published in 1945, but intended for publication in June 1944), some fifty contributors, as diverse as Matisse, Lurçat, Cocteau, and Rouault presented papers on some seemingly innocuous topics. These appeared under such headings as "Painting and Public Language", "Abstraction and its Limits", "Painting and Reality". Such issues were reminiscent of prewar aesthetic discourse, but the impetus for the collection was expressed in the foreword by Gaston Diehl:

To be concerned with artistic questions, to dream of the future, of the problems of painting . . . [This is] testimony in support of this affirmation: without these reasons to live, France was in danger of dying. And what were these reasons? Liberty, independence, put toward the service of a culture in which Art constituted the highest expression.³⁴

Diehl's statement evinces the understanding that the border between the aesthetic and the political was illusory, that 'resistance' was not only to be found in engaged art, but when modern art was under attack, aesthetic questions were presented as acts of radical engagement and defiance. Artists were not empowered to deal with aesthetic issues; these were to be left to government. In 1936, Hitler had ostensibly brought a formal end to

discussions of art within Nazi-dominated terrain. Not only was art to be free of elements which might provoke debate, but aesthetic concerns themselves were to be handled by technocrats, whose prime qualification was allegiance to Nazi beliefs. The "Decree Concerning Art Criticism" by the Minister of Propaganda, November 11, 1936 contained the following statement:

From today on, the art report will replace art criticism . . . The art critic will be replaced by the art editor . . . In the future, only those art editors will be allowed to report on art, who approach the task with an undefiled heart and National Socialist convictions.³⁵

In this context too, just to paint, or write, in the face of censorship, became a kind of testimony -- as long as the product could not be seen to fulfil official requirements. As the 1942 manifesto for the clandestine publishing house, the Editions de Minuit, stated: "Our business is to show that French thought continues to live."³⁶

It was, in part, the actual means used which signified opposition and the refusal to submit to the dictates of the censors. Whether in 'open' writing, or in visual art, the language used by resistance artists involved the employment of codes and allusions. Indeed, the assumption of a heightened sensitivity on the part of the public for the arts is key to understanding how, when Lurçat (and others) produced tapestries which wove themes used by both Vichy and the Resistance, there was no confusion regarding their import, or their political stance. Vichy tapestries (and Vichy art in general), as well as the idealizing art preferred by the Nazis, used transparent, easily readable means. Whether this representation was the antique or traditional sculpture such as that by Arno Breker, which Dorléac presents as "the readable and narcissistic images . . . reflecting the grand Nazi ideological themes"³⁷ or the decorative, figurative, hagiographic Pétainist imagery, such art was considered to be analogous to propaganda, communicating as directly as the posters prevalent on French walls. Lurçat, however, involved the viewer in a game of deciphering a welter of images, and the style of weaving, the colours, the material were not those favoured by Vichy.³⁸

While the official art of the period was to be unproblematic and uplifting, other art was produced which contravened such dogma. Dorléac notes that while "the expression of

the artistic life of this epoch seemed to deny the existence of an interior combat, to appear as in a state of "*calme et volupté*", works such as those by Dubuffet, Fautrier, Gruber, Fougeron and Kandinsky "reveal thematic and formal diversity, permanence or conflict and opposed to reason."³⁹ In Dubuffet's Parisian views or landscapes of 1943 (to be discussed in Chapter 3), it was not the subject matter that was problematic, but rather his style of painting (his extreme primitivism and strident colour) which flew in the face of official proscriptions. Such an offence was warned against by Hitler in a speech in the Reichstag in 1933, wherein he stated: "That which poses as a revelation of the 'cult of the Primitive' is not the expression of a naive, unspoiled soul but of a degeneracy which is utterly corrupt and diseased."⁴⁰ And at the opening of the House of German Art in July 1937, Hitler added:

The new age of today is at work on a new human type, the proud bodily vigour of youth. This, my good prehistoric art-stutterers, is the type of the new age: and what do you manufacture? Misformed cripples and cretins, women who inspire only disgust, men who are more like wild beasts . . .⁴¹

Within this context, it is obvious that Dubuffet's wartime stick-people and Lurçat's images of 'wild men' pointedly defied the idealized types which Nazi art insisted upon. Opposition was considered insane, aberrant, and modern art itself was frequently described in German and Vichy pronouncements as a form of mental illness. Such equations had been part of some conservative discourse in France prior to 1939. But during the war, the painter Vlaminck again took up the cudgel, associating Surrealism with insanity in an article in Comoedia.⁴² As a result the modern artist, as Dorléac has observed, saw herself or himself as "condemned to having too often submitted to the influence of primitive art, negro art, that of children and of the insane."⁴³

When it was not possible to practise art with the same freedom as before the war, to persevere in art production was itself a decision fraught with difficulty. While not producing art could be seen as a protest, eventually many artists and writers were compelled to add their 'voice' to a growing opposition. At first, for writers to publish at all meant to be compromised: "Legal literature is the literature of betrayal", wrote the clandestine La Pensée libre in 1941.⁴⁴ While the situation of enforced silence did not last

long, the theme of language and silence was subsequently taken up in resistant writings, and became part of the vocabulary of resistance. In discussing the wartime poetry of Pierre Emmanuel, Loys Masson, Jean Tardieu, and Seghers, Ian Higgins has observed that in their work, ". . . the voice of destruction is an attack on God and humanity" with the struggle between good and evil presented as a "battle for voice."⁴⁵ "The numerous references to enforced silence and clenched teeth in Resistance poetry", he argues, "are not simply evocations of censorship, they are images of human beings as essentially linguistic creatures. Not to speak is a nightmarish inhuman paralysis."⁴⁶ Literary historian Margaret Atack, assessing the phenomenon of testimony, has made a related point noting ". . . that which cannot be said officially must be said unofficially", and adding ". . . no literature of the period can avoid being placed upon the great public/ clandestine divide."⁴⁷ In other words, as these passages suggest, the need to speak out, to align oneself on the side of the 'righteous' cause became acute for writers and artists -- and this was the case whether one had the support of a group or was isolated, exiled or imprisoned. Even the study, or the 'ivory tower' of the writer or artist, came to be seen as a cell, with expression, in turn, functioning as a release. J.H. King has remarked on the perception during these years that ". . . Occupied France was a prison . . . its writers . . . for the most part, in solitary confinement", and he quotes poet Jean Guéhenno, who saw literary expression as ". . . concerned with painting the walls of [the writer's] prison."⁴⁸ Such testimony to opposition, if it was to be published openly, or, in the case of art, exhibited, needed necessarily to be coded. The use of allusion required sophistication, and it needed as well as to be posited in such a way as to be understood.

There was another operative factor in this creative use of language: it had to be seen as standing apart from the kind of discourse employed officially, in propaganda. Again Higgins, in discussing the poetry of resistance, argues that ". . . linguistic acts, characterized by a manifest and conscious mastery of language . . . contrast greatly with the submission to language normal in a state founded on propaganda and terror."⁴⁹ In France, certain forms of the French language, came to be seen as standing for the preservation of culture itself,

and as J.H. King describes it, served as ". . . the emblem of passive and active resistance . . . it cannot be destroyed and remains a guarantee of national identity."⁵⁰ The language then, of both literature and painting needs to be placed in relation to the language of the official regime, whether the terms of written and visual propaganda or the vocabulary of collaboration. However, J.H. King has provided a cautionary note regarding cultural ideals upheld in resistant writing:

For what happened in France between 1940 and 1944 was not only the occasion for numerous writers to close ranks in defence of certain cultural and literary values, it also constituted a crisis of those values. Surely, if European civilization had culminated in the death-camps, it is perverse to respect the traditional values of this civilization, and more so, to perpetuate them. Of this problem, the resistance writers were, of course, aware.⁵¹

Central to Resistance culture was a notion of a universalist liberal humanism, akin to that which was believed to have sparked the French Revolution⁵², and which was reinvoked in response to both Vichy's eschewal of republican values, and the Nazi attack on human equality. This crisis of humanism, and the problem of perpetuating the values of a civilization seen by some as bankrupt was to become a major issue by the end of the war. However, the full spectrum of this crisis can be seen in the duality of viewpoints surfacing in the wartime art of Lurçat and Dubuffet. While Lurçat's art -- the later works particularly -- can be seen to present an optimism, Dubuffet reveals, especially in his later pieces such as Les Murs and Messages, if not a pessimism, at least conflicting aspects of this crisis. What Dubuffet was keeping alive was not the same cultural continuum which Lurçat and others were trying to preserve, but another tradition: that of avant-garde art practice, replete with its combative tactics and strategies. Dubuffet sought to rupture a 'high' culture, and to recoup some of the individualistic modernism despised by both German and Vichy aesthetic arbiters. No less interested in achieving an art for the 'ordinary' person, no less humanist, nor even universal, Dubuffet, however, looked to a precultured Man. Rejecting any connotation of the narrowly national, he used sources such as expressionist colour, and he emphatically rejected the *beau métier* of the painter by performing an art such as that of the untrained, of children, of the mentally ill.

Both Lurçat's and Dubuffet's arts were 'illegal', outside the bounds of the

conventions of the period. While Dubuffet exploited the vocabulary of the 'primitive' and the insane, Lurçat made his alignment with other elements of resistance culture all the more flagrant through the inclusion of resistance writings on his tapestries.⁵³ Indeed, in remaining outside accepted norms, rejecting the authoritative 'new order' or 'national renovation', such art subscribed to an important element in resistance culture, that which H.R. Kedward terms "the culture of the outlaw".⁵⁴

Any unity provided by the Resistance was predicated upon the understanding that the movement was composed of a community of lawbreakers, even exiles, but serving a higher justice than that which rested in the legally-constituted regime. Kedward argues that this culture was not just the expression of those who had technically broken the law, but formed a structural alternative to legal society among a much wider population.⁵⁵ "Such a culture", he writes, "wherever it has positively existed in history, embodies the conviction that the established law has exceeded its rights, and has itself become illegal, so that real authority, real justice, now lie with those who have technically become outlaws."⁵⁶ This 'outlaw' topos was manifested in the calling up of a number of precedents. "Myth, folklore, regional traditions" writes Kedward, "were marshalled to sanctify acts of rebellion."⁵⁷

Vichy's promotion of the doctrines of Charles Maurras (*Travail, famille, patrie*) sought to provide unity for the divided country. However, by 1942, the constructions of Maurras' True France/Anti-France (*pays réel/pays légal*) had backfired. The *pays réel* (real country) excluded so many that the framework seemed to include only a handful. And by 1942, 'patriotism' came to be viewed as the possession of the Resistance -- those whom Maurras and Vichy supporters would have initially deemed traitors.⁵⁸

Poet Jean Cassou, named as director of the Musée d'Art Moderne in 1942, only to have his directorship immediately revoked by Vichy, was described in a radio report at that time as embodying nearly all the alien tendencies so despised by the authorities:

The communist Jew Red Spaniard Popular Front Freemason anarchist Jean Cassou member of the cabinet of Jewish minister of the ministry of the Jew Blum, the Jew Jean Zay, cause of the war . . .⁵⁹

These were the same accusations that were concurrently hurled at modern art.⁶⁰ Cassou,

who had been imprisoned in 1942, would later articulate his experience of confinement in terms of the artist-outsider, disenfranchised and marginalized:

I myself had always been someone without possessions, without inheritance or title, with no fixed home, no social status, no real profession . . . Finally I found myself in a situation where . . . it was the norm not to give your own name, it was the rule not to have social position and no longer to look for one.⁶¹

To assume the clandestine use of the contraband in art was to align oneself with the forces of rebellion, employing forbidden themes, forbidden means. This image of the 'outlaw' (as a presence, or subject) was posited as a positive value, in the arts of Lurçat and Dubuffet, for that construction functioned as something that the 'enemy' could not be. Both artists made use of written languages of rebellion, and included human figures whose construction depended on connotations of disenfranchisement/empowerment.

By placing both these artists within a general culture of resistance, their strategies are more fully understood, and the following chapters will analyze their works through an exploration of resistance themes. But there is one other important factor, more peculiar to visual art than to poetry or fiction and which affects the production of Lurçat and Dubuffet. While the metaphor of the 'wall' arises in some of the poetry of the period (Les Murs by Eugène Guillevic is an obvious example, and Paul Eluard had for some time dwelled, to an extent, on walls as barriers⁶²), it is within visual art that this concept was appropriated, as the staking out of a space for art. Painting, unlike written forms -- which can be spoken or memorized -- depends on the visual and on display. The latter was, of course, particularly difficult during the war, when to exhibit, or to encode the domain of the 'public' in art, meant 'speaking out', and attempting to reach out to a receiving public.

The 1920's and 1930's in France had already seen an emphasis placed on the wall as a public space to be reserved for art, with artists such as Amédée Ozenfant, Le Corbusier, and Fernand Léger, and groups such as the Comité d'Art Mural (1934) advocating mural art as a form of public expression. Léger, from the 1920's, had proposed a greater collaboration between architect and painter. The modern architect, he said ". . . cleanses through emptiness"⁶³, "the wall is a waiting room"⁶⁴, pitiless, "a large dead surface"⁶⁵,

incapable of touching the average person. Easel art, in particular, had been the subject of harsh criticism already for a decade in 1940, when as Dorléac explains, it was viewed by both Vichy and the community of painters opposed to that regime as ". . . impotent, agonized, reserved for a minority of the privileged, an object of speculation for dealers and intellectuals."⁶⁶

The idea, then, that art should serve a community was not new, and was taken up by Vichy in its artistic 'renovation', including in that project the advocacy of both mural and monumental art. But for the artists who had held out for the potential for public art in the 1930's, such a route was not, generally speaking, open to them.⁶⁷ Still, the notions of public expression and often collectivity involved in the concept of the wall, were not abandoned. Permutations of the wall formed part of the art production in France, but as a kind of underground, forbidden zone, with such works often produced in isolation or with limited means. Brassai continued to photograph Parisian graffiti but now bullet holes formed a framework for design; Boris Taslitsky, arrested and sent to Ste. Sulpice la Pointe did a series of murals there; Atlan, evading arrest by pretending insanity, spent the Occupation years in Ste. Anne, where he and his fellow inmates decorated the walls of the institution; Hans Bellmer, hiding in a brickworks near Aix, produced a series of drawings of human figures composed of bricks.⁶⁸

These are widely disparate art forms, yet they provide variations on the theme of the wall, at the root of which are connotations of communication and expression, release and escape (for the wall had become a kind of metaphor for prison). Also involved was a desire to take art, if not 'to the streets' -- at least, to make visible the private world of the imagination. Claude Roy, in a book on Lurçat, discusses the phenomenon:

Nothing is more necessary, but nothing is more sad than a wall . . . Every wall is the beginning of a prison . . . the wall is the cold frontier of the imagination and of the eyes . . ."⁶⁹

It was not, then, just a gallery space or interior architectural walls which the painters sought to seize, but the public spaces, the walls of the streets, so heavily censored during the Occupation. Raymond Gid describes the use put to these walls, in an article in the

catalogue, Paris-Paris: 1937-1957:

The walls were hopelessly censored. Only reduced formats could be printed in secret, here a clandestine journal, there some graffiti. If one wish to detail the description of the walls during the intermediate period between retreat and Liberation, one would consider the typical poster of this epoch: the great paternal image of the Maréchal, underlined by the slogan, Travail, Famille, Patrie. One saw, otherwise, the insidious propaganda of the Occupant imposed on the walls (Travail en Allemagne or Anti-Bolschévisme) punctuated by notices enframed for mourning: execution of hostages.⁷⁰

It is in the context of the 'war of emblems'⁷¹ a *guerre des affiches*⁷², as well as an attack on culture per se, that the painting of the period needs to be considered. And it is often through the reference to, and the difference between visual propaganda and art, that an enemy figure is declared, and the righteousness of Art illuminated. Dubuffet took the walls of Paris (Les Murs and Messages) as his subject, and out of the hands of the authorities, and, in his earlier works (Le Métro and Vues de Paris), imposed his own 'order' on other Parisian public spaces. Lurçat continued to practise a mural art, in defiance of censorship, inspired by the conviction that not only would there be -- one day -- a destined space for them, but that already at the time of their production, there was a community to whom, and for whom, they spoke.

ENDNOTES

1 *La mode rétro* is discussed by Margaret Atack. Literature and the French Resistance (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp. 2-3. Alan Morris devotes an article to the phenomenon in "Attacks on the Gaullist 'Myth' in French Literature since 1969", The Second World War in Literature (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Academic Press, 1986), Ian Higgins, ed., pp. 71-83. According to Morris, the Resistance became equated with Gaullism, and any criticism of Resistance mythology, when deGaulle was reelected in 1959, could be considered unpatriotic, even punishable (p.74). In 1969, however, after de Gaulle's death demythification became fashionable for a new generation which sought a newly-written heritage. Morris (p. 78) contends that this generation may have been the offspring of collaborators. I would think that this situation may have involved, given the historical events of 1968, a critique of the claim by the Communist Party to a central role in the Resistance. The trend is considered to have arrived with Marcel Ophuls' film, La Chagrin et la pitié (1970), which exposed an embarrassing extent of, and lack of remorse for, collaboration among the citizenry of France.

2 The works referred to are: Margaret Atack, Literature and the French Resistance; J.H. King, "Language and Silence: Some Aspects of Writing and the French Resistance" European Studies Review, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1972, pp. 227-238; John Flower and Ray Davison, "France", The Second World War in Fiction, Holger Klein, ed. (London and Basingstoke: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1984), pp. 47-87; Ian Higgins, Anthology of Second World War French Poetry (London: Methuen Educational Ltd., 1982), Ian Higgins, "France, Soil, and Language: Some Resistance Poems by Luc Bérimont and Jean Marcenac"; in Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture and Ideology, H.R. Kedward and Roger Austin, eds. (Totawa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1985), pp. 206-221; Ian Higgins, "Tradition and Myth in French Resistance Poetry: Reaction or Subversion?", The Second World War in Literature, Higgins, ed. (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Academic Press, 1986), pp. 45-58. There are several books and articles by H.R. Kedward which I found valuable: Occupied France: 1940-1944, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1988); "Behind the Polemics: French Communists and the Resistance", Resistance in Europe: 1939-1945, S. Hawes and R. White, eds. (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1975), pp. 92-116; Resistance in Vichy France (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); "Patriots and Patriotism in Vichy France", in Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 12 September, 1981, pp. 175-192; "Charles Maurras and the True France", in Ideas into Politics: Aspects of European History 1880-1950, R.J. Bullen, H. Pogge Von Strandmann, A.B. Polonsky, eds. (Totawa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1984); "The Maquis and the Culture of the Outlaw (With Particular Reference to the Cevennes)", in Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture and Ideology, pp. 232-251. Kedward also provides a most informative introduction to this latter book, which compiles papers from a conference held in Sussex in 1984 on the subject.

It is interesting, although perhaps not surprising, to note that this third approach, which investigates the culture and ideology of the Resistance, (providing, in a sense, a middle ground between the traditional myths of the Resistance and those of *la mode rétro*), comes not from France but from English and Scottish scholars. Disinterested in the sense of having no personal stake in French national history, these writers reconstruct the criticality of the culture of the period. There is, however, a political basis to these works. An

example of the differences between *la mode rétro* and this mode of analysis can be seen in the interpretations of 'ambiguities'. *La mode rétro*, according to Morris, in "Attacks on the Gaullist 'Myth' in French Literature since 1969" (pp.78-79), emphasizes chance over choice. That is, French citizens ending up on one side might just as easily have taken the other position. Louis Malle's 1974 film, Lacombe Lucien, is taken, by those who subscribe to *la mode rétro*, to provide an example of the passivity of the individual -- only an accident of fate causes Lucien to become a *gestapiste*. Kedward, however, in his introduction to Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture and Ideology, p. 9, maintains that ". . . no one should confuse the study of ambiguity with the study of chance", arguing that reviewers of Malle's film failed to recognize the decision-making process into which, he contends, the protagonist Lucien entered.

3 Jean-Paul Sartre, What is Literature? (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), trans. Bernard Frechtman, p. 72. Atack, in Literature and the French Resistance, (p.5), notes that the writers claim to having been *combattants* in the war is supported by the Royal Air Force's having dropped over France leaflets of such literature as Paul Eluard's poem, "Liberté".

4 Dorléac, Histoire de l'art: Paris 1940-1944, p. 200.

5 Flower and Davison, "France", p. 50, quote Pierre Seghers from La Résistance et ses poètes, 1 France 1940-1944 (Nerviers, 1978), p. 295. Seghers edited a poetry journal, Poésie casqué, in 1939. A friend of Dubuffet and poet Louis Aragon, he moved to Villeneuve-sur-Avignon during the war, where he continued to publish the journal annually, in secrecy. Such commentary is included here because I believe that it bears repeating that while few were exempt from possible persecution during the war, France's intellectuals were especially targeted, resulting in many famous 'martyrs', some of them close to the actors featured in this thesis. Also, since dealing with artistic representations of events involves points of view rather than historical 'fact', the kind of emotion expressed in such statements as Seghers' have direct bearing upon the cultural products of the period, both in their production and their reception.

6 Dorléac, Histoire de l'art: Paris 1940-1944, p. 7.

7 Many aesthetic viewpoints had been expressed in the 'Querelle du réalisme' debates. See Serge Fauchereau, La Querelle du réalisme (Paris: Editions Cercle d'Art, 1987).

8 See, for example, Pierre Seghers, L'Homme du commun ou Jean Dubuffet (Paris: Editions Poésie, 1944), and also Louis Parrot, Jean Dubuffet (Galérie Drouin, Pierre Seghers Editeur, Paris: 1944).

9 Atack, Literature and the French Resistance, pp. 5-6.

10 Ibid., p. 7.

11 Ibid., p. 3. It is somewhat paradoxical, even ironic, that studying ambiguities increases the breadth of 'resistant' works, thereby attesting to a greater amount of resistant cultural activity than had previously been given in either Gaullist or Communist accounts.

12 *La mode rétro*, as is exemplified in Pierre Daninos', La Composition d'histoire (Julliard, 1979), contends that it was the Allies that won liberation for France, and that the Resistance was a small group. (See Morris, "Attacks on the Gaullist Myth in French Literature since 1969," pp. 77-78.) Given the more balanced view of the sources I have previously cited, the pendulum (it seems to me) can be seen to have swung back to the extent of giving some credit to the activities of the internal Resistance.

13 Kedward, Resistance in Vichy France, p. 186.

14 Ibid., p. 247.

15 Cited by Atack, Literature and the French Resistance, p. 139. She notes that this manifesto was written in 1930's vocabulary, recalling the Communist Party's *main tendue* policy (to embrace all classes, all parties), as the manifesto also included the following: "We hold out the hand of friendship to all French people of good will." (p. 37).

16 Ibid., p. 4.

17 Ibid., p. 137.

18 The phrase, 'common man', was attributed by Pierre Seghers in 1944 in L'Homme du commun ou Jean Dubuffet, to Dubuffet himself and to his subjects.

19 Atack, Literature and the French Resistance, p. 57. Even when present in the narrative, the German soldier, for example, is not always caricatured as evil incarnate but, as in Vercors' La Silence de la mer (1942) or Edith Thomas' Le Tilleul (1943), is presented as an 'ordinary' human being. The reader then, is cautioned to look beyond surfaces, beyond individual characters, to apprehend the insidiousness of fascist 'inhumanity'.

20 Charles Maurras, the anti-Dreyfusard writer of the late 19th century, had finally found his niche in Vichy France, as philosopher-advisor to Pétain. His impact is best discussed by Kedward, "Charles Maurras and the True France".

21 The encompassing by Vichy of aspects of Popular Front ideology is discussed by Kedward and Dorléac, and also by Julian Jackson, The Popular Front in France, defending democracy, 1934-38 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Jackson provides a thorough account of the cultural activities of the Popular Front period, and states on page 137 that ". . . some of the themes of the Popular Front were to recur hauntingly in the France of Vichy: the obsession with the young . . ., the celebration of the countryside and of folklore, and, indeed, the search for moral unity."

Gaston Bergery, Radical minister in the Popular Front, came to Vichy as an advisor to the government, perhaps contributing in some part to such similar tendencies.

22 Kedward, introduction to Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture and Ideology, p. 6. Dorléac discusses such 'returns', so prevalent in the art of the period; "Retour au Beau Métier", "Retour à l'humain -- retour au réel", "L'Eternel retour à la Tradition", are some section titles, in Histoire de l'Art: Paris 1940-1944.

23 See Herbert R. Lottman, The Left Bank: Writers, Artists and Politics from the Popular

Front to the Cold War (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1982), p. 59. The Congress, now famous for its exclusion of André Breton, and the subsequent suicide of Surrealist René Crevel on the night of the first meeting, was Communist Party-organized, and included such German emigrés as Anna Seghers and Bertolt Brecht, as well as E.M. Forster, Huxley, and Strachey from Britain; Gorki and Tolstoy; and also involved non-Communists such as Jean Guéhenno (editor of the periodical Europe) and Jean Paulhan (editor of Nouvelle revue française). Poets Louis Aragon and Tristan Tzara attended, as did André Malraux and André Gide. Lottman discusses the Congress and its participants, pp. 83-98.

24 Ibid, p. 60.

25 The dating of the beginning of this perceived threat to culture is not precise, and there are early examples of efforts to retain some potential for the 'modern' in art. For example, a group of painters, under the name Abstraction-création was formed in 1931, and upheld the banner of non-figuration against a generalized 'call to order' in the art world. Certainly, the battle was on with Hitler's assumption of Chancellor of the Reich in 1933, and the consequent banning of certain artworks; and in France, the fascist riots of February 4, 1934 brought the conflict home. According to Jackson, The Popular Front in France, defending democracy, p. 128, "for painters [André] Lhote and [Edouard] Goerg return to social realism was not only desirable but inevitable: it was impossible to paint in the same way before 6 February and after." The confusion around art of this period, the desire to be 'revolutionary', and yet make some sense of the chaos facing art in the 1930's, is evidenced in the occasion of many debates, the most famous of which was the debate of 1936 now known as the 'Querelle du réalisme' (The Problem of Realism), sponsored by the Maisons de la culture and which drew such participants as Léger, Lurçat, Aragon, Ozenfant, and Max Ernst.

26 Fauchereau, La Querelle du réalisme (Paris: Editions Cercle d'Art, 1987), pp. 21-22. The struggle with the anxiety of the period provided the impetus for the organization of the debates, which were concerned with such issues as a definition of 'realism', murality and monumentality, abstraction, and the limits and possibilities of Cubism and Surrealism. No single means nor subject was successfully promoted (nor one 'realism' satisfactorily defined), but the overall concerns of the painters were the same: how to maintain the liberty to paint as one wished, yet still preserve a link with as large a public as possible. And in doing so, each would share in the larger struggle against fascism.

27 Jackson, The Popular Front in France, defending democracy 1934-38, pp. 130-131, discusses the programme of the Exposition, as a 'breaking down of the barriers', and describes the aim of Popular Front art as seeking ". . . to break down the barriers between people and culture, between different forms of cultural expression between audience and performer, between creator and cultural consumer, between past and present, between science and art. This aspiration could lead in contradictory directions -- embracing the avant-garde or reaffirming cultural values. But these were not perceived as contradictions precisely because the Popular Front's cultural eclecticism, its defence of the widest possible cultural front, allowed cultural diversity . . .".

28 J.H. King, "Language and Silence: Some Aspects of Writing and French Resistance", p. 232.

29 Atack, "Literature and the French Resistance", pp. 85-87. Atack claims that the terms *Esprit* and *esprit français*, were used interchangeably, "in the same way that Germany or Nazism [in persuasive writings] are synonymous with barbarism." (p. 86) To defend Western civilization was to attack German claims to do the same, as invoked especially in the Nazi crusade against Bolshevism (p. 87). Moreover, the attack on the resistance group around the Musée de l'homme (whose magazine Résistance included writings by Jean Paulhan and Jean Cassou, and which resulted in the arrest and execution of Jacques Décour, writer and teacher of German literature) was taken to be an assault on humanity and culture. As Roland Penrose wrote in In the Service of the People (London: 1945), ". . . this museum at once became a centre of resistance; a symbol of something that the Germans could not conquer because it was something that they could never understand." (Quoted by Atack, p. 86)

30 Atack, Literature and the French Resistance, p. 88.

31 Ibid., p. 35.

32 Ian Higgins, "Tradition and Myth in French Resistance Poetry: Reaction or Subversion?", p. 51. This article's subject is the investigation of some of Surrealist poet Benjamin Péret's criticism of the engaged poetry of the period. Higgins analyzes such concepts of *patrie* and *nation* within Resistance poetry. In another article, "France, Soil, and Language: Some Resistance Poems by Luc Bérimont and Jean Marcenac" (pp. 218-219), Higgins develops the notion of 'France' as it arises in some of the poetry, contending that, in the poems, "Humanity is not a total of people, nor France a total of land", it is rather a 'nest of relations', and that the poems "manifestly embody an ideal, 'mythical' France which is not that of Vichy. In this each is fundamentally a negation of the given . . . with the country never more divided, these poems are themselves the *domaine française* which the Maquis protect with guns."

33 Higgins, "Tradition and Myth in French Resistance Poetry: Reaction or Subversion?", p. 55. Higgins finds this use of tradition in the poems of Aragon, Seghers, Pierre Emmanuel, and Robert Desnos, poets whose work was quite different, and who made use of traditions (such as the alexandrine) in differing ways.

34 Les Problèmes de la peinture (Editions Confluences, 1945), n.p. It is worth noting some of the rest of the foreword: "Some comrades recounted that Jean Prévost, in the last days of his life, leading his men into the battle of Vercors, recited some verse. O poets of France, so often associated with its martyrdom! Yes, Art, by its existence alone, was moreover a challenge to the new 'Civilization' that they intended to impose on us." Concepts such as *L'Homme*, tradition, France, unity, inner freedom, the defence of culture, form a thematic thread throughout the collection. "Humanité de la peinture" and "L'Art de la collectivité" (Diehl); "Pour une peinture indépendante" (Hippolyte Tavernier); "De l'universalité de la peinture française" (Charles Fegdal). It should be noted that the 'tradition' which is discussed includes such forms as Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, and Surrealism, and others which were excluded from the Nazi 'new order'.

The journal, Confluences, began publication openly in Lyon in 1941, under the direction of Rene Tavernier. Vichy suspended its publication in July 1942 for two months for its inclusion of "Nymphée", a poem by Aragon. In the same issue appeared the writings of two Jews, Gertrude Stein and Max Jacob. In a later issue, a satirical review of the poetry of

fascist writer Robert Brasillach caused Vichy to put the magazine under 'reinforced control'. A Parisian paper wrote that, ". . . the literary magazines of the southern zone have always manifested, more or less slyly, the greatest tenderness for the defunct Third Republic, its Jews, pederasts, and Freemasons. Among these magazines, Confluences . . . has always distinguished itself by its zeal in opposing new ideas . . . A writer is interned? At once his name appears in the table of contents of the next issue of Confluences." (Quoted Lottman, The Left Bank, p. 209)

Les Problèmes de la peinture was intended for publication in June 1944; the submissions were written during the Occupation.

35 Cited by Berthold Hinz, Art in the Third Reich, p. 37.

36 J.H. King, "Language and Silence: Some Aspects of Writing and French Resistance", p. 233. King contends that while writing may have been a luxury, because of lack of paper and other shortages it also became a necessity.

37 Dorléac, Histoire de l'Art, Paris 1940-1944, p. 97. This distinction between the 'easily read' and the more 'coded' is an important one, as the former was seen to have a parallel in propaganda.

38 Ibid., p. 38.

39 Ibid., p. 113. The works she refers to here, produced during the war, are Kandinsky's Tensions, Fautrier's Otages, Gruber's Hommage à Jacques Callot, Fougeron's Rue de Paris 1943, and Dubuffet's Le Métro.

40 The Speeches of Adolf Hitler (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), vol.1, pp. 577-578.

41 Ibid., p. 590.

42 In "Portraits avant décès", Comoedia, 5 September, 1942, Vlaminck wrote of Surrealism: "Sexual visions plunge him into a morbid state wherein the intellectual onanism and pederasty in the making of these monsters collect the specialists of mental illness and inverted amateurs." (Cited by Dorléac, Histoire de l'Art: Paris 1940-1944, p. 146.)

43 Dorléac, Histoire de l'Art: Paris 1940-1944, p. 145.

44 This appeared in the February 1941 issue, cited by Atack, Literature and the French Resistance, p. 21.

45 Higgins, "Tradition and Myth in French Resistance Poetry", p. 49. He uses the phrase "voice of destruction" as it appears in Emmanuel's Combat avec tes défenseurs (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1969). Already a cliché then, it was the title of a 1940 book on German propaganda by Hermann Rauschning, The Voice of Destruction (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1940). Higgins here is obviously taking up the voice of the poet.

46 Higgins, "Tradition and Myth in French Resistance Poetry," p. 49.

47 Atack, Literature and the French Resistance, p. 21.

48 J.H. King, "Language and Silence: Some Aspects of Writing and French Resistance", p. 236. Guéhénno, who was imprisoned during the war, later wrote "Dans la prison", in La patrie se fait tous les jours, 1 France 1939-1945, Jean Paulhan and Dominique Audry, eds. (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1947). This quote is from p. 236.

49 Higgins, "Tradition and Myth in French Resistance Poetry", p. 56.

50 J.H. King, "Language and Silence: Some Aspects of Writing and French Resistance", p. 237, p. 227.

51 Ibid., p. 238.

52 Higgins, "Tradition and Myth in French Resistance Poetry", p. 56. Republican patriotism was equated with universal humanism throughout resistant writings.

53 Lurçat included poetry by such writers as Jean Marcenac, Tristan Tzara, Paul Eluard, Louis Aragon, and Pierre Seghers. See Claude Roy, Jean Lurçat (Génève: Editions Pierre Cailler, 1956), p. 116.

54 See Kedward, "The Maquis and the Culture of the Outlaw", pp. 232-251.

55 Ibid., p. 248. Kedward's concern here is for the Maquis, but he contends that this culture was extended to a larger population by November 1942, when the mood of Vichy switched from optimism to the pessimism of the 'shield' philosophy, and there were not enough Jews and foreigners to use as barter, hence the pool of potential hostages needed to be increased. Similarly, there were not enough young men willing to go to Germany to work, and criteria for this forced labour programme was extended to include married men, students, and agricultural workers. This incursion into the general population forced much resistance (p. 240). Meanwhile, the *réfractaires* (those who refused to go to Germany) were caricatured as bandits, and many formed the Maquis, the armed resistance which had not existed before the labour programme. These young men, their families, local curés, pasteurs, and teachers supported the Maquis position, thus evolving a greater tolerance, in many regions, for those people and acts which stood outside the law.

56 Ibid., p. 244.

57 Ibid.

58 At first Pétain was seen as the 'first patriot'. However, as Kedward notes, in the introduction to Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture and Ideology, p. 3, after the collapse of the shield policy in 1942 and with the invasion of the southern zone, patriotism came to be seen as the sole possession of the Resistance. For Maurras' construction of the 'real country', which excluded Jews, Freemasons, Protestants, revolutionaries, socialists, anarchist, and *laissez-faire* liberals, see Kedward, "Charles Maurras and the True France", p. 121. Kedward explains that Maurras' concept of 'True France' was a nation "composed of classical elements: absolute monarchy, a permanent hierarchy, ancient provincial liberties

and rural values, classical culture and the humanism of the Renaissance" (p. 121).

59 This radio report is cited in part by Herbert Lottman, The Left Bank, p. 204, and by Dorléac, Histoire de l'Art: Paris 1940-1944, p. 105. Cassou is a pivotal figure in the Resistance, both for his writing and his activism. He was arrested and imprisoned in December 1941, for his association with the Musée de l'homme group. While in prison, he wrote 33 sonnets composés en secret under the pseudonym Jean Noir. Upon his release, he moved to Toulouse where he organized the Resistance group Libérer and fédérer, and soon became de Gaulle's Commissioner of the Republic for the region. Wounded in Toulouse during the liberation of that town, he was rewarded for his contributions with the directorship of the Musée d'Art Moderne.

60 Dorléac, Histoire de l'Art: Paris 1940-1944, p. 105, gives some examples of official discourse: "'art judéo-maçonnique', 'art bolschévique', sustained by a 'judéo-américaine' clientele, accused simultaneously of being foreign, Jewish, Freemason or communist."

61 Cassou, from La mémoire courte (Editions de Minuit, 1953), pp. 53-55, cited by Kedward, Resistance in Vichy France, p. 76.

62 See Mary Ann Caws, The Poetry of Dada and Surrealism: Aragon, Breton, Tzara, Eluard, and Desnos (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), for a discussion of Eluard's 'wall' imagery. Caws notes, p. 161, "Eluard's most despairing poems are haunted by the spectacles of walls closing in to shut off liberty and light; and with them the sense of man's individual significance." She quotes from a wartime poem, "Mourir": "Walls exist for me alone . . . Between the walls the shadow is complete/And I go down into my mirror/Like a dead man into his open tomb." While, she says, during the war "the sensation of darkness and separation are to be expected, . . . walls and shadows haunt all his poetry . . ." (p. 162)

63 Léger, "The Wall, the Architect, the Painter", Functions of Painting (New York: the Viking Press, 1965. First published in 1933.) p. 94.

64 Léger, "Mural Painting and Easel Painting", Functions of Painting, p. 161.

65 Léger, "The Wall, the Architect, the Painter", p. 95.

66 Dorléac, Histoire de l'Art: Paris 1940-1944, p. 31.

67 That is, of course, unless one wished to collaborate in the Vichy regime's glorification project. I do not, however, wish to overgeneralize here, for as Dorléac, Histoire de l'Art: Paris 1940-1944 makes clear, exhibitions were held during the war, in small locations, or in such small galleries as those of Jeanne Bucher or Louis Carré. However, such exhibitions were few and small, and always suffered the risk of censure, or worse -- having the pieces destroyed. Some artists involved in the public art discussions of the 1930's were Georg, Lhote, Gromaire, Humblot, Taslitsky, Bissière and Gischia, as well as Lurçat and Léger.

68 These examples are all taken from the catalogue Aftermath: France 1945-54 (Paris: L'Association française d'action artistique, Barbican Centre for Arts and Conferences, March 3 - June 13, 1982). For Brassai, see pp. 87-88, Boris Taslitsky, pp. 70-71, Jean-Michel

Atlan, pp. 83-84, and Hans Bellmer, pp. 125-126.

69 Claude Roy, Jean Lurçat, p. 18. This concern for reconciliation of the exterior and interior worlds, a kind of cathartic reassertion of the hegemony of the interior world (or a balance, at least, between the two) as it occurs in the poetry of Eluard, is discussed by Caws, The Poetry of Dada and Surrealism, p. 141. She notes that in a 1934 essay on Max Ernst (reprinted in Beyond Painting, New York: Wittenborn, 1948), "Eluard describes the inseparable nature of the exterior and interior, of 'matter, movement, need, desire'. There is no distance between man and the objects of his vision, and ideally none between things actual and imagined, the concrete and the abstract: they are in fact identified with each other." This will become apparent in the ensuing discussion in Chapter 2 of Eluard's poem "Liberté", and it is also part of the meaning of the *chosiste* poetry of Francis Ponge. Ponge's version of the relationship between this world and one more abstract is seen in his poetry both before and after the war. However during the war, when some abstract concepts were highly-charged and encoded within material images, the phenomenon obviously became more 'political'. For example, Ian Higgins, in discussing Ponge's poetry (Anthology of Second World War Poetry, London: Methuen Educational Ltd., 1982, p. 221), asserts that the image of a plane tree stands for Provence and the Mediterranean (a race which the Nazis found inferior) and the plane tree becomes a symbol of the pride and permanence of the south of France. ("Le platane" is subtitled "ou la permanence"). Ponge, despite his leftist politics, is not generally considered a 'resistance' poet, and it is through analyses such as Higgins' that one can understand the significance of such works at the time of their production. Ponge's 'matterism' is paralleled in Dubuffet's 1945 works, Les Murs, and the illustrations Dubuffet did for Ponge's Matière et mémoire.

70 Raymond Gid, "Vingt ans d'affiches et de livres", Paris-Paris 1937-1957 (Centre Georges Pompidou, 1981, pp. 454-467), p. 454.

71 This is Dorléac's term, in Histoire de l'Art: Paris 1940-1944, p. 87, so-called after the first V's appeared in the city of Paris.

72 Henri Michel, Paris Résistant (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1982), p. 42. This 'war', he suggests, began in July 1940 with the first arrest of youths vandalizing posters.

Chapter 2

Jean Lurçat and the Defence of French Culture

Programmatic reclamation of French history and tradition began in the mid-1930's and henceforward, throughout the Popular Front's governing years, would dominate its cultural politics. Rather than encourage new forms of art, Popular Front support was directed toward dispersing traditional culture. The programme had an eclectic base, and embraced a range of heritages, from Christian cathedrals to Dordogne cave paintings to provincial folklore. This concern with tradition was part of an overweening effort to 'break down the barriers' between art and the masses, and was tied to an effort to educate the public about art.¹ This relationship between culture and politics, as Julian Jackson has noted in The Popular Front in France, defending democracy, was one largely forged by the Communist Party.² The Popular Front's cultural eclecticism was embraced by most leftist artists. Seemingly, only the October Group and the Surrealists could not accommodate themselves to the programme, differing over such issues as the burgeoning nationalism in cultural policy. For example, Jacques Prévert, member of the October Group which dissolved in 1936, expressed his dissatisfaction with the nascent nationalism which focused on traditional heritage: "I gave up . . . when in working-class circles it became good form to replace the Internationale with the Marseillaise."³

The interest in French culture found an apogee in the 1937 World Exposition, in the retrospective of the history of French art. This exhibition coincided in 1937 with the Nazi 'degenerate art' exhibits in Germany, and underscored the significance of art to political struggle. Moreover, that year Hitler had intended to erect a display in Munich entitled A Thousand Years of German Art. He chose instead to concentrate on contemporary art, to better affect current art practice.⁴ That display of contemporary art opened the new House of German Art in Munich, near the gallery in the Hofgarten arcades which displayed the 'degenerates'. Hitler had placed the artistic realm at the forefront of his battle for political power, seeking to eradicate modern art altogether, and hence to link official German art of the 1930's directly to academic art of the 19th century. A desire to wipe out troublesome

periods of history and their problematic cultural products was indicated by this move; thus, it is no accident that it was in those gaps of history that the French left found its own moments of glory. This attack on art is perhaps best remembered for the actual enactment of the policy -- the confiscations of artworks from German galleries by the Reich Chamber of Culture, from 1936-37.⁵

In France, in November 1938, the Popular Front was defeated. As Jackson has noted in his study of the period, this political change made the use of the past, of tradition and of culture even more important. He states that:

. . . the Communists' obsession with history became increasingly frenetic, culminating in the campaign for the celebration of the revolution, which dominated the party's activity in 1938 and 1939 . . . By 1939, these were the tactics of desperation -- an attempt to retrieve through history the consensus that had been lost in politics.⁶

The new Radical government, however anti-Communist, did not abandon the promotion of French culture, buoyed no doubt by a certain patriotism in the face of mounting tensions in Europe. Hence the Ministry of Education continued to fund some of the projects begun by the former administration. State support of the reanimation of the weaving workshops such as Aubusson under the supervision of Jean Lurçat and Marcel Gromaire, initiated in the mid-30's, was one of these. In 1939, these artists were asked to study the reestablishment of that tapestry industry.⁷

These tapestry looms of Aubusson, Beauvais, Tabard, and Gobelins had been idle since the 19th century. However, now that unemployment plagued France, reactivation of the tapestry industry simultaneously offered a way of providing jobs for unemployed weavers, and through state commissions a means of dispersing art 'to the people'. Thereafter throughout the war, a revival of this oldest, quintessentially French art flourished, and it was from tapestry's earliest form, the medieval works, that Lurçat and Gromaire took their direction.

Adopted as part of an oppositional vocabulary, a new medievalism developed during the war -- and was by no means restricted to the tapestry endeavour. For example, a reference to the medieval was developed by the group, Jeunes peintres, whose paintings

took, among other medieval aspects, the blocks of colour of stained glass windows.⁸ Resistance poets, too, assumed a medievalist reference in their work; Louis Aragon is perhaps the best known of this group. Specific aspects of medievalism, in particular, the Catholic and monarchical associations of the period were ignored as there were other aspects of medieval life that could stand in opposition to present realities. To revive the medieval was not only a way to recall a period of French glory. To be sure, this was an effective part of such a revival, but it also served another function. This construction of the medieval operated as a counterfoil to the Nazi resurrection of the classical/ Renaissance/ neo-classical periods, with their supposed monopoly on reason as a period trait. This medievalism was also set up against the promotion, through fascism, of the racial superiority of the Aryan race. Surrealist poet Louis Aragon, for example, in pursuing his interest in the theme of nationhood during the war, found a viable source in the late medieval era of Provençal France. In the twelfth century, not only did the south of France have a written culture which flourished in Provence, and served to set it apart from that which was constructed as the 'savage' but, according to M. Adereth, in Aragon: The Resistance Poems, the idea of nation was rising in the peasantry, not the feudal lords.⁹ Thus for the French left, the Middle Ages could represent a past free of fascist appropriation. Precapitalistic, preindividualistic, the Middle Ages could be poetic rather than rational, tolerant instead of ordered, communal rather than hierarchical. Its 'character' was viewed as imaginative, not literal, spiritual and fanciful rather than physical, and as subtle and persuasive rather than overwhelming. These associations had a compelling currency in the 1930's. After all, 'progress' and 'reason' seemed to have led western civilization to the brink of war, leading the world into regression, and irrationality.¹⁰

The tapestry revival, then, during the last years of the 1930's and into the war, offered a means of uniting radical opposition to fascism with a French tradition, one that could be appropriated for leftist ends. Oppositional art during the war took a stand not only against Nazi imagery, but the art promoted by Vichy as well. In the southern,

unoccupied zone, there existed a veritable cult of Pétain, who was seen as a saviour or father figure. This sentiment was accompanied by a nostalgic attachment to the countryside, which was represented as a timeless, untroubled landscape. The result was a plethora of posters and glorifying portraits of Pétain [Figure 1]. These presented the Maréchal as a military hero, or a kindly grandfather, or standing rooted in a rural landscape, sometimes in the tradition of the 19th century print, the *image d'Epinal*. Such imagery was used for crafts as well, and tapestries were woven to honour Pétain.¹¹ As Dorléac has noted of the Occupation period, "Effigies of Pétain appeared everywhere and bore such slogans as: France is a Great Lady; All the Nation Wants Peace."¹² [See Figure 2] Jean Texcier, a resistance writer, on a visit to Vichy noted the ubiquitous imagery of Pétain and compared the southern capital to Paris:

This comic opera capital is also the Holy City, with its Maréchal in flesh and blood, its Maréchal on prints, posters, postcards, calendars, pipes, paperweights and before long, no doubt, on cough lozenges. In Paris, one can never get away from the vision of our wounded and insulted country, every moment on the streets you can hear its tormentor's voice -- but Vichy is different. By listening hard, by watching closely, one can see that a subtle political game is going on.¹³

The style of this official Vichy art was untouched by the 'modern', and it did not subscribe to any period of splendour. Instead it was, and was intended to be, a timeless art of great simplicity and landscapes and portraits frequently resembled either folk art, academic work, or 'Sunday painting'. Vichy attempted above all, to revive the vocation of the artisan, to evoke a nostalgic return to a past when art was carefully, earnestly crafted. Maréchal Pétain made the programme clear in 1940, when he declared that "The France of tomorrow will restore the traditions which, in earlier times, made its fortune and glory. As a country of quality classicism, it would know how to give all its production this finish, this delicacy, this elegance -- of which it has no rival."¹⁴ In its pursuit of timelessness, elegance and simplicity, Vichy emphatically rejected other art forms. Like Germany, Vichy abhorred aspects of 'modern' art, which it viewed as overly complex, indulgent, or chaotic. The abstraction of a group such as the Jeunes peintres was anathemic to the Vichy regime: problematic, pretentious, decadent, self-indulgent. While the Jeunes peintres de tradition

française were also preoccupied with the relationship between the artist and nation, a concern dating from before the war until some years after its end, their art exhibited not serenity and elegance but what Dorléac terms an *inquiétante étrangeté*. Dorléac explains that instead of adopting the rational organization of the universe implied in classicism, the Jeunes peintres refused such order, preferring disequilibrium and arbitrary arrangements.¹⁵

In aiming to gain or keep the support of the citizens of the south, and believing in their own version of rural values, members of Vichy's government sought to appeal, in art, to a rural sensibility. Feeling a camaraderie with their hosts (the people of the south) and observing the rise of resistance among the peasantry, Lurçat and his fellow *tapissiers* also sought to convey rural associations in their tapestries. But they rejected Vichy's pastoral imagery and aimed at a greater level of intellectual engagement with the viewer. As this chapter will assert, Lurçat's works in particular integrated allegory, myth, legend, and ancient history with current events, social concerns, and values shared by both resistant intellectuals and other southern citizens, including peasants. This is an important aspect of Lurçat's art. Vichy's appeal to the peasantry had subsided; indeed, it may never have taken a firm hold to begin with. By 1942, as Alexander Werth, who spent the war years in France recalled, the cult and myth of Pétain had faded out, "with its tearful French glorification . . . and the rolling together of cows, pigs, trees, Joan of Arc, God, le Maréchal, and an expurgated Charles Péguy."¹⁶ In fact, oppositional strategy appealed to other historical precedents and deliberately reshaped traditional legends as part of its programme. Poet Louis Aragon wrote in 1942 of such tactics:

Puisque les peseurs d'or ont fermé leurs comptoirs
Et que toute grandeur a passé son chemin
Je te reprends Légende et j'en ferai
L'Histoire¹⁷

Within this context, the defiant appropriation of resistance poetry on Lurçat's tapestries served to affirm what was already considered to be resistant in the realm of the visual arts. So as well as the poetic analogy, the very means of production stood for opposition: the woven material itself (the choice of fabric), the physical dimensions, the cooperative association of artist and artisan, the revival of the medieval and the collusion theretofore of

myth and ancient and contemporary history.

The reestablishment of tapestry at the workshops of Beauvais, Gobelins, Tabard and Aubusson had been preceded by experiments in tapestry cartoons by artists such as Lurçat, Braque, Matisse, Dufy, Picasso, and Derain, in the early 1930's. These efforts were largely the result of the sponsorship of gallery director and collector, Mme. Cuttoli.¹⁸ Lurçat came to believe that most of these endeavours were only poorer copies of painting and, having rediscovered in 1938 France's oldest existing medieval tapestry, the Apocalypse d'Angers¹⁹, he felt that there was much to learn from the direct study of such ancient works. He wrote an article on the tapestry for a 1943 issue of Confluences, and based his view of tapestry production on such medieval works. Post-medieval tapestries, he believed, had lost through the use of fine threads and many colours, the simplicity and economy of means which distinguished the older works. He claimed that these later tapestries, particularly those designed by such painters as Boucher in the 18th century, had degenerated into pale imitations of painting. In turn, these "false pictures" by their silken elegance and frivolous subject matter had become mere decoration for the homes of the privileged and the courts of kings.²⁰

What emerged as the first objective for Lurçat and Gromaire's 1939 study of the tapestry industry was to find a kind of marriage of aesthetics and economics, to study materials and their costs. The second was to make tapestries more of a joint creation of weaver and artist, and less the assertion of the authority of the painter.²¹ The solution to the latter dilemma they found in the medieval process, wherein the weaver had been accorded a greater freedom of interpretation than in later tapestry production. Lurçat and Gromaire recreated this through a new method of instruction between designer and weaver: a cartoon coded by numbers for colours, which the weaver would interpret and 'fill in' when at work on the tapestry. In subsequent writings, Lurçat made much of the economic viability for tapestries,²² reviving the use of locally-produced vegetable dyes: madder from Carpentras, yellow weed from Normandy, woad from Albi. These then created a link with the very soil of France. The woven materials then, connected with the

natural world, and as a result of the study, in his own works Lurçat preferred the use of simple wool to sumptuous silks, and used a coarse warp. [See Figures 3, 5, 13-18.] He then wove these threads in a simple gros point, with fewer than five threads per centimetre. He relied on oppositions of few colours, one simple field of colour juxtaposed against another; this method gleaned from medieval tapestries. According to writer Pierre Hirsch, the opposition of masses and colour were to be read as opposition in general -- to the world of the here-and-now, but also against oppression.²³

The only depth created in these weavings was that of the sturdy wool surface, which asserted itself as robust, warm, and vibrant, with each thread casting a shadow. Tapestry, in medieval times, so Lurçat claimed, had all the simplicity and complexity of poetry, and French 'genius' then he considered to be more poetic than realistic. Medieval outlook, in his analysis, was taken to be deeply allegorical -- the earth, for example, was viewed as a mirror of heaven: everything on earth was imbued with special spiritual meaning. In this there seemed to exist a profound sense of nature and communion with powers and the elements: earth, air, fire, and water. This reference to the medieval Lurçat and Gromaire used to transform nature or landscape from pictures of pastoral scenes, to more complicated subjects. The four elements in, for example, Lurçat's la Terre of 1944 [Figure 17] and Gromaire's work of the same name in 1943, and also Marc St. Sâens' Le Feu of 1945, were revived to indicate the endurance of these basic entities throughout history.

Medieval craftsmen were often nomadic and, uprooted by war, formed independent companies as a result.²⁴ At the end of the fifteenth century, the Valois reestablished the capital in the Loire valley, and there in art sought to free themselves from adherence to Flemish dictates of realistic representations to instead develop their own, more lyrical, evocations of nature. The weavers studied flowers, for example, but then scattered them arbitrarily over the background.²⁵ This medieval departure from realism writer René Huyghe has described as ". . . no more imitating depth and perspective, where nature piles itself up into a thick microcosm", adding, "Tapestry remains a surface, an animation of a

surface. It only borrowed from nature since realism was there."²⁶ In Huyghe's view then, this kind of tapestry insists on being both nature and artifice: the Gothic is presented as positing a poetic solution, but unlike the *trompe l'oeil* of the 18th century, Huyghe sees the restricted number of tones in these medieval products acting as safeguard against confusion.²⁷ In medieval art, then, Lurçat found much to transform into the modern in response to the rise of fascism. Medieval tapestries were considered to hold no hierarchy of forms, since all the pictorial elements were equally significant. Medievalism such as Lurçat's harked back to a more harmonious time, a spiritual communion of people working together as a unit, and a time wherein people approached the world poetically rather than with strict rationality.

The medieval reference is apparent in Lurçat's Combat de coqs of 1939 [Figure 3]. The composition derives from a medieval tapestry, Unicorn in Captivity [Figure 4], from the series The Hunt of the Unicorn, from about 1500. The unicorn, a familiar icon for Christ, a symbol for courtly love, and a powerful, magical entity whose horn has the ability to purify, appears in an Edenic garden, the *hortus conclusus*.²⁸ The previous tapestry in the Hunt of the Unicorn series depicts the killing of the unicorn; the Unicorn in Captivity presents its rebirth.²⁹ Lurçat replaces the unicorn with three battling French cocks -- resplendent, but trapped. The entrapment is somewhat ambiguous: an escape is afforded by the open gate, of which the cocks appear unaware, and the fence appears as an optical illusion. The broken fence of the mythical garden could also indicate the possibility of an intrusion into paradise of outside, alien forces, while the cocks, proud and preoccupied, look the other way. Is the combat amongst each other, or a potentially losing battle against evil? Lurçat marshalled medieval allegory and myth to compose a language through which to speak of contemporary events.

Another tapestry of 1939, Le Poète³⁰ [Figure 5, and detail, Figure 6] exhibits the beginnings of what became Lurçat's vision of a universal Man, called up in response to the debasement, through fascism, of notions of common humanity. In Lurçat's piece, this vegetal, natural man, hairy, bearded, aged and with white hair, appears in a garden

surrounded with what appear to be either oak or holly leaves. Oak and holly were both venerated, tied to France's Celtic past, and were also sacred symbols in medieval art, associated with fertility.³¹ A dark shadow crosses the sun, and large black areas contrast with bright yellow spaces. The Man holds a fish and either a falcon or eagle, signifying his position as earth, joining sea and sky, balancing underworld and heaven. The eagle may here stand for the Nazi symbol, tamed and neutralized.

With this image of the Poet, Lurçat speaks here to Nazi ideology; the Man confronts the concept of 'man-superman' of fascist doctrine. Nazi ideology emphasized the cult of total man, *homo fascista*: connoting youth, the athletic, perfect physical specimen, and a virile elite or leader, suggesting aggression and force. Such ideology was succinctly conveyed by the stoic, cold, imposing marble neoclassical sculptures by Nazi artist Arno Breker³² [See Figures 7, 8, 9]. Lurçat's Man assaults this Nazi concept and its visual representations in every way, both in materials and image. Man, soft, aged, wise, in his garden home, contradicts the Volkisch doctrine of distance from nature and the material world. As well, Man here is the poet, whose power lies in the ability to recreate the world afresh, and who rescues language from its abuse in propaganda.

Lurçat also brings to bear upon tapestry another medieval mythical entity, the 'wild man' [Figures 10, 11]. As Timothy Husband has noted in a recent study, the wild man myth persisted for at least two centuries, from the 13th to the 15th. With supernatural powers, close to nature, and immune to civilization's evils, the wild man "was both antithesis and ideal, savage and sublime."³³ In carnivals and masquerades, the world turned upside down, he evolved as a critic of society's corruption. In Le Bal des ardents [Figure 12], a representation in a Book of Hours, the 'wild man dance' from the end of the 15th century provides an illustration of a common theme, one also produced in tapestry. At these dances, lords and ladies would masquerade as their social opposites.

The wild man, associated with nature and unbounded fertility, was the outcast 'man of the woods'. In one form he was the 'green man', or green knight, and leafy rather than hairy, he was the personification of spring.³⁴ He was often portrayed in sculpture as

covered with foliage. This allusion to leafy sculpture, in Le Poète, can be seen as confronting and defusing the power of Nazi statues, a regenerative verdant growth in opposition to frozen and academic classicism. Lurçat's Le Poète then, can be interpreted as a travesty of fascist ideology on many levels: the 'spirit of the team', the virile fascist elite, is contradicted by the collective, anti-authoritarian teamwork of tapestry production. And Nazi art, the geometric, absolute forms, the colossal architecture of the granite or marble tomb or monument, is confronted by huge elastic tapestries, of colourful, warm, woven, earthy materials, destined to blanket bare walls or open a window in a prison cell. While fascism relied on mass spectacle,³⁵ visual only, tapestry is appreciated by touch as well, living and sensual. Rigid control and total order are absent from this tapestry design as it posits a poetic vision of soft edges and haphazard details.

In 1940, Jean Lurçat produced the tapestry L'Hallali [Figure 13]. The poet's garden is snowed under, dark and silent. The Man is poised as if to flee, anxious and alert. France's occupation, the chaos of the *exode*, and the imposition of censorship inform this work. The years of the Armistice, 1940-1941, were years characterized by a silence which arose from the immediate response to the trauma of unexpected defeat. Stricken by the rapid defeat and consequent invasion of their country, 85% of the population welcomed the investiture of Maréchal Pétain as the new leader of the unoccupied zone, forming a unanimity of disparate groups and individuals cleaved together by fear, resignation, and fatalism. Five to ten million people fled the occupied zone, a shocking phenomenon of chaos and despair, a migration unknown since the Middle Ages. Lurçat described the event of the exodus of June, 1940, witnessed from his home in the south:

This pitiful wandering . . . almost submerged the movement. The looms stopped . . . Completely overwhelmed, we stood on the crossroads watching this human flood, this panic of men to save their wealth, this flood of mattresses, grandmothers, wireless sets . . .³⁶

To resist would have been futile, and the refugees thought only of survival and shelter. This surely was the topsy-turvy world: no belonging, no home, no routine. The exodus created a community of exiles. Jean-Paul Sartre spoke of the trauma:

Certain madmen, they say, are haunted by the feeling that a ghastly event has

turned their world upside down . . . At every moment we felt that a link with the past had been broken.³⁷

As H.R. Kedward has noted, paranoia was rampant on the road, with the fear that the Germans were right behind, superhumanly fast, and hiding in every cornfield.³⁸ The feelings of the exodus, the fear and bewilderment, the anger and bitterness toward the government of the Third Republic which had not protected them, set the stage for people's acceptance of Pétain's reassurances. Silence was one form of passive resistance to the regimes, particularly to the German presence. Indeed, as James King analyzes, "Language was the last line of defence for a defeated people."³⁹ In these early years, before the emergence of the clandestine press as a form of oppositional communication, language was not the active weapon it would become.

The tapestry, L'Hallali of 1940 [Figure 13] shows a frozen, paralytic winter, the silent night of Occupation. Man is the hunter or the hunted; 'l'hallali' is the rallying cry of the hunt. The appearance of three-headed hounds in medieval art generally signifies Cerebus, the three-headed dog who guards the gates of hell. The landscape of winter in medieval art was the depiction of life gone underground, as Christ himself entered a wintry hell before he rose in the spring.⁴⁰ In this tapestry, Lurçat evokes rebirth, as an open gate: will Man hear the call of the hunt? Which way will he turn?

The image evokes the exodus of 1940 which had caused swelling populations in the south of France, with many areas tripling their populations⁴¹, and with urban refugees now dependent upon the peasantry for survival. The countryside, for those whom modernity had failed, meant comfort and safety. In particular, as H.R. Kedward has argued, the language expressive of traditional provincial values held special meaning.

The 40 million French people, if affected by anything, were moved by the language and imagery which expressed hopes of basic survival, words which were felt to be good, simple, warm, and protective: mère, famille, enfant, père, nourriture, courage, honneur, joie, esprit, fraternité, relèvement, renaissance, amour, paysans, la France éternelle.⁴²

Kedward has convincingly demonstrated that Pétain monopolized the comforting words and values such as hearth, village, community, and safety, up until the end of 1941. At that time a growing resistance movement sought to challenge this monopoly. Thus, La France

libre's first issues, published in London, were filled with photographs of the French countryside:⁴³ the exile's vision concurred with that of the refugee. Resistance began with the struggle over words and consciousness as the imagery was transferred and realigned. Language became a permanent battlefield.

As part of a study of Resistance poetry in France, writer Ian Higgins has claimed that "the death-dealing abuse of language characterizes fascism; the life-giving use of language equals resistance to fascism." He adds that the use of language in Nazi propaganda, with its effect of a 'spring to attention', is antithetical to poetry, which is "supple, dynamic, creative."⁴⁴ In 1947, looking back at the motives for poetry-making, poet Pierre Emmanuel observed, "Ce régime ne pouvait vivre qu'en pervertissant les mots, mais qui blesse le langage, blesse l'homme."⁴⁵ This significance to what Surrealist writer Paul Eluard called life-giving words or words made flesh⁴⁶, was asserted in his own poem of 1942 for Gabriel Péri, one of the editors of L'Humanité, who had been tortured and executed by the Germans in October of 1941. Part of that poem reads:

Il y a des mots qui font vivre
Et ce sont des mots innocents
Le mot chaleur le mot confiance
Amour justice et le mot liberté
Le mot enfant et le mot gentillesse
Et certains noms de fleurs et certains noms de fruits

Le mot courage et le mot découvrir
Et le mot frère et le mot camarade
Et certains noms de femmes et d'amis
Ajoutons-y Péri.⁴⁷

Vichy's attempt to legitimize its domination of the values associated with the countryside came in large part from the ideas of Charles Maurras. Vichy's National Renovation of its first two years was largely created by Maurras, staunch upholder of French conservatism, entrenched in his beliefs for half a century.⁴⁸ A longtime opponent of the Third Republic, Maurras sought to link the 20th century with the *ancien régime* overthrown at the end of the 18th century. Thus, the Resistance needed not only to combat Maurras' concept of what he termed the *pays réel*, but also his slavish devotion to classicism. The response was to call up another period of French glory, the medieval, and

drive a wedge into the false national unity embraced by Pétain and Maurras.

When in the winter of 1940-1941 Pétain toured the provinces, local mayors and prefects revived local festivals and folklore.⁴⁹ But in October 1941, at the time of the hostage-taking of French citizens at Chateaubriant⁵⁰, Le Travailleur de Languedoc, a newspaper from the south, traditionally aligned with the oppositional left and not the forces of repressive order, claimed a different local history:

In a period which greatly resembles the one in which we live, in 1851 the Languedoc forcefully opposed the *coup d'état* of Napoléon-le-petit . . . the Commune and the Dreyfus affair reasserted the old fighting tradition, a flame never extinguished . . . and it was the people of Languedoc who passionately upheld the Spanish Republic.⁵¹

In the realm of culture, an Occitan revolt was taking place, and a group of Occitan poets rivalled the Felibrige, the literary movement begun in the 19th century, and promoted by Maurras to preserve the Occitan language.⁵² Also, by 1942 Occitan-speaking peasants joined or aided the Maquis, the early organized and armed resistants.⁵³ Rural support for resistance, according to H.R. Kedward, was consecrated by the tendency to draw from local histories, myths, or folklore. For example, this outlaw group, the Maquis, living literally in the open air in the hills, drew on precedents such as the Purs of the Cathars, or the 19th century Camisards.⁵⁴ Other localities remembered their own persecuted pasts: the predominantly Huguenot village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon secretly sheltered large numbers of Jews during the war.⁵⁵

Historical precedents for fighting oppression were upheld to validate illegal acts, committed now not by criminals, but by ordinary French citizens who made difficult moral choices. At first, then, such concepts as nation, unity, countryside, dignity were espoused by those in support of Pétain, but by 1942 allegiance in the south had swung to the Resistance, and as H.R. Kedward writes:

Maurras' real freedoms could have been written by any Maquisard, for while Vichy appropriated many of the words and sentiments which had traditionally been the property of the left, by 1944 the Resistance was referring to *libertés anciennes, le pays des ancêtres*, as if the concept of *le pays réel* had been invented by the Maquis and not the Nationalist Right.⁵⁶

Poetry and its historical tradition in the south served a role in this context. The

mode of writing under censorship created a role for poetry much as it was practised in the Middle Ages. Then, it was an oral tradition. During the war, this tradition was revived with a more public face, as poetry was recited, for example, around Maquis campfires. As well, the clandestine press, an active agent in the Resistance after 1942, produced handbills and poetry on small pieces of paper, much of which could be quickly memorized and concealed or destroyed. Ian Higgins has argued that the nature of poetry during wartime was necessarily altered: the shortage of paper and the threat of reprisal created a reliance on rhyme, especially old and familiar French forms, and a strict rationing of words, simple images for easy memorization. This rationing caused an increase in value for each word⁵⁷, making each the bearer of multiple meanings. The Occupation had changed the outside world to the extent that even the most everyday, taken-for-granted thing or situation could have a sinister side or, at least, could not be counted upon to be there tomorrow. A tree, for example, which might at one time have evoked images of sunlight, or a woman's hair, now might have execution notices pinned to it.⁵⁸ Even the most private feelings were turned public. Hence, the mission of the poet within this environment was to keep a sense of freedom alive by preserving *la vie intérieure*, to reveal the hidden emotional or abstract meanings in reality, often by defamiliarizing everyday objects to register them more intensely.

Poetry, as Higgins has noted, had traditionally been considered (among other forms of writing) to be by its very nature resistant. Protesting against accepted ways of looking at the world, it draws attention to its own process of expression. Poetry then could be seen as incompatible with propaganda -- *la fausse parole* -- which depended upon and reinforced linguistic clichés. In contrast, poetry could negate the world in its relation to language.⁵⁹ In terms of Resistance poetry, its distinguishing characteristic was its discreet use of language. This, in Higgins' analysis, was more true of the writing produced through legally-sanctioned channels which was known as *contrebande*, than of the militant poetry of the clandestine press which, being anonymous, could be more explicit.⁶⁰ Contraband poetry, he explains, "had two themes: one on the surface -- for example, love, nature God . . . and a

hidden one, which will be seen by those who have eyes to see."⁶¹ Such poetry was highly coded, packed tight with imagery and unexpected words or phrases which could trigger chains of associations. The phrase 'Octobre vert', for example, in Pierre Seghers' 1944 poem "Octobre 41", may seem at first a simple image of nature. But October would be red, not green: red like blood -- and green is the colour of the Nazi uniform. The poem referred, in fact, through this juxtaposition of words, to the hostage-taking at Chateaubriant in October 1941. Similarly, the river evoked in the first line of Bérumont's 1942 "Le Temps du beau plaisir" [Appendix A], could signify the Loire, reminiscent of castles or past glory. However, in wartime it also evoked Nantes on the Loire, the scene of a notorious execution of hostages. Indeed, reading of the poem depends upon knowing the circumstances of its publication by Resistant poets, les Amis de Rochefort, as Rochefort is on the Loire.⁶²

This kind of image-making is similar to Lurçat's, and his tapestry venture in the same years shares with such poetry the rationing of simple images, the exploration of *la vie intérieure*, and the attempt to make a public gesture, using old, familiar forms and symbols to convey contemporary meaning. Lurçat included in his tapestries poems by such Resistance writers, overtly linking the analogous means of expression and shared imagery, and also denoting the community and conspiracy of cultural resistant workers.⁶³ In making a traditional association which holds that as poetry is said to be passion, prose reason, Lurçat made the statement, "Where reason falters, isn't poetic fervour more capable of understanding the world, of interpreting it, expressing it, even as reason is?"⁶⁴

Some poetic themes link most directly with Lurçat's work; in particular those drawn from the surrealist poetry of Tristan Tzara, Luc Bérumont, and Louis Aragon who all continued to write during the war. While sharing the composite ideology of the Resistance, these and the other poets pursued their own styles and themes, and elements of this poetry can be seen to parallel Lurçat's subjects. Tristan Tzara, for example, through the 1930's wrote of the bounty and wisdom of the natural world in his poems of *plénitude*, wherein he described of the "slow consciousness of the plants and things", the "fire of the word sewn to the fruits of the world".⁶⁵ And Terre sur terre, written during wartime, begins with an

inventory of positive objects:

Voice le sable voici mon corps
Voici le marbre et le ruisseau⁶⁶

It ends with rebirth, crows replaced by images of sun, crystal, and flame, opening out from individual perception to a universal vision.⁶⁷ Rebirth, sun, flames, the creation of the 'marvellous' as the dream passes through everyday life,⁶⁸ are all elements in Lurçat's tapestries from 1942-1944. [See Figures 14-18.] Like Lurçat, Luc Bérinmont too wove themes of time and seasons, life and death, soil and France, and resurrection into his poems. Other allusions from his poem, "Le Temps du beau plaisir", were clear in 1942: 'dead', 'ocean of blood' were read as war and occupation. And 'stars', 'fire' were light, hope, purity, and dawn -- *le jour se lève*: renewal and liberation.⁶⁹

Aragon's imagery was drawn from history, nature, art, and everyday life. "The essential", he said, "is the mystery of the everyday."⁷⁰ In Aragon's work, contradictions too are essential aspects of life, to remain without pat resolution.⁷¹ Aragon's patriotic poetry relied on the distinction between nation and race, wherein a community was not viewed as based on blood (as contemporary German doctrine argued) but on shared language and culture.⁷² Blending medieval and modern history, Aragon used archaic forms, even ballads, as vehicles for modern. The past could be spoken about; it was the present which was the censored topic. Aragon used the medieval for its exaltation of heroism, reviving patriotic figures such as Percival-le-justicier, or Bertran de Born.⁷³ He thus established connections between the troubadours and the Resistance poets much as Lurçat looked back to the *beau metier* of the medieval *tapissier*. The troubadours were viewed as nomadic, 'men of the soil', lords of language. Troubadours were thought to uphold the concept of freedom of speech in more than one way. On the one hand, troubadours could sing to a woman while her husband listened (such were the deceptive lyrics). As well, in that medieval period France was divided in two, and the language of half of France and the troubadours -- the *langue d'oc* -- had been proscribed heretical by Pope Innocent IV.

In 1942, Aragon underscored the relationship between troubadours *chansons* and contemporary politics. He wrote, "Tous les Français ressemblent à Blondel",⁷⁴ evoking the

troubadour poet-companion to Richard Coeur-de-Lion, who rescued the king from prison, announcing the arrival of help by singing a ballad outside the prison window -- a ballad both he and the king knew. In his introduction to Jean Cassou's 33 Sonnets composés en prison, Aragon wrote:

Chansons de gestes came into being in the sanctuaries that mark the route of the pilgrimages along the roads of France. Today, however, the epic of France is being composed in other sanctuaries on the road to National Calvary. From the prisons there arises a new Song of Roland.⁷⁵

In his verse, Aragon's medieval adventures often involved references to tapestry. His poem of 1940 on the wartime exodus is entitled "Tapisserie de la Grande Peur", a title which also refers to the Revolution's peasant rebellion of July/August 1789 that followed the eradication of rural feudalism. Later, Lurçat created a tapestry which he called La Grande Peur, suggesting a parallel with both Aragon's verse and the revolutionary event. Another of Aragon's poems produced in 1943-44, "Six Tapisseries inachévées", evokes a link with Lurçat and holds up tapestry as a symbol of Resistance art.⁷⁶

Lurçat's tapestries of 1942-1944 signal a departure from his earlier works⁷⁷. A single overall image was rejected for a more abstract pattern, a condensation of individual, highly-charged elements, each resonating with meanings, often multiple, even contradictory, as are words in Resistance poetry. The images evoke the complex from the simple, the abstract from the concrete, and involve contrasts of colours, light and dark, sea and sky, water and fire, song and silence, bestial and human, nature and culture, life and death, night and dawn.

Libérte, produced in 1942 and nearly 9 square meters [Figure 14], is Lurçat's most famous Resistance tapestry. On the black circle is a skull: death; on the sun is a hand passing a torch. Wild foliage on one section is juxtaposed to an abstract floral pattern on another. The verses inscribed are from Paul Eluard's 22-verse poem, "Liberté":

Sur les formes scintillantes
Sur les cloches des couleurs
Sur la vérité physique
J'écris ton nom

Sur la mousse des nuages
Sur les sueurs de l'orage

Sur la pluie épaisse et fade
J'écris ton nom

Pour te connaître
Pour te nommer
Liberté⁷⁸

Eluard possesses the word *liberté* through the familiar use of *tu*, and such usage also invokes intimacy, and a suggestion of prayer. The abstract concept of liberty is inscribed on the most everyday objects or natural phenomena, "schoolboy notebooks", "wings of birds", to the progressively more abstract, multi-levelled, "on my reunited houses", the walls of my weariness", "on hope without memory".

Significantly, the word liberty is only written, unspoken until the very last line, a gesture of bravura and a rallying call. In his tapestry, Lurçat gives the word special predominance by juxtaposing it on the rising sun, a traditional French symbol (since the 19th century) of political opposition and regeneration.⁷⁹ He omitted some of the important words from the last stanza which, complete, reads:

Et par le pouvoir d'un mot
Je recommence ma vie
Je suis né pour te connaître
Pour te nommer
Liberté.

This deliberate omission creates a kind of censure, which forces the reader to actively participate, join together to fill in the rest of the well-known words, which contain the idea that the word had the power to create new life, and that one is born to possess liberty: it is an inalienable right, and moreover, a shared one. In Lurçat's tapestry, the border of sea creatures indicate the clandestine, secret life of the sea, and stars, light in the darkness. A sun, aflame, eclipses the dark circle, and the victorious Gallic cock crows the new morning, the dawn of renewal and liberation.

The 1942 tapestries, L'Apollinaire [Figure 15], and Es la verdad [Figure 16], include the same fragment of a poem by Guillaume Apollinaire [Appendix B]. A calligram, like a concrete poem, is in the shape of an object, thus making of words a visible, concrete reality. The lines on the tapestry read, 'Voici la maison où naissent les étoiles et les divinités' and the shape created is a house or castle. The calligram derives from the technique of

fragmentation and recombination, the interrelationships of the whole perceived globally and hence more powerfully.⁸⁰ This effort is much like the programme of Lurçat's later works: the viewer needs to fuse the elements into an overall statement, be it victory over alien evil, regeneration, or a new image of Man.

In L'Apollinaire, the fragment of the calligram rests to the left of a spray of foliage. In the whole original poem, entitled "Paysage" (Landscape), that position of the foliage belongs to the shape of a tree, formed by the words, "Cet arbriseau qui se prépare à fructifier te ressemble." Again, the reader is offered the opportunity of what was referred to in medieval times as *opera aperta*, the filling-in of the image. In this case, the familiar form for 'you', the *te* is a direct gesture, and the theme is, again, rebirth. A few of the many elements in L'Apollinaire are the inevitable sun and flames (dawn and purification), and these eclipse the horns of a bull. Division was a taboo theme during the Occupation, too evocative of a divided France.⁸¹ Not accidentally, L'Apollinaire has its own demarcation line; one half of is darkened with an ominous shadow, a snake, and bloodlike red flames. The shadow, a more geometric, manmade form, is balanced by the positive, natural foliage image on the right of the weaving. Within the sun are four parts: nature and the city on the light areas -- the alliance of town and country, nature and culture, provinces and Paris, peasant and poet. Lighting up the dark, black sections are a man and a rising sun on one side, and a lion (Christ, pride, dignity, Richard Coeur-de-Lion) on the other. On medieval tapestries, the lion provided a resurrection motif.⁸²

The title, Es la verdad -- it is the truth -- firstoff makes immediate reference to Spain. It may also indicate the difficulty, at times, of speaking the 'truth' in one's own language. Here the truth is the unending cycle of the seasons, of life and death, of the link between nature and humanity -- the man and woman depicted form a living river. Herein, as with Lurçat's earlier tapestries, are symbols of the elements: earth, air, fire, and water. Water and fire are apparent opposites, but as Lurçat commented later, "Man lives by paradoxes and contradictions which are finally resolved. The water that quenches the flame that consumes, and seeds the world . . ." ⁸³ The river runs to the sea, the biological

and mythological source of life, to be reborn. And here, the river runs over the earth to fertilize it. On the sun are four regions: earth, animal, vegetable, mineral -- and Man. Under the earth are circles indicating the months of the year, rhythm without end, denoting fecundity, and a false, wintry death.⁸⁴

A living, mythical pyramid is on the left side of the tapestry, like a coat-of-arms on many medieval works. The pyramid is composed of a goat, cock, and bisexual centaur, above which is a stabbed bull, and atop that a lyre. Goats, centaurs, roosters are all images with associations with lust. The goat is the most lowly, as the cock and centaur have dual natures. The cock is a national symbol, and the centaur represents either instincts controlled by spirit, or the reverse, the domination a being by lower forces. In creating a bisexual centaur, Lurçat may have been offsetting the centaur apparently favoured by Vichy. In a rare description of Vichy tapestry, Lurçat condemned its 18th century focus which evoked the authoritative monarchical and aristocratic culture of the feudal *ancien régime*:

Laval, Pétain . . . détestaient le ‘moderne’; ne croyaient qu’aux Grand Rois, à Boucher, à Mignard, aux jupons, aux escarpolettes, aux seins échappés des corsages . . . aux Triomphes, aux Centaures, à Jupin-Jupiter, à Madame de Pompadour, aux Enfants Jardiniers, aux Bacchus . . . On tissait aux Gobelins le ‘Triomphe du Maréchal’, pour Goering un monstrueux Hercule . . .⁸⁵

The triangle in Lurçat’s image is itself the threefold principle of creation, all things aspiring to a higher end. The bull is conquered, and the pinnacle is the lyre, symbol of the harmonious union of cosmic forces, and the reconciliation of heaven and earth. A lyre also represents poetry, and here, doubtless, indicates the means for such a reconciliation. On the seventh underground circle -- July -- is a sprig of cherries. Cherries, since the Commune, had been associated with the socialist struggle for justice, from J.B. Clément’s 19th century song, Le Temps des cerises. This title was also chosen by Jean Cassou for one of his Sonnets.⁸⁶

In 1944, Jean Lurçat produced the tapestry, La Terre [Figure 17]. Another tapestry, Le Ciel et la Terre [Figure 18], has a nearly-identical man on one side and three flaming suns on the other. The Man serves as the link between heaven and earth, and indeed as

earth itself, he is the connection between sea and sky. On that tapestry, Man has a rooster at head and heart. According to Claude Roy's account, Lurçat spoke of the inspiration for the Man of both these tapestries as the black Moor from Francesco del Cossa's fresco at the Schifanoia Palace in Italy. The image is from the section representing the month of March, therefore 'spring', and also Mars, the god of war. Lurçat also referred to another source, a Resistance boy he had encountered on the road.⁸⁷ What I would argue here is that like the interpretation of Resistance poetry, Lurçat's tapestry involves the free association of images, wherein the reader plays the crucial role of interpreter, construing the abstract from a deceptively simple image. Such is the case with Lurçat's special reconstruction of the concept of Man. An example of this type of interpretation, which would consider this imagery as part of an oppositional vocabulary, might be the following:

This Man is the profane: the black Moor, the outcast, the warrior, the visionary Camisard, a Maquisard, the wild man of the woods.⁸⁸ He is also the divine: the rural deity, and Christ. He is a pauper, a ragged peasant -- not the idealized 'wholesome' peasant of Pétain and Maurras -- but he is also regal, a vegetation king. He is the heretic, but also the patriot, with French cock at head and heart. This is the barbarian from the topsy-turvy time when the true barbarian is the Nazi, whose preferred self-image is cold, dead, sculpture. Unlike a statue or a cold-blooded fascist, Lurçat's Man is visceral, fertile, regenerative, with the creative powers of the poet-seer. He is the wise man, the troubadour -- he is the universal Everyman. Both hero and antihero, he is the *pays légal*, true heir of the *pays réel*. He is the exile, the refugee, an alien in his own land, but his home is the whole natural world. Weaponless and naked, he nevertheless represents strength, and dignity in defiance. He may be one of the poet-martyrs: St.Pol-Roux or Péri, or another martyr, the Wandering Jew who, while condemned to wander the earth, was characterized in medieval times by his longevity.⁸⁹ So older, much older even than Pétain, he persists in tradition and endures through art and legend long after the foibles of real men are but historical aberrations.

Lurçat chose the largest format to make his statements public. In his attempt to

rediscover a public art, Lurçat found a special democracy -- a fraternity -- in tapestry. In 1950, he wrote of his vision of the capacities that tapestry offered:

And by contrast with the posturings and saccharine efforts of the easel picture, for the purposes of high warp, the world is made up of the best and worst, the pure, the impure, abstract, base concrete, domestic or divine, sweet, bitter, or salty, forms in mural tapestry ferment, reflect, join together furiously . . . the great lady of tapestry holds open house, welcomes all comers, all forms, familiar animals, nettles, pittances, ships, pools, brawls, crows, unicorns, great ladies or stable boys -- everything has its place in tapestry.⁹⁰

Lurçat's venture, fuelled by urgent hope for final victory, unfolds not only testimony to the period of struggle against fascism, but with its imagery, uniquely posits a vision of a truly united, classless France.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Julian Jackson, The Popular Front in France, defending democracy 1934-38 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 120-138. Jackson devotes a chapter of his book to the 'cultural explosion', and within that, a section discussing responses to the desire to bring art 'to the masses'. Breaking down barriers on many fronts was part of the Popular Front project. Jackson also discusses the various histories and traditions espoused by Popular Front intellectuals.
- 2 Ibid., p. 118.
- 3 Ibid, p. 126.
- 4 Berthold Hinz, Art in the Third Reich (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), p. 8.
- 5 Ibid., pp. 25-26, 38-40. Actual destruction of art began early. The first major acts occurred in 1930, with the destruction of Oskar Schlemmer's frescoes at the Bauhaus, and the subsequent removal of 70 works from the Schloss museum.
- 6 Jackson, The Popular Front in France, defending democracy 1934-38, p. 120.
- 7 Francis Thomson, Tapestry: Mirror of History (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1980), p. 186.
- 8 Laurent Bertrand Dorléac provides a thorough discussion of the group Jeunes peintres de tradition française, in Chapter IV, Histoire de l'Art: Paris 1940-1944 (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1986). Dorléac also gives an account of that group's tendency toward medievalism (Ch. IV, Section 3: 'Renaissance et retour au Moyen Age', pp. 179-181).
- 9 M. Adereth, Aragon: The Resistance Poems (London: Grant and Cutler Ltd., 1985), p. 43. Aragon cited such references to nation as "*la douce France*" in the Chanson de Roland.
- 10 Léger, for example, wrote of the Renaissance in this way. In 1938 in Europe, in an article entitled "Colour in the World" (Functions of Painting (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), p. 126) he declared: "An artistic culture will be born, based on the collective arts of the Middle Ages". In 1937, in "The New Realism Goes On", Art Front (Functions of Painting, p. 115-116), he wrote, ". . . [even] our tastes, our traditions incline to the primitive, popular artists before the Renaissance. It is from this same Renaissance that individualism in painting dates." In 1952 Léger in "Mural Painting", Derrière la Miroir, criticized easel art: "It was born in the Italian Renaissance, along with the advent of individualism and capitalism." (Functions of Painting, p. 178.) Leon Gischia, member of the Jeunes peintres, also claimed that the Renaissance had led France to defeat, and art into decadence, upholding medieval art as an antidote: "L'art byzantin, par exemple, ou l'art du Moyen Age, constitue une renaissance par rapport à la décadence de l'art classique . . ." Quoted by Dorléac, Histoire de l'Art: Paris 1940-1944, p. 179.
- 11 See Dorléac, Histoire de l'Art: Paris 1940-1944, p. 45.
- 12 Ibid, p. 45.
- 13 Texcier, member of Resistance group, 'Libération-Nord', wrote this in Ecrit dans la nuit (1945). He was quoted by Alexander Werth, France 1940-1955 (London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1956), p. 50.

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- 14 Dorléac, Histoire de l'Art: Paris 1940-1944, p. 35.
- 15 Ibid., p. 196.
- 16 Werth, France 1940-1955, p. 42.
- 17 From "En Etrange pays dans mon pays lui-même" Merlin-Brocéliande, 1942. Aragon, L'oeuvre poétique Tome IX 1939-1942 (Livre Club Diderot, 1979) p. 350. Quoted in English by Anna Balakian, Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 217.
- 18 Mme. Cuttoli was the director of the Galerie Vignon in Paris in the 1930's.
- 19 The Apocalypse d'Angers is a series of 13 of St. John's visions. The oldest surviving French tapestries, they were designed by Jean de Bondolf, painter to the king, and produced in 1375-79. Lurçat devoted an article to these in Confluences 26, 1943.
- 20 See René Huyghe, "French Tapestries in Paris", Magazine of Art, Vol. 40, No. 1, January 1947, p. 14.
- 21 See Francis Thomson, Tapestry: Mirror of History, p. 186.
- 22 See Lurçat, Designing Tapestry (London and Southampton: The Camelot Press, 1950), Chapters III and IV, for a discussion of the economics of tapestry design. Before Lurçat's and Gromaire's 1939 study, tapestry had been a very expensive proposition and, therefore, few tapestries were commissioned. Also, Lurçat and Gromaire wanted to be able to experiment, to practise, to learn from mistakes. They needed to find a way of designing the tapestries which would allow the weavers a shorter period of production on each work. It should be noted that Lurçat and Gromaire were interested in an art form for which there existed no private customer.
- 23 Pierre Hirsch, Jean Lurçat et la Tapisserie (Paris: Victor Michon Editeur, 1946), p. 13. He wrote: Ce double aspect de la lutte que menait le pays 'contre' l'oppression et 'pour' la libération ne sont pas les termes d'une opposition purement verbale: le choc des deux tendances forment le fondement qui se traduit par des oppositions de masses et de coloris ..."
- 24 Andre Léjard, French Tapestry (London: Paul Elak Publishers Ltd., 1946), p. 15.
- 25 René Huyghe, "French Tapestries in Paris", Magazine of Art, January 1947, p. 12.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid, p. 11.
- 28 Francis Klingender, Animals in Thought and Art to the End of the Middle Ages (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971) p. 463, discusses the unicorn as an icon for Christ. John Williamson, The Oak King, The Holly King, and The Unicorn: The Myths and Symbolism of the Unicorn Tapestries (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1986), p. 123, describes the powers possessed by the unicorn.
- 29 Williamson, The Oak King, The Holly King and The Unicorn, p. 199.
- 30 The 1942 version was destroyed in 1944 when the Germans set fire to Lurçat's atelier. This work was rewoven in 1947. (See Claude Roy, Jean Lurçat (Genève: Editions Pierre Cailler, 1956), p. 105.) Lurçat's work may have been targeted for his political activities as he was a member of the Comité de libération for the Lot region. According to Pierre

Seghers, La Résistance et ses poètes, p. 180, Lurçat's tapestries literally smuggled messages, transporting forged documents from the Galerie Bucher in Paris to the south, rolled up in the tapestries.

31 John Williamson, The Oak King, The Holly King and The Unicorn, pp. 61-64. It should be emphasized that interpretation of the symbols from Lurçat's tapestries should be open to many possible meanings. Indeed, the iconography is meant to involve many readings and to encourage active interpretation. This is conspiratorial in the sense of speaking to those 'in the know', but this excluded those who would not be receptive. In the later works especially, the great amount of iconographic detail was meant to confound, through an innocent face, those wielding power, i.e. Vichy and the Germans.

32 Breker was awarded most state commissions after 1938. See Steven Kasher, "The Art of Hitler", October 59, Winter 1992, pp. 56-57.

33 Timothy Husband, The Wild Man: Medieval Myth and Symbolism (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), p. 15.

34 John Williamson, The Oak King, The Holly King, and the Unicorn, pp. 72-73.

35 Terry Smith, "A State of Seeing Unsighted", Block 12, Winter 1986-1987. Smith provides a discussion of the kinds of Nazi manipulation of spectacle and their effects.

36 Jean Lurçat, Designing Tapestry, p. 49.

37 Sartre from "Paris sous l'occupation", 1949. This section is translated by Stephen Hawes, "The Individual and the Resistance Movement in France", Resistance in Europe 1939-1945 (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1975), p. 126.

38 H.R. Kedward, Resistance in Vichy France: A Study of Ideas and Motivation in the Southern Zone 1940-1942 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 6. He says, ". . . the rumours ran that the Germans moved twice as fast as normal soldiers, and that in the hot days of early summer, they were advancing 'les torsos nus' through the ripening cornfields. It was a small step from here to believing that the Germans were in some way superhuman and that they were conquerors by sheer force of physique . . ." I might add that this imagery, this nude superhuman, invokes Breker's statuesque athletes.

39 J. H. King, "Language and Silence: Some Aspects of Writing and the French Resistance", European Studies Review, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1972, p. 227.

40 John Williamson, The Oak King, The Holly King, and the Unicorn, pp. 177-178.

41 H.R. Kedward, Resistance in Vichy France, p. 7. The population of Cahors, for example, rose from 13,000-60/70,000, Pau in the Basses-Pyrénées had an increase from 38,000 to 150,000.

42 H.R. Kedward, "Patriots and Patriotism in Vichy France", Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 12 Sept. 1981, p. 189.

43 Ibid, p. 190.

44 Ian Higgins, "France, Soil and Language: Some Resistance Poems of Luc Bérimont and Jean Marcenac", Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture and Ideology, H.R. Kedward and Roger Austin, eds. (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1985), pp. 211-212.

45 Ibid, p. 217.

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- 46 H.R. Kedward, "Patriots and Patriotism in Vichy France", p. 190.
- 47 The complete poem in both French and English is reproduced in Paul Eluard: Selected Writings, (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1966), pp. 114-116.
- 48 The importance of Charles Maurras to Vichy is discussed by H.R. Kedward. "Charles Maurras and the True France", Ideas Into Politics: Aspects of European History 1880-1950, passim.
- 49 H.R. Kedward, "Patriots and Patriotism in Vichy France" (Totawa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1984), p. 176.
- 50 Forty-nine hostages were executed at Châteaubriant and Nantes in October 1941. These were the first such incidents; others followed. Hostage-takings began after the first assassination of German soldiers in the Occupied Zone. For each German shot, up to 100 prisoners were executed.
- 51 H.R. Kedward, Resistance in Vichy France, p. 59. This was not the only journal to respond in similar fashion: Père Duchesne's longevity aimed to rival Pétain's ("The father of all revolutionary papers" started by Hébert in 1793; see Kedward, p. 153). Such leftwing journals as L'Humanité and Le Cri du Peuple were the first anti-Vichy organs.
- 52 Kedward discusses the decline of the Félibrige and the rise of the Occitan poets in "Charles Maurras and the True France", Ideas Into Politics, p. 127.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 The Camisards were French protestant peasants of the 1700's, who organized military resistance to the government over the Edict of Nantes. They were visionaries; the stars in the sky guided them to safety and voices sang encouragement to them. The Purs were a 12th century heretical group which believed that man was a sojourner in an evil world. The Maquis' assumption of these historical predecessors is discussed by Kedward, "The Maquis and the Culture of the Outlaw", Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture and Ideology, p. 245.
- 55 Pierre Sauvage who, as an infant with his family, was protected by the villagers of Le Chambon, made a film on the phenomenon of this conspiracy which involved an entire town. The documentary, entitled Weapons of the Spirit, was released in 1991, and was shown on PBS.
- 56 H.R. Kedward, "The Maquis and the Culture of the Outlaw", p. 249.
- 57 In 1948, Sartre wrote in "Qu'est-ce que la littérature?": "La guerre de 14 a précipité la crise du langage; je dirai volontiers que la guerre de 40 l'a révalorisé", p. 282. Quoted by J.H. King, "Language and Silence: Some Aspects of Writing and the French Resistance", p. 235.
- 58 Ian Higgins, Anthology of Second World War French Poetry (London: Methuen Educational Ltd., 1982), p. 23.
- 59 Ibid, p. 28.
- 60 This distinction is discussed by Higgins, *ibid.*, pp. 7-8, and in "France, Soil, and Language: Some Resistance poems by Luc Bérinmont and Jean Marcenac", pp. 201-219. Titles of some poems illustrate the difference. Compare for example, Jean Marcenac's militant poems, "Mort à nos ennemis", "Les traîtres se trahissent", with Seghers' "La vérité", or "L'Automne", or Henri Frénauds "Les rois mages" or "Printemps", and Pierre

Emmanuel's "Le soir de l'homme."

61 Higgins, Anthology of Second World War French Poetry, p. 7.

62 Higgins, "France, Soil, and Language: Some Resistance Poems by Luc Bérимont and Jean Marcenac", p. 209. Segher's "Octobre 41" is discussed by Higgins in his Anthology of Second World War French Poetry.

63 Pierre Seghers used the term, 'la conspiration des poètes'; quoted by H. Josephson and M. Cowley, Aragon: Poet of the Resistance (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pierce, Inc., 1945), p. 12. They also cite Aragon's comment, just after liberation: "The new poetry was an art of conspiracy to . . . express what our masters wanted not to be told."

64 Jean Lurçat, Designing Tapestry, p. 32.

65 "The slow consciousness of plants and things" is from one of Tzara's 'plénitude' poems in L'homme approximatif, 1931. This theme continued through La Signe de vie, 1946, from which the second quote derives. See Mary Ann Caws, The Poetry of Dada and Surrealism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 131.

66 From "Sur une aurore grecque", Terre sur terre. Tristan Tzara, Oeuvres Complètes Tome 3 1934-1946 (Flammarion 1979). English translation in Caws, The Poetry of Dada and Surrealism, p. 126.

67 Caws, The Poetry of Dada and Surrealism, p. 127.

68 The idea of the 'marvellous' was part of the Surrealist programme from the 1920's. See Caws, *ibid.*, p. 21.

69 This was written in 1942, and published in 1943. Bérимont was a member of L'Ecole de Rochefort.

70 Quoted by Caws, The Poetry of Dada and Surrealism, p. 40.

71 According to Caws this was a legacy of Surrealism for the Surrealist poets' bond to each other was their ". . . unique attraction to opposing elements which underlies all their critical and imaginative ventures and marks all their prose and poetry . . . Surrealist writing in general is characterized by its basic double centre." (*Ibid.*, p. 19.)

72 Aragon wrote in 1945, "La poésie d'un peuple n'est past un héritage dans le sens racial du mot, mais dans le sens national du terme." Quoted by M. Adereth, Aragon: The Resistance Poems, p. 42.

73 Aragon reworked Chretien de Troyes' 12th century Percéval from a warrior to a 'righter of wrongs', in les Yeux d'Elsa, 1942. See Adereth, *ibid.*, p.48. Bertran de Born was France's oldest patriot and a symbol of liberty. Aragon used him as an example to modern poets in "Pour un chant national", Les Yeux d'Elsa, 1942. Quoted by Adereth, *ibid.*, p. 47. Adereth also notes the liberties Aragon took with medieval history, such as his adoption of the Crusades, ". . . hardly wars of national liberation" (p.48).

74 From the last verse of Richard Coeur-de-lion, Les Yeux d'Elsa, 1942. Aragon, L'oeuvre poétique, pp. 239-240. Tome IX, 1939-1942 (Livre Club Diderot 1979).

Tous les Français ressemblent à Blondel
Quel que soit le nom dont nous appelions
la liberté comme un bruissement d'ailes.
Répond au chant de Richard Coeur-de-lion.

75 Ibid., p. 152.

76 This poem is from La Diane Française, 1944. Two lines from it are:

J'ai rencontré ma Dame au bord de l'eau
Ma Dame est France et moi son Lancelot

Reproduced in M. Adereth, Aragon: The Resistance Poems, p. 20.

77 This is not conclusive, but based on the somewhat limited number of tapestries available for study and evaluation at the time this research was carried out.

78 The entire poem is reproduced in both French and English in Paul Eluard: Selected Writings, pp. 137-141.

79 See for example Jean-Paul Bouillon, "A-Gauche! Note sur la Société du Jing-Lar et sa signification," Gazette des beaux-arts, ser. 6, 91 (March, 1978): pp.107-18, who points out the association between the rising sun and Republican opposition.

80 From the introduction, by S.I. Lockerbie, to Guillaume Apollinaire's Calligrammes: Poems of Peace and War (1913-1916), p. 10.

81 Robert Pickering, "Writing Under Vichy: Ambiguity and Literary Imagination in the Non-Occupied Zone", Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture and Ideology, p. 261. Pickering says that, "Images associated with division, intersection, a break of continuity (nostalgia for home and loved ones, etc.) articulate a deeper awareness of rupture -- devolving from divided political and ideological loyalties and from the specifically physical image of a dividing line demarcating occupied and unoccupied France". These images were taboo, avoided at all costs by those negotiating writing between censorship and opposition.

82 Williamson, The Oak King, The Holly King, and The Unicorn, p. 77.

83 Lurçat, "Le Chant du monde", Graphis, 1967, p. 86.

84 Some of this description of the image is from Claude Roy, Jean Lurçat, p. 70. For example, the 'bisexual centaur', the 'living mythical pyramid' are Roy's terms, although the interpretation ends there. Regarding the underground motif, Roy says, ". . . les douze mois de l'année déploient leur rythme sans fin de fécondité et de fausse mort hivernale".

85 Jean Lurçat, Le Bestiaire de la tapisserie du Moyen Age (Genève: Edition Pierre Cailler, 1947), p. 31. This is the most concrete testimony regarding Pétain's aesthetic programme for tapestry. Indeed, there is scant information available on Vichy tapestry design.

86 Discussed by Ian Higgins, Anthology of Second World War French Poetry, p. 189. The fourth verse of Clément's song begins:

J'aimerai toujours le temps des cerises:
C'est de ce temps - là que je garde au coeur
Une plaie ouverte.

Cassou's poem (ibid., p. 77) begins:

La plaie que depuis le temps des cerises
Je garde en mon coeur s'ouvre chaque jour.

87 Claude Roy, Jean Lurçat, p. 35.

88 This rendering should be compared with two aforementioned similar images of the wild man in medieval art. Figure 11 is a tapestry from 1480. The wild man here has bright blue and red tufts instead of hair, similar to the Man in La Terre. By the end of the Middle

Ages, the wild man was more benign, living harmoniously in a woodland paradise -- in contrast to civilization. Figure 10 is The Wild Condition, from The Four Conditions of Society, one of four looseleaf illuminations from Tours, 1450-1500. The other 'conditions' are the poor, the working, and the noble.

89 Galit Hasan-Rokem, The Wandering Jew: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 3.

90 Lurçat, Designing Tapestry, p. 58.

Chapter 3

Jean Dubuffet and the Struggle for Paris

While he had studied art some twenty years before World War II, Jean Dubuffet began his art career in earnest in January, 1943 with a series of still life and portrait images entitled les Gardes du corps. Dubuffet was no stranger to Parisian circles of leftist artists and writers. In 1943, he counted among his friends writers Francis Ponge, Jean Paulhan, Henri Michaux, Georges Limbour, Raymond Queneau, and the artist Jean Fautrier.¹ Among this circle, Dubuffet's art was known and although the artist was ostensibly producing primarily for his "personal pleasure",² he was encouraged by this circle to publish his work. Jean Paulhan suggested that they both cooperate on publication of Le Métro of March 1943, with Paulhan writing an accompanying text for the images.³

Throughout the war, Dubuffet confined his works to such small executions. With the exception of Paysages, produced as a result of country vacation in 1943, Dubuffet's series are explorations of Paris and depictions of its inhabitants, who are generally represented engaging in mundane activities. The intimate size of the works (Vues de Paris, also of 1943, and Le Métro are 37 x 30 cm) and the numbers of versions of the subjects indicate an attempt at familiarity, and an effort toward detailed knowledge of the people and the city. Yet the exhaustive series, the compulsive repetition of images which vary little, still result in surface or facade. Dubuffet's eschewal of 'realism' and his embracing of an alternative art of extreme simplicity of form results in the tension between known and unknown -- the pull of recognition and the refusal of an easy understanding.

To be sure, Dubuffet's wartime series are cribbed and confined within their borders and bear little resemblance to Lurçat's tapestries with the latter's characteristic grand flourishes and expansiveness. And unlike Lurçat, Dubuffet did not participate in the 1930's movement toward public art. But, as will be developed in this chapter, during the war Dubuffet, like Lurçat did articulate resistance themes in his works. Both constructed 'outlaw' figures, for example, but while Lurçat's were stalwart peasants or patriots, Dubuffet's were anonymous city dwellers and faceless furtive urban lowlifes. Dubuffet's

version of the theme of the 'wall' does not evolve from the former decade's concern with the public display of high art, but rises from Dubuffet's desire to reclaim Parisian spaces which, during the Occupation years, were dominated by the German authorities. Thus, in a sense, the aim was reversed as Dubuffet produced a 'low' art for more private consumption. Humanism inspired Dubuffet's works, but his art took a cynical turn, from the ironic stance of the 1943 series, Vues de Paris and Le Métro to a bitter edge in Messages of 1944 and Les Murs of 1945. So, while Lurçat and Dubuffet shared a concern for the defeat of fascism, they differed in the kinds of written and visual language they used, in the views of the culture they espoused, and more basically, in their definitions of humanism.

To some extent, their differing oppositional language stemmed from the nature of the experience of war in either occupied Paris or the rural south. Vichy had little real authority in the occupied zone, both practically as a result of the domination of the German presence and its bureaucracy, and ideologically because Vichy sought to appeal to a rural sensibility in opposition to urban modernity. Even after the total occupation of France in November 1942 the dichotomy existed although Vichy's ideology was waning, and many areas had been seized by and were controlled by the Resistance.⁴

In Paris, the Resistance remained an underground movement, one that was primarily unarmed. In this sense, it was impotent in the face of repression, however highly organized it had become by 1942. In the early years of the Armistice, resistance was enacted in isolated, anonymous gestures and relatively minor acts of sabotage. Some of these were graffiti, the wearing of forbidden emblems, the dispersions of *papillons* (leaflets), and the employment of linguistic tactics to irritate and insult the Germans. These signs -- visual, spoken, or written -- became linked in number, and were understood to represent not a *refus absurde*⁵, but a potential for release, an underground activity which gave visible form to a negation of control and oppression.

In examining Dubuffet's art, one needs to 'picture' Paris at this time, for Dubuffet's works, Métro, Vues de Paris (1943), the walls of the series Messages (1944) and Les Murs (1945), are serial views of the city during Occupation. Significantly, however, they also

depict what transpired under the surface appearance of urban life. Dubuffet's art does not depict armoured vehicles, uniformed soldiers, hungry Parisians in lengthy queues -- that is, a city under siege. Instead, he draws storefronts, strollers, and subway riders. How is it then, that when the pictures were finally exhibited at the Galerie Drouin in 1944, viewers described these seemingly congenial images of city life as "illegal", their gaiety as "sinister a provocation, a condemned art"? The art was described as a "game of mirrors", and the pictures said to "denounce, with violence, the tragic burlesque of our bitter world".⁶

These works may be taken to portray, with irony, a happily ordered world, yet what kind of order is this? It goes beyond the visible, to present an illusion, on the one hand of order (the syncopated, dancing puppets of what Max Loreau has termed Dubuffet's Marionettes de la ville et de la campagne) and on the other, the 'real' community of Parisians which lay underground, or else within the imagination of the artist.

So much of what is written about the experience of occupation in Paris is catalogued in visual terms: the omnipresent posters and parades, changes to familiar vistas wrought by foreign control. At the same time, the visual evidence of another reality, another outlook was illustrated by other elements such as execution notices draped with flowers, or posters covered with V's. Dubuffet in his art responded to visual, written, and spoken signs, bringing his own defiant order, even brilliant colour, to construct another reality. His imagery and style were so far removed from official proscriptions that they could be seen to lie outside the 'law'. When art was to be monumental, his was constricted; when it was to be thematically and formally idealized, he retreated to the simplest of means to depict the street. When the artist was to be a conscientious artisan, Dubuffet took up an art of the untrained; and when art was meant to glorify the state and be uplifting, he turned to some of the most marginalized sectors of society for his sources. Hence, this chapter focuses on the Paris of Dubuffet, peopled with marionettes who dance to a different tune, whose walls are alive with explosive energy, whose subway is an unpredictable rollercoaster ride through the underground, a city ready to erupt.

Paris had become an open city in June, 1940. While the spectacle of the exodus was

one of chaos and pathos, the image of the deserted city was a scene of desolation. A Swiss journalist described the initial dislocation:

I left Paris because it suddenly changed in appearance . . . because the streets seemed a little emptier each day, and everything that goes to make up a street and gives it its confidence, was disappearing . . . The day the streetcleaner fails to turn up and the paper stand stays shut, the street begins to panic . . . On Wednesday, June 12, at 6 p.m., a herd of cows from the Ferme d'Auteuil was wandering freely in the place de l'Alma . . . their bellowing echoed sadly in the deserted quays . . . It was probably after witnessing this spectacle that I decided to leave Paris.⁷

Yet when the streets gradually returned to life, those who remained endured not only material privation but visible reminders of defeat, and the city -- once familiar and traversable -- was now the property of a foreign power. [Figures 19, 20] The presence of the Occupant, the paraphernalia of control and conquest, altered the appearance of Paris, a disorienting experience for a population accustomed to feeling 'at home' in a community among which a certain ownership of the city had been taken for granted. The spectacle of military parades, the colonization of the walls of Paris by systematic propaganda, even the sight of the 'correct' German soldier,⁸ represented in posters as a kindly relative [Figure 21], were met at first by some with fearful, mute resignation or chilly hostility. Jean-Paul Sartre, in The Republic of Silence of 1945, articulated one response to this development:

We had lost all our rights, beginning with the right to talk. Every day we were insulted to our faces and had to take it in silence . . . Everywhere, on billboards, in the newspapers, on the screen, we encountered the revolting and insipid picture of ourselves that our oppressors wanted us to accept . . . Because the Nazi venom seeped even into our thoughts, every accurate thought was a conquest. Because an all-powerful police tried to force us to hold our tongues, every word took on the value of a declaration of principles. Because we were hunted down, every one of our gestures had the weight of a solemn commitment.⁹

At first, oppositional leaflets cautioned Parisians to resist through silence: to refuse invitations or places on the Métro, to refuse to read the Occupation press, and also to pretend to misunderstand requests.¹⁰ Mute protests, although a sign language understood initially only by the French, could register visually and at first this provided a means to escape repercussion. Great imagination was put toward display of the forbidden tricolour, for example, and by 1941, there was a veritable commerce in patriotic insignia.¹¹ [See

Figure 22] Henri Michel, in Paris Résistant, dates the birth of opposition in terms of *balbutiements*: hesitant and individual words and acts of defiance. Word plays could be employed, wrong directions given, and the German soldiers could be mocked without their understanding; hence, the French language could be used as an offensive tool.¹² And in the dark anonymity of the cinema, loud responses to German films, hoots and jeers, were commonplace enough to cause 26 theatres to close for several days in November, 1940.¹³ The passivity of silence was soon exploited by the authorities perhaps since, as a position of resistance, it was fairly quickly rejected. In the official Occupation journal, Aujourd'hui of April 2, 1941, was written: "Silence is a weapon . . . it is the nightlight of speech, a disguise, a protection. In this dramatic age we must learn to be sparing in our words, and betray neither ourselves nor anyone else."¹⁴

Writing was still the most stubborn means of expression, since one was freer to write than to paint or sculpt, and radio, films, and walls were all subject to the control of the authorities. Indeed, the clandestine press was alive in Paris, embracing the most primitively-produced *papillons* to the organized efforts of the Editions de Minuit. At first, writers who had no wish to cooperate with the authorities chose to protest by remaining silent. However when faced with the literature of collaboration, the need to provide alternatives became apparent.¹⁵ The January 1942 manifesto of the Editions de Minuit, drafted by Pierre Lescure, linked the aims of the new publishing house to the necessity of countering collaboration:

At another period in French history the prefects 'eliminated' writers who refused to praise their master. The master said of the others: "I opened the doors of my anteroom, and in they rushed." In France, there are still some writers who do not rush to the anterooms and who refuse to obey orders. They feel that they must express themselves . . . because if they don't express themselves the mind will die . . . Propaganda is not our field. We want to safeguard our inner life and serve our art in freedom.¹⁶

The need for expression, in response to suppression and propaganda, took many forms, and was practised both in backrooms and on the street. In 1941, all graffiti was forbidden by law. From March 24-21, 1941, 200 different leaflets were seized and 1200 inscriptions counted.¹⁷ Despite the edict, on July 20, 1941, the BBC campaigned for a day

of V-signs: 4400 were tallied on buildings, 5500 on sidewalks. However, as a consequence, the following morning, giant V's appeared on German-controlled public buildings, including the Eiffel Tower, and the Chambre des députés [Figure 23]. The occupying forces, acknowledging the war of imagery, had conscripted the oppositional symbol.¹⁸

German posters, heavy-handed in content and ostentatious in format, seem apparently to have been less effective than desired. A German report for the Armistice Commission at Wiesbaden, stated that, ". . . German posters sometimes obtain contrary results than those they aim for, and convince no one."¹⁹ As the image of the polite German soldier became more difficult to sustain, in the light of the growing severity of wartime oppression (the retaliatory hostage-takings beginning in 1941, the spectacle of the roundup of the Jews in 1942)²⁰, it was replaced by more aggressive imagery [Figure 24]. Concurrently, outright acts of sabotage occurred more frequently -- sabotage expressing what could not be put into words.

The offenders need to be canny, both psychologically and tactically, attacking only the materials of the Occupant, to evade arrest, and to gain the support of the population. These *combattants de l'ombre* moved in the populous quartiers like fish in water, their familiar neighbourhoods were like jungles to the foreign forces, wherein the soldiers would be lost, isolated, in danger -- the victims of underground surveillance.²¹ Such urban guerrillas were not professionals, anyone could be a spy. Graffiti artists would follow the posterers, lacerating the paper while it was still wet, gluing leaflets overtop, or covering the images with phrases.²² [See Figure 25.] The intensity of this *guerre des affiches*, this 'scribblers' war', worried the editor of L'Appel. On July 31, 1941, he wrote:

Every morning carriages in the Métro are full of mimeographed leaflets. Walls of houses are smothered with inscriptions, revolutionary slogans, and hammers and sickles. L'Humanité is rearing its head again. Orders from Moscow are passed on by word of mouth in workshops, offices, and queues.²³

The most public spaces were typical targets for the dispersion of resistance tracts. The Métro, the only means of transportation, save bicycles or *vélo-taxis*, was one such crucial public forum. La Gerbe, on May 28, 1942, reported that, ". . . A leaflet headed 'You Must Resist' has been circulating for the last few days. It was first distributed in

trains and stations in the Métro in the now time-honoured way . . . "24 Virtually everyone used the Métro. Some felt that it provided a real sense of community in an otherwise fractured city²⁵; for others it was a necessary indignation. A writer for Aujourd'hui in November 24, 1940, for example, expressed the tension involved in the confined situation:

It was midday, and a crazed mass of humanity, streamed past me as I went down to the Orléans-Clignacourt line. Every step I took, I got an umbrella in my legs, a parcel in my stomach, elbows in my ribs, and tense, angry faces were thrust into mine, so close I had to turn away . . . All around me was an atmosphere of stale air . . . and silence too, the silence of bodies locked in a deadly combat, a dangerous silence, with fluctuating moods, in which one shout . . . could provoke a storm.²⁶

A voyage could have unforeseen repercussions; raids for identity cards were frequent episodes. A rush for the last Métro was often complicated, as curfew times changed in response to threats to public order, or changes were simply enacted as wholesale punishment for unlawful activities. The curfew was one of many restrictions which treated Parisians like juvenile delinquents. Resistant writer Lucie Aubrac, in 1945, wrote of some of the seemingly minor acts of resistance, which were nevertheless punishable by arrest:

A little like children in the presence of a boorish teacher, the French tended from the outset to make fun of the Germans. Travellers in the Métro would deliberately direct the Germans to stations miles out of their way, bus conductors would skip stops, while shop assistants liked to sell Germans the most unsaleable articles after a glowing display of flattery.²⁷

Dubuffet's Un voyage en métro, les dessous de la capitale (la connaissance de Paris par son sous-sol), of March 1943, an album of 12 gouaches, each approximately 37x30 cm. [Figures 26-29], forms an early part of the artist's wartime work.²⁸ The primitive, childlike execution of these images casts the subjects in a humourous, or ironic, fixed, frozen, frontal display of innocuousness. Clownlike faces stare poker-faced, wide-eyed and innocent, hands folded just-so, figures primly compartmentalized. As the title of the series tells us, this is the underground, the underside of Paris, the daily life of the Parisian 'common man'.²⁹ Cunningly artful masks could convey a jolly community, a bright otherside to what Louis Parrot, in a 1944 introduction to a catalogue for Dubuffet's work, connoted as a world of "ashes".³⁰ Or meaning could rest in the deliberate and deceptively simple form of representation of what was sometimes a charged situation, a confrontation of nation and

class. Dubuffet's inclusion of the words *Rauchen verboten* in one gouache [Figure 28], floating like a visual clue, is a reminder of a hidden, complex, historical context behind the presumed innocence of an art of the 'primitive' or of the child.

In April, 1943, Dubuffet produced another group of small gouaches (37x30 cm.), Vues de Paris [Figures 30, 31], that were variations on a similar theme. These are street scenes, including walls of buildings atop strict rows of trees, with human figures spaced between the trees or below them, ordered in compositions organized by Dubuffet alone. While some scenes seem to be site-specific (some so indicated by a subtitle, e.g. Vue de Paris avec quatre arbres et trois personnages: Place de l'Estrapade, Figure 31), and hence supposedly recognizable, the views are remarkable similar and exceedingly simple, with very few elements. Dubuffet here deliberately eschewed perspective, imposing another order from top to bottom, and each view is delineated temporally and spatially. The series is meant to present a picture album of Dubuffet's own city, traversed by one of its own inhabitants. What is displayed is a personal view, a reclaiming of public spaces by a private vision. Bright colour plays the role of emotionally enlivening the scenes; this use of colour by Dubuffet was emphasized by both Georges Limbour and Louis Parrot, friends of the artist, who wrote about his work. Parrot, in June 1944, claimed of the images:

We are no doubt in a populous quartier . . . a miserable glimmer lights this desolate facade where the words TRIPES and CAFE . . . appear on a storefront painted purple, a clarity from wherever colours in broad strokes this building dedicated to poverty, and we, in fact, abruptly forget its ugliness. Facades more beautiful, more true, and more human than so many human faces . . . Under the revelatory brush of Jean Dubuffet, these facades, so long insensible, return to life.³¹

And Limbour, in Servir, 24 and 31 May 1945, wrote: "No doubt, the intelligent will of man orders the material chaos, harmonizing colours with the subtle virtuosity; nevertheless he is dedicated to the material to the point of loving in it resistance and revolts . . ." ³²

Already a friend of Jean Paulhan and Raymond Queneau, both active in resistance networks, Dubuffet, in 1942 and 1943, met and befriended other intellectuals involved in resistant efforts. His friends then included the poets Paul Eluard, Pierre Seghers, Eugène Guillevic, and Louis Parrot. And in February 1944, he met René Drouin, who would

organize Dubuffet's first exhibition at the Galerie Drouin, for October 1944.³³ Pierre Seghers, in L'Homme du commun ou Jean Dubuffet, 1944, was decidedly unreserved about the impact of Dubuffet's work. He began:

Robot, who functioned for 2000 years, his testicles crushed in the easy chair, if he breaks his bolts, his targets, comes to life, what does he do? He takes a piece of chalk and on the first wall encountered, he writes MERDE, to begin with.³⁴

Further in the book, he wrote:

An epoch has the painting it deserves. The painting of Dubuffet is illegal, in a state of permanent insurrection. No order, says Dubuffet -- and he means by this -- 'mine'. His order is his own, it is the force of savagery which takes everything to zero, his palette, the yellow, the blue, the green, the red, and also the black. Much black in Dubuffet: whoever likes that, says a proverb, likes writing on walls.³⁵

With Dubuffet then, as Seghers made clear, the slate is wiped clean. Aligned with the prisoner, the deranged inmate, Dubuffet does not see the world the same way as others, yet he is also the common man who, *de facto*, rejects order, institutions, authority. In further discussing Dubuffet's painting, which colours a "violin red, or feet green", Seghers continued these associations, claiming of his art: "That isn't normal . . . it's marvellous and, however, very simple: we call that . . . liberty."³⁶

In May and June, 1944, Dubuffet produced a group of graffiti-like works, which departed somewhat from the earlier series, because of their emphasis on written language, and on close-up encounters with inscribed walls of Paris. Language, to reiterate, was a minefield, from silence to *balbutiements*, always in response to the language of collaboration or propaganda, and the scarred walls attest to this 'war of words'. Radio provided another voice for both sides of the struggle, and to some extent, informs this latter series which Dubuffet called Messages [Figures 32-35].

Following the German occupation and the seizure of all organs of communication, the official radio operations were Radio-Paris, the voice of the Third Reich, and Radio-Vichy, known as the 'radio of intoxication'.³⁷ Nazi radio propagandists believed that the masses would be impressed by strength, and must remain "shudderingly submissive."³⁸ According to Adolf Raskin, "Dramaturgy of Propaganda" in the Handbuch der Deutschen

Rundfunks (1939-40), " . . . genuine, sincere radio is simply propaganda . . . it means fighting on the battlefields of the mind . . . to destroy, to weed out and annihilate, to build and to abolish."³⁹

On the 19th of June, 1940, General de Gaulle made his first broadcast from London. While Pétain's image was omnipresent, few would remember de Gaulle's face, but eventually, the solace of his voice, and the nightly BBC broadcast, 'Les français parlent aux français' -- the whole notion of French speaking to French -- made the programme popular despite official denouncement [see Figure 36]. The result was that listening to foreign radio was ultimately banned in 1941, and in 1943 Vichy outlawed the purchase of radio sets.⁴⁰ Such listening took on the form of a kind of secret near-religious ritual. With closed doors and shutters, people would gather in what would be described as a 'communion of hope', and the next day, in the interminable queues, commentary would be passed, mouth to ear, or on pieces of paper.⁴¹

Witnessing the phenomenon of the BBC, collaborationist writer Alfred Fabre-Luce wrote in his journal in 1940:

French opinion is no longer guided by the government, still less it is guided by the German occupation authorities. It can be seen obeying anonymous catch-words, and spreading rumours from one end of the country to another . . . During the day, your Frenchman sounds so simpleminded, one would think he had never read anything but the DNB news; but at night, behind closed doors, and among trusted friends he turns on the BBC . . .⁴²

A certain level of intrigue was added to the situation in the summer of 1941. Broadcasts were interrupted frequently by coded messages, sounding nonsensical, or like family greetings. Notifications to resistance agents in the field, 'Romeo embrasse Juliette', 'la chien de Barbara aura trois chiots', 'Esculape n'aime pas le mouton' could signify, respectively, 'safe arrival courier from Toulouse', 'arrival in Barcelona of three passengers', and 'a drop near Chaumont'.⁴³ The messages could not have been more public, but because of the use of a code wherein the message would be fully understood only by the intended receiver, the Germans were not able to decipher the meanings. As D-Day approached, the messages signalled calls to action, to sabotage railway and telephone targets. On the 1st of June, 1944, 200 such messages were sent via the BBC, and on the 4th

of June, the awaited message that the Allies had landed took the form of a quote from Verlaine: 'les sanglots longs des violons d'automne'. On the 5th of June, the day before D-Day, the remainder of the verse: 'bercent mon coeur d'une langueur monotone,' passed over the airwaves.⁴⁴ The ordinary citizen was aware of this secret language, and while not knowing the exact meaning of the code, understood nevertheless that the messages were laden with import, and that their growing number signified the existence of a large underground network in France, increasingly called to overt action.

The 17th of June, 1944, is the date of the first of Dubuffet's series of 12 Messages, each ink on gouache on newspaper, each roughly letter-sized (~20x23 cm.), some signed and dated. Dubuffet took portions of newspapers, the official German or French press, defaced these with gouache strokes, and handwrote overtop a number of 'messages', some nearly illegible, appearing hastily, furtively, yet audaciously scribbled. Some titles are: Georges arrive demain matin, toujours bien devoués à vos ordres [Figure 35], Emile est reparti, je pense à toi, vu que j'aime pas, reviens, ma santé est toujours excellente et je ne m'ennuie pas, [Figure 36]. The language of these is banal, innocuous, even cliched. They are private, letter-type communications directed toward an intimate listener. Yet the phrases echo the seemingly trite, but intensely charged, BBC messages.

Other Dubuffet defacements have a blasphemous tone: Dubuffet est un sale con, un foireux, un enculé [Figure 33], and Je n'aime pas les femmes saoules et les emmerdeuses. Both groups of words could have been written on walls, washrooms, prisons, fences, but whereas the former evoke urgent communication, the latter are provocative examples of the transgressive language of graffiti, forbidden, abusive toward correct and proper behaviour, explosions indicative of a private hostility made public. The first of these, Dubuffet est un sale con, un foireux, un enculé [Figure 33], is bitter self-deprecation, self-hatred. It is a mirror, in a way, to the prevalent image given back to the French in German propaganda, that population defeated, violated, but ostensibly happily so. Or perhaps such language connotes the submissive collaborator, presenting a confrontational image to the overtly masculine, fascist construction of a 'man'. What remains of the self is a crude trace,

a frustration, not even on a real wall, but a shrunken representation.

Certain concerns of the Parisian situation are articulated in Messages: conjunctions of material and metaphor (the wall and the *parole*), the interior and the public realms, official and clandestine, individual and collective, personal and anonymous, overt and covert, propaganda and censored speech, lies and authenticity (the 'real' fragment of newsprint, and the 'artifice' of art and language), nonsense and meaning. Dubuffet turns this latter around, making sense and meaning from the ostensibly meaningless scrawl, making his 'mark' with the handwritten message larger than the newsprint type, scratching out the official version of events. In doing this, he overturns hierarchies of language, of the upside-down regime of the Occupation. Also, Dubuffet makes an evident gesture toward the *zazou*, the delinquent, the troublemaker, the graffiti, the outlaw, the urban guerrilla, and also the field agent -- who all, risking arrest, kept alive the spirit of opposition during the war. This begs the question which arose in the previous chapter, in the discussion of Lurçat's images: who is the real barbarian? Language is assumed to be a civilizing force. Who is its abuser, the encoder, the blasphemer, or the propagandist? The outlaw may be a primitive, but with the cunning, the 'intelligence' of a spy.

Resistance poet, Eugène Guillevic, wrote a collection of 12 poems, Les Murs, in 1943; Jean Dubuffet provided 15 lithographic illustrations for the book in 1945 [Figures 37-41].⁴⁵ Guillevic's verses [Appendix C], claim that walls are like people, some are friends to lean on, comfortable places to rest your palm or your elbow, but, like people, one cannot see inside them. Even when broken, only the facade shows. "Some walls are ugly," wrote Guillevic, "made to hide or block, inset with broken glass," they may keep us from the past, from a time when we could make love behind them -- but, he said, "They cannot stop the triumphal crowds." In a subsequent verse, Guillevic asked, "What is a wall for a wounded person? . . . when he comes to it often, in battles, to rest again? It may allow him to die, with more leisure, and some liberty."

Dubuffet's lithographs, while as varied as the verses, share some basic elements among themselves. In each, the walls constitute nearly the whole of the background, solid

confines which allow no glimpse of nature or the outside world. Walls are man-made structures, instruments of imprisonment or protection, and while they may be eventually scaled, they must first be confronted. In general, Dubuffet's walls are black slabs, enlivened only by scratched inscriptions; some nearly obliterated by script [Mur et gisant, Figure 37]; some have only a few names or phrases such as 'vives les anglètes', [Pisseurs au mur, Figure 38].

Human figures appear grimly lockstepped up against the walls, the outlines of the bricks fixing the figures on the same plane as the walls, people treated, created by the same artistic process as the ostensibly inanimate walls. In Mur et gisant, the horizontal, 'barely breathing' body is etched out of the backdrop like another inscription. Like some walls, some men are ugly. One with a death's head grimaces beside the notice-format used to announce executions [Mur et avis, Figure 39]. In Pisseurs au mur, two bleak figures bridge two walls, joined by the solid white space between them. Each has his own wall on which to urinate, and the twin, identical arcs of the streams of urine act as a framing device for the picture -- a compositional mockery of traditional art practice. Homme coincé dans les murs [Figure 40] makes clear the identification of Man and wall, the man constrained by white lines, mouth agape and drawn back with protruding tongue, as if to indicate a silent scream, or strangled speech. Language is transferred to the wall: it speaks for the speechless. In Mur et homme [Figure 41], the 'man' is only a smear on the wall, like a bloodstain after an execution.

These are not 'pretty pictures', and are also far away from the colourful images of the earlier Métro and Vues de Paris, as the figures have none of the studied nonchalance of the subway riders, or the innocence of the strollers in Vues de Paris. Like the Messages, these pictures are not 'views', but involve interior confrontations. Yet Dubuffet indicates, in the same metaphorical vein as Guillevic, some certain endurance for Man (as solid as a wall), or, ironically, the walls are as alive, vulnerable, temporal, even ephemeral, as those humans who both build and destroy them. Dubuffet, in Prospectus, wrote in 1946:

There are in the world many objects which resemble and evoke each other.
What must be underscored is this: not the differences and particularities, but

the contrary: the similarities. If one wishes to do humanist work -- and naturally one wants to -- he must make the wind of unity and continuity blow which blows in the world of man.⁴⁶

There is nothing spiritual in these gritty pictures, which generalize a view of the human condition, specifically facing an almighty choice: cornered, against the wall, life 'on the line', evoking an awareness (however fixed, depicted in two dimensions) of the necessity of choosing between death or life (what kind of a wall, or Man). There is no promise, no *promesse de bonheur*, no elevation of a belief in the inherent goodness or sweetness of human nature. In this regard, Dubuffet's Man parts company with Lurçat's. Lurçat's Men have a spiritual purity about them, images of lyrical optimism to Dubuffet's tension and discordance. Lurçat's poetic anthems sing like hymns; the tapestries unroll like banners to Man's infinite capacities, transcending the angst and violence around them. While Lurçat's images provide a strong voice, resistant to oppression, they are positive proclamations for Man, when compared with Dubuffet's ambivalent constructions. Those of Lurçat are already in command, with no doubts of victory. In Dubuffet's Le Métro and Vues de Paris, there is a sense of innocence and yet even in these, an irony pervades which is absent in Lurçat's work. Irony turns to bitter cynicism in Dubuffet's Messages and Les Murs. Dubuffet's Men crouch or cringe, or display masks of pure malevolence of executioners or terror of victims. His walls can be seen as corroded ruins or gravestones, and are always testimonials to those who could not speak, hence were dehumanized.

The crude facticity of these latter works of Dubuffet's has more in common with works like Fautrier's Otages [e.g. Figure 42], than with Lurçat's soft, sensual tapestries. The Otages, a series of images, produced in 1943, were a homage to hostages executed during the war. Like Dubuffet's skeletons, Fautrier's heads or torsos are composted lumps of flesh, petrified fossils. Brute matter, they are all that is left of Man, anonymous victims of violence and torture, innocent martyrs who perhaps faced a most awful choice: to betray others, or to choose not to speak. Jean-Paul Sartre wrote of the preoccupation with the challenge which torture presented in the Republic of Silence, 1945:

Obsessed as we were by these tortures, a week did not go by that we did not ask ourselves: 'Suppose I were tortured, what would I do?' And this question carried us to the very frontier of ourselves and of the human . . .⁴⁷

And of the tortured, he wrote:

For it is within the human that one can distinguish means and ends, values and preferences, but they [the victims] were still at the creation of the world, and they had only to decide in sovereign fashion whether there would be anything more than the reign of the animal within it. They remained silent and man was born of their silence. We knew that at any moment of the day, in the four corners of Paris, man was a hundred times destroyed and reaffirmed.⁴⁸

In his art, Fautrier defiant, unearths, disinters, and exposes the remains in commemorative display. Fautrier, according to his friend, poet Francis Ponge (writing in January 1945), said in response to a suggestion that he paint on a wall, because he had surpassed easel painting, ". . . it is the wall itself that one must come to terms with . . ." ⁴⁹ Ponge explained that, ". . . it is clear that Fautrier has another ambition. He wants to rupture the wall . . . Fautrier knows so many interior constraints . . . so many interior scruples that he has no need to impose them on exteriors . . . his passion is imposed upon by the passions of other men, of anonymous humanity."⁵⁰

Dubuffet, friend of both Fautrier and Ponge, in 1945 illustrated another book, Francis Ponge's Matière et mémoire, providing human corollaries to Ponge's animation of the lithographic stone as it operates in the process of printmaking. Ponge ascribes to the stone the human qualities of memory and language, ". . . when one writes on the lithographic stone, it is as if one is writing it on a memory. It is as though one speaks in front of a face . . . appearing on the skin of a face."⁵¹ Moreover, the process is described in terms of a seduction, the first between the stone (*la pierre*) and the artist. Ponge writes, "We come then to the reactions of the stone . . . when the artist struggles and plays with her, to finally impose his mark on her."⁵² And then he describes another love affair, the marriage of stone and paper, the "perfect fit". He says, "It's in the love here, in a kiss, in a series of kisses that the stone is led to divulge its memory."⁵³ The repetitive act of printmaking is like a women "recalling old lovers".⁵⁴ "The concern here," writes Ponge, "is for a depth of memory, of a profound interior repetition of the theme which is inscribed on the surface . . . It is memory, spirit . . . which create the third dimension."⁵⁵

Dubuffet presents his equivalents in the form of quotidian activities, eating, dancing,

playing the piano. Several are of women, darning socks, plucking a chicken, looking in a mirror, grinding coffee [Figure 43]. Two other women are at other work: le Supplice du téléphone [Figure 44], and Dactylographe [Figure 45]. They are frozen, in silent suspended animation: modern archetypes. Their repetitive activities congeal in the artist's memory: he, too, engages in repetitive labour, indicating a relation between the printmaking process, and other 'common' kinds of work. But Dubuffet's -- the artist's -- position *vis à vis* the stone and the printed image, is that of both the lover and the visionary foreman.

The concerns for language, interior life, for Man, for the wall, continue then to be of issue in this period just after Liberation, although the war still persisted. It was at this time that the united front of resistance began to fragment into its component factions -- or, rather -- the political and philosophical differences between the various groups came to the fore, with the departure of the common enemy, and the ensuing purge of collaborators. While most intellectuals had attempted to retain a certain continuity of beliefs before, during, and after the war, for Sartre certainly, and I believe for Dubuffet as well, it was primarily the experience of years of Occupation which formed the direction of their subsequent art.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Margit Rowell, "Jean Dubuffet: An Art on the Margins of Culture," Jean Dubuffet: A Retrospective (New York: The Solomon Guggenheim Foundation, 1973), p. 17.
- 2 Max Loreau, Jean Dubuffet: Délits, Déportements, Lieux de Haut Jeu (Paris: Weber Editeur, 1971), p. 17
- 3 Ibid. Dubuffet did publish a book, Métromanie, in 1949, but the images were new.
- 4 By the spring of 1943, the internal Resistance had military as well as political and ideological power. The three largest groups had become the United Resistance Movements (MUR) and, after the total occupation of the country in November 1942, prefects in individual departments chose whether or not to adhere to Vichy. According to Kedward, Occupied France: Collaboration and Resistance 1940-1944 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1985), pp. 73-74, by 1944 Germany had only the Milice (the Vichy police) to uphold its authority, since the Resistance had infiltrated the gendarmerie by 1943 or earlier.
- 5 This term was Cassou's, cited by Kedward, *ibid.*, p. 47.
- 6 'Illegal' is Pierre Seghers' description, L'Homme du commun ou Jean Dubuffet (Paris: Editions Poésie, 1944), p.13. He writes, "Une époque a la peinture qu'elle mérite. La peinture de Dubuffet est illégale, en état de permanente insurrection." 'Sinister gaiety' is from Fr. Elgar, Carrefour, 4 November 1944; 'a game of mirrors' is from J. Grenier, in Combat, 27 October 1944; the 'tragic burlesque' quote is from L-G Clayeux, Le monde français, October, 1945. All the above, save Seghers', are cited in the Catalogue des Travaux de Jean Dubuffet, Vol.1, Marionettes de la ville et de la campagne (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Editeur, 1966), pp. 242-243.
- 7 E. Dubois, Paris sans lumière (Lausanne, 1946), cited by Gerard Walter, Paris Under the Occupation (New York: The Orion Press, 1960), pp. 11-12.
- 8 German soldiers were specifically instructed to behave with decorum; this policy was called 'korrektion'. See Robert Aron, The Vichy Regime 1940-1944 (London: Putnam and Co. Ltd., 1958), p. 136. According to Kedward, Occupied France, p. 9, the 'correct German' had become a "bad joke" within two months.
- 9 Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Republic of Silence", The Republic of Silence, A.J. Liebling, ed., trans. Ramon Guthrie (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1947), p. 498. This was originally published in La France libre, in 1945. The writer Vercors (Jean Bruller) also expressed the importance of maintaining clarity of thought. In discussing the setting up of a clandestine publishing house (the Editions de Minuit) in the fall of 1941, Vercors recollected events, ". . . the point really was to show world opinion that France, amid misfortune and violence, was able to keep faith with her highest purpose: her claim to think straight." From Vercors, The Battle of Silence (London: William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd., 1968) p. 155.
- 10 Henri Michel, Paris Résistant (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1982), p. 39. Michel is perhaps the most encyclopedic chronicler of events during the Occupation, providing numerous details and statistics of resistant acts. Many of my examples of these activities are taken from Michel, although some of these have become somewhat legendary in resistance annals. Michel anchors his descriptions with exact dates, and police reports, and hence his exhaustive studies make his works a valuable source for scholarship in this period.

11 Michel, *ibid.*, pp. 40-41. An ingenious example of the use of the tricolour was the combination of women dressed individually in red, white, or blue walking together. Paper and metal Lorraine crosses were sold, and insignia were sewn inside jackets or purses. Reprisals could be severe: on national holidays, the display of forbidden emblems increased, and, for example, on July 14, 1941, 1667 arrests were made of those wearing tricolour cockades.

12 While these *balbutiements* were individual and often anonymous, and not attached to any organized movement, they were numerous enough to represent a generalized expression, viz. jokes and word plays became a kind of common currency: Abel Bonnard, Minister of Education, was called Abel Connard in some quarters; Vichy's *retour a la terre* (as a result of privation) became *retour dans la terre*; and *la fête des mères, la fête des misères*. See Michel, *ibid.*, p. 25.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

14 From Gerard Walter, Paris Under the Occupation, Trans. Tony White (New York: The Orion Press, 1960), p. 153. According to Robert Aron, The Vichy Regime 1940-1944, p. 199, Otto Abetz, the German ambassador, in September 1940, authorized two journalists, Henri Jeanson and Robert Perrier, to publish Aujourd'hui. They refused to follow instructions, and were replaced in November 1940, by George Suarez, and Jeanson was imprisoned. Aron states that, ". . . from then on, the docility of Aujourd'hui was the more valuable to the occupying power for the fact of the independence previously permitted it." This, I believe, accounts for the kind of pretence of protection involved in the passage quoted.

15 Jean Bruller details the situation in the winter of 1941, when silence was dwindling and more writers chose, or were lured, to write for official publications. See Vercors (Jean Bruller), The Battle of Silence, pp. 130-132.

16 'Another period' refers to the censorship in France in the 17th and 18th centuries. The manifesto is included in Defeat and Beyond: An Anthology of French Wartime Writing 1940-1945, Germaine Bree and George Bernauer, eds. Trans. Alastair Hamilton (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), pp. 247-248.

17 Michel, Paris Résistant, p. 40.

18 *Ibid.* Also, Asa Briggs, The War of Words (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), describes the V-campaign in detail, pp. 365-383.

19 Cited by Michel, Paris Résistant, p. 42.

20 These are only two examples, and the most dramatic ones. Of course, the Jews had long been threatened, and Vichy published the first decree against immigrant Jews within two weeks of assuming power; this included Jews naturalized as French just before the war, who were also deprived of their rights. (See Kedward, Occupied France, p. 28.) The roundup of 4000 Jewish children into the Vélodrome d'Hiver on July 16, 1942, deported with 7000 others, an act administered by both Nazi and Vichy authorities, was only the most 'public' of persecutions, and resulted in greater loss of support for Vichy (*Ibid.*, pp. 63-64). Concerning hostage-takings, see Chapter 2, Note 50.

21 Michel, Paris Résistant, p. 15. One reprisal for such activities was the 'blind bombing' of these neighbourhoods.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

23 Gerard Walter, Paris Under the Occupation, p. 158. L'Humanité was the official Communist party journal, suspended in 1939 when the Communist party was itself

prohibited. L'Humanité was published clandestinely during the war.

24 Gerard Walter, Paris Under the Occupation, p. 159. La Gerbe was a legal journal, which began publication in 1940.

25 Jean Paulhan, under a pseudonym in the clandestine journal, Cahiers de la libération, in an article, "The Bee", wrote that the Métro, along with the grocer's, had become the only refuge of any sort of community life, and a common meeting place. This is quoted by Robert Aron, The Vichy Regime 1940-1944. Trans. Humphrey Hare (London: Putnam and Co., Ltd., 1958), p. 433. The entire essay is reprinted in English in The Republic of Silence, A.J. Liebling, ed., pp. 182-184.

26 Gerald Walter, Paris Under the Occupation, p. 72.

27 Quoted by Alexander Werth, France 1940-1955 (London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1956), p. 142. The passage is from Aubrac's book, La Résistance (Naissance et Organisation) (Paris, 1945), p. 15. Aubrac was a member of Libération-Sud, the southern branch of Libération, headed by Emmanuel d'Astier de la Vigézie. The southern group formed a paramilitary organization in 1942.

28 It would be impossible to append copies of all the art which Dubuffet produced during this period, nor would it be possible to address every picture. I have chosen to deal, primarily, with five series, three in gouache (Le Métro, Messages, and Vues de Paris), and two lithographic (Les Murs and Matière et mémoire). From these I have selected several individual works which are typical of each series. I have chosen not to discuss his still lifes of the period, nor his landscapes, since the subject matter does not concern the urban experience which this thesis addresses, and, in any case, this thesis is not meant to be an exhaustive study of all Dubuffet's output. Another series, Jazz, was excluded for similar reasons, although a case could certainly be made for inclusion of this as a representation of a Parisian contemporary entertainment which was not a form encouraged by German or Vichy authorities (especially not, because of its Afro-American origins). A catalogue raisonné does exist for Dubuffet's art, the aforementioned Catalogue des Travaux de Jean Dubuffet.

29 See Seghers', title, L'Homme du Commun ou Jean Dubuffet.

30 Louis Parrot, Jean Dubuffet (Paris: Galerie René Drouin, Pierre Seghers, Editeur, 1944), p. 10. Parrot said, "I think that a great desert of ash covered our old world and that the painter first of all incites us to grieve this desolate absence of colours..."

31 Ibid., p. 12.

32 Georges Limbour, "Jean Dubuffet ou l'imagination de la matière", Servir, Lausanne, 24 & 31 May, 1945. Reprinted in Catalogue des Travaux de Jean Dubuffet, p. 240.

33 Catalogue des Travaux de Jean Dubuffet, p. 123.

34 Pierre Seghers, L'Homme du commun ou Jean Dubuffet, p. 11.

35 Ibid., p. 13. Again, here, the collusion of aesthetics and politics is presented. In more recent art historical accounts of Dubuffet's works of the period, the rebellion encoded in the art is seen to take place only within 'art'. For example, Max Loreau, in Jean Dubuffet: Délits Déportements, Lieux de Haut Jeu (Paris: Weber Editeur, 1971) pp. 20-21, writes forcefully about the series Messages, describing the "futility and emptiness" of the subject matter as a "graphic dance bare of signification and value", without any mention whatsoever of the historical events surrounding the series.

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- 36 Seghers, L'Homme du commun ou Jean Dubuffet, p. 16.
- 37 Odile Vaillant and Myriam Duffau, "Quelques repères, radio, télévision ", Paris-Paris 1937-1957 (Centre Georges Pompidou, 28 May-2 November, 1981), p. 470.
- 38 Philip E. Jacob, "The Theory and Strategy of Nazi Short-Wave Propaganda", Propaganda by ShortWave, Harwood L. Childs and John B. Whitton, eds. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942, pp. 51-108), p. 59.
- 39 Ibid., p. 60.
- 40 Gilles Perrault and Pierre Azema, Paris Under the Occupation (New York: Vendome, 1989), p. 44.
- 41 Michel, Paris Résistant, p. 37.
- 42 Alexander Werth, France 1940-1955, pp. 10-11. Fabre-Luce, who was an advocate of Franco-German collaboration even before the war, published Volume I of his Journal de la France, in January 1941, and a second volume in 1942.
- 43 M.R.D. Foot, S.O.E. in France: An Account of the Work of the British Special Operations Executive in France 1940-1944 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966), p. 110. Foot provides a detailed study of some of the resistance networks in France: Two agents, Bergeret and Herman Gregoire, offer a personal record of activity in a specific area, near Bergerac, in Messages personnels (Bordeaux, Editions Bière, 1945)
- 44 Vaillant and Duffau, "Quelques repères, radio, télévision," Paris-Paris, p. 470.
- 45 Guillevic's poems were published in 1945 as part of a larger collection of his work produced during the war, Terraqué (Editions Gallimard). In 1950, with Dubuffet's illustrations, the poems were republished by Les éditions du Livre in Paris. The lithographs appear in the Catalogue des travaux de Jean Dubuffet, p. 211-233.
- 46 This is from a larger group of Dubuffet's writings, Prospectus et tous écrits suivant, vol. II (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1966), p. 68. The first publication of Prospectus aux amateurs de tout genre was by Gallimard, in 1946.
- 47 Sartre, "The Republic of Silence", p. 220.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Quoted by Ponge, "Notes sur les ôtages", Le Peintre a l'étude (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1948), p. 69.
- 50 Ibid., pp. 69-70.
- 51 Ponge, "Matière et mémoire", 1945, in Le Peintre a l'étude, p. 87.
- 52 Ibid., p. 91.
- 53 Ibid., p. 97.
- 54 Ibid., p. 100.
- 55 Ibid., p. 99.

Conclusion

Both Lurçat and Dubuffet addressed resistance themes in their works: freedom in opposition to control and repression, confrontation to both French collaboration and Nazi barbarism, and the creation of alternative images to propaganda. For both, the development of a language which would be seen to encode resistance was central to their work as was the use of artistic means which would envelop local and national concerns. Indeed, the enterprise was an attempt to reach beyond the strictly individual or national, to embody notions of a human commonality. Ultimately, resistance art sought to testify to the existence of an active opposition at a time when many thought that the rest of the world believed that France had graciously or willingly submitted to defeat.¹

There were, however, significant differences in the two projects. Artists and intellectuals such as Lurçat, Aragon, and Eluard were adherents of a universal humanism, one which was based on such tenets as the inherent goodness of Man and the potential for change, while preserving a continuity of culture -- the origins of which were national. In contrast, the humanism of Sartre, Dubuffet, Ponge, and Fautrier was predicated upon a materialist basis, the capacity of Man to do both good and evil, a refusal to accept any empowerment not based on individual choice, and the refusal to accept a solution which did not blast away the cultural trappings of the past.

Lurçat's agenda was well-established by the 1930's. It was a surefooted response to the inquietude of that decade and his humanistic beliefs persisted, despite the calamitous attack of the war. With the identification of the Resistance with the French Communist party (PCF), and the recognition of that party's role in the preservation of French culture, Lurçat -- who later joined the PCF -- was seen as the quintessential Resistance artist. Dubuffet's crude and nasty investigations have been viewed differently by history, divested of their political meaning despite Dubuffet's own activity within a milieu which included many Communists. Galvanized by the circumstances of the war, Dubuffet's images briefly remained outside the realm of high culture as the artist continued his interest in

disenfranchisement, whether in his own art or in his collecting of Art Brut. It was through this very stance that Dubuffet maintained the mantle of the 'modern' avant-garde artist outside an art of 'circumstance' or situation: a judgement which Lurçat could not escape. However, during the war, these milieus interlocked; for example, writers such as Eluard, Seghers, and Guillevic embraced both Dubuffet and Lurçat. But more importantly, as my thesis has argued, these two artists' works evinced a commonality and communality which for a brief moment appeared to be the reconciliation of politics and aesthetics hoped for in the previous decade.

The war in France was fought partially on the level of words and symbols -- the scribblers' war, a war of words, *guerre des affiches*. At first by necessity, and then design, the war was won by transforming words and codes into action [See Figure 46]. Potent metaphors for the upside-down world of Nazi occupation are with us today: night, nocturne, nightmare, silence, winter, night and fog, dark ages -- indicative of barbarity in the seat of civilization and culture, irrationality in the heart of reason. The writer Vercors recalled a conversation with Jean Cassou in 1941, when the two feared that the Occupation could last a hundred years. They anticipated that "the role of the intellectuals would be similar to that of the monks who, during the long night of the Middle Ages, were obstinately and secretly passing on the torch of ancient thought".² The role of art took on a similar task. By reclaiming the wall, by turning the private, interior world to the outside, by persisting in a practice forced underground, and insisting on forms of freedom, the art of Lurçat and of Dubuffet served as testimony to the kind of clandestine activity which did, in the end, overturn the regime of the Occupation.

ENDNOTES

1 See Vercors, The Battle of Silence (London: William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd, 1968. Trans. Rita Barisse. First published in France, 1967), p. 129. Vercors' milieu, at least, chafed at this message to the world, given by Vichy press and by diplomats. British contempt for France's weakness is described by Kedward, Occupied France: Collaboration and Resistance 1940-1944 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1985), p. 1.

2 J.H. King, "Language and Silence: Some Aspects of Writing and the French Resistance", European Studies Review, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1972, p. 232, quotes Vercors, from The Battle of Silence (London: William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd., 1968), p.158.



Figure 1 Poster of Maréchal Pétain. The Marshal thanks the Legionnaires: "In joining the crusade led by Germany, thereby gaining the undeniable right to world gratitude, you are playing your part in warding off the Bolshevik peril from our land". (Source: David Pryce-Jones, Paris in the Third Reich, London: William Collins Sons Co. Ltd., 1981.)



Figure 2 Master baker H. Labazec with his 'Pétain' cake, June 1943. (Source: Alain Guérin, La Résistance: chronique illustrée 1930-1950, Vol. 2. Paris: Club Diderot, 1985, p.97.)



Figure 3 Jean Lurçat, Combat de coqs, 1939. Tapestry, 600 sq.cm. Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris.

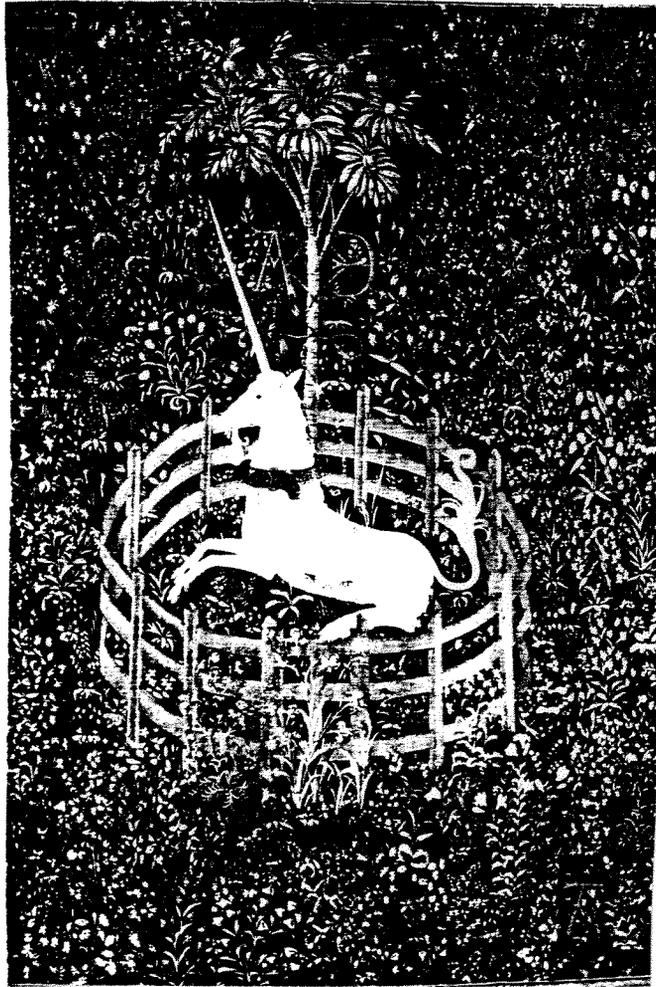


Figure 4 The Unicorn in Captivity. The Unicorn Tapestries, Franco-Flemish, c.1515. 300 x 200 cm. Collection of the Cloisters, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 5

Jean Lurçat, Le Poète, 1939. Tapestry, 300 cm x 265 cm.



Figure 6

Jean Lurçat, Le Poète, detail.



Figure 7
Arno Breker, Partei, 1938.



Figure 8
Arno Breker, Wehrmacht, 1938.

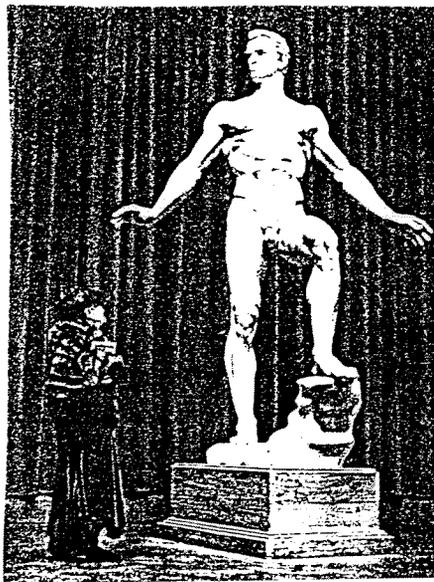


Figure 9
Arno Breker, unnamed statue at Breker exhibition at l'Orangerie, Paris, 1942. (Source: Gilles Perrault and Pierre Azema, Paris Under the Occupation. New York: Vendome, 1989, p.98.)



Figure 10 The Wild Condition, from The Four Conditions of Society. One of 4 looseleaf illuminations, Tours, 1457-1521, 17 x 13.5 cm. Collection Paris: Ecole National Supérieure des Beaux Arts Bibliothèque, Miniatures 90-93.

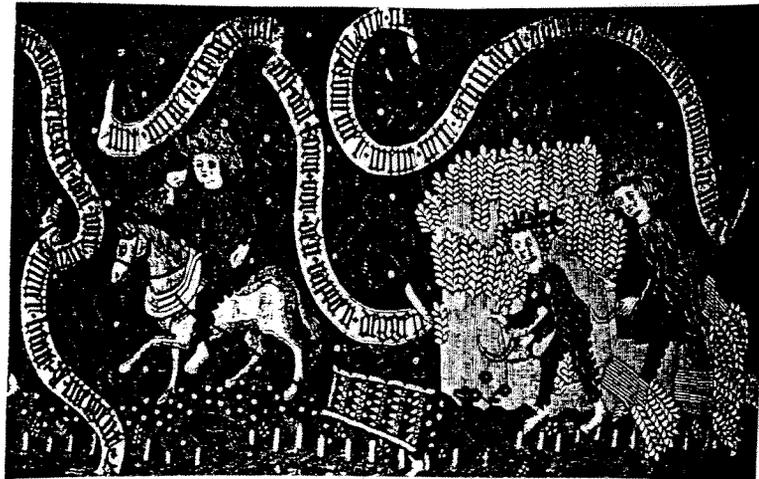


Figure 11 Wild Folk Working the Land, detail. Tapestry, Switzerland, c.1480. 90 cm x 600 cm. Collection Vienna: Österreichisches Museum für angewandte kunst.



Figure 12 Bal des Ardents, (The Wild Man Dance of Charles VI). Illumination from a Book of Hours, end 15th century. 50 cm x 35 cm. Collection, London: The British Library, Harley MS. 4380.



Figure 13 Jean Lurçat, L'Hallali, 1940-41. Tapestry 300 cm x 300 cm. Collection Mrs. T. Catesby-Jones.

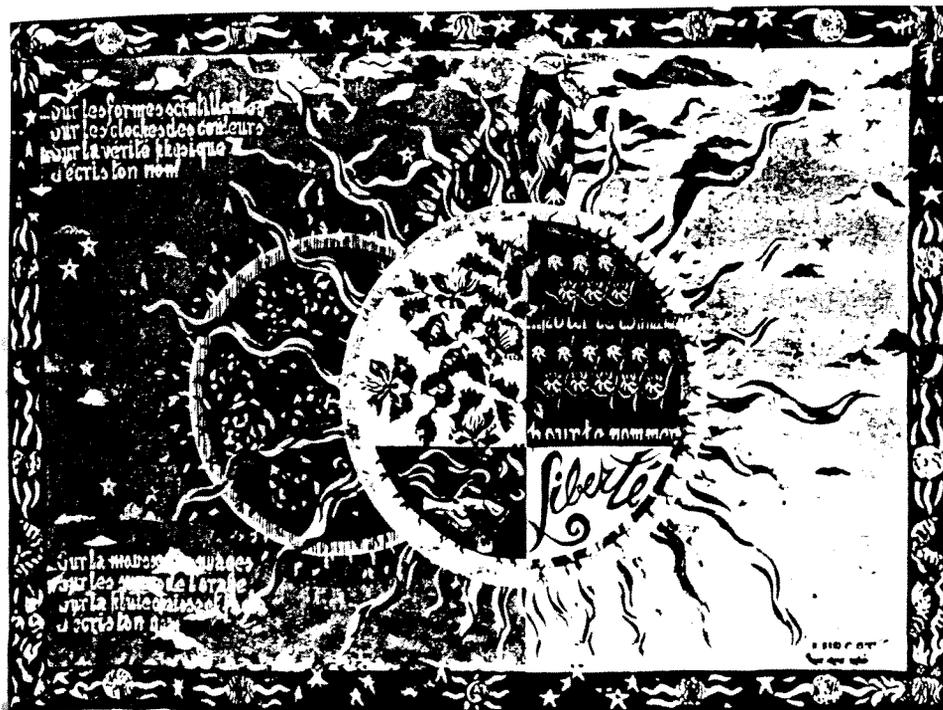


Figure 14 Jean Lurçat, Liberté, 1942. Tapestry, 325 cm x 235 cm. Collection Paris: Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne.

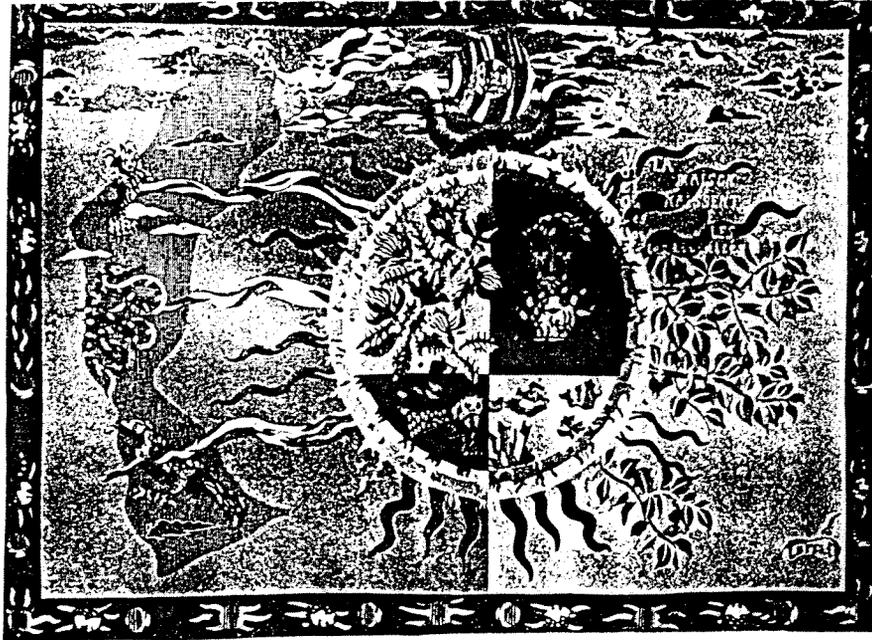


Figure 15 Jean Lurçat, L'Apollinaire, 1942. Tapestry, 250 cm x 350 cm.

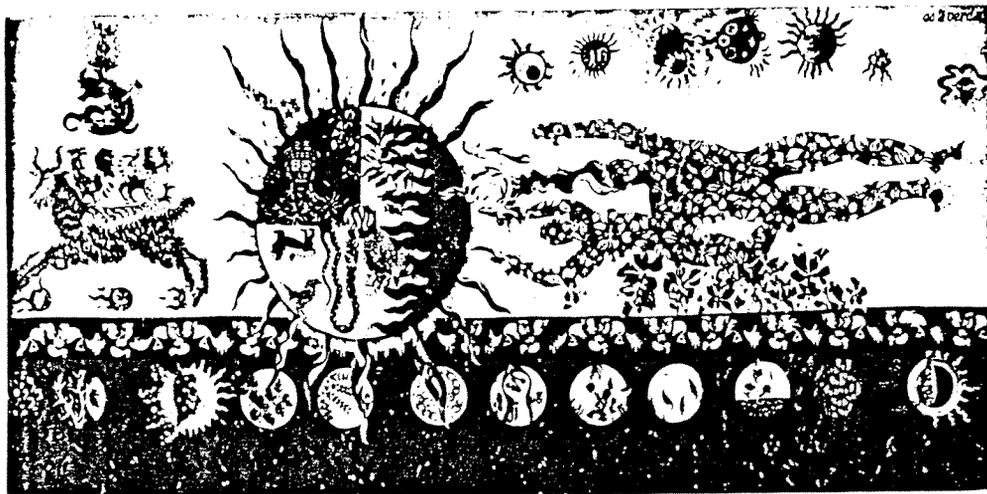


Figure 16 Jean Lurçat, Es la verdad, 1942. Tapestry, 300 cm x 750 cm. Collection B.N.C.I., Bogota.



Figure 17 Jean Lurçat, La Terre, detail, 1944. Tapestry.

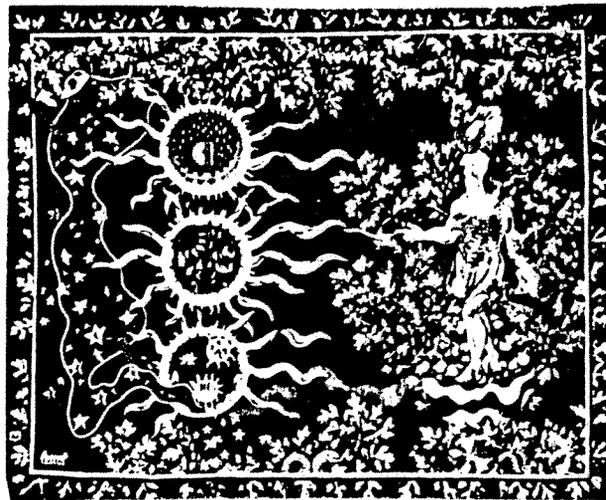


Figure 18 Jean Lurçat, Le Ciel et la terre, 1944. Tapestry.

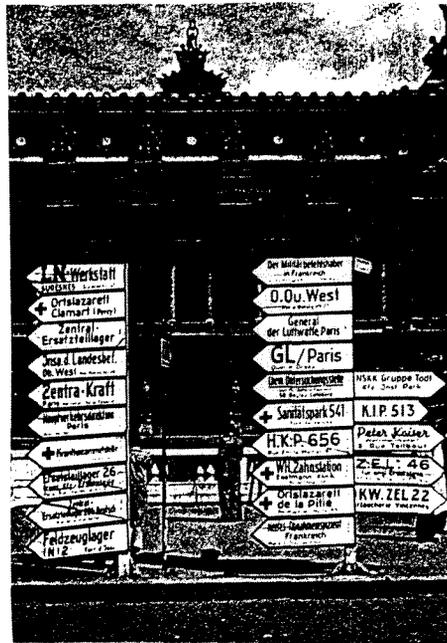


Figure 19 German road signs at a Paris intersection, Place de l'Opera. (Source: David Pryce-Jones, Paris in the Third Reich, London: William Collins Sons Co. Ltd., 1981, p.16.)



Figure 20 Hitler in front of the Eiffel Tower, 1940. (Source: Gilles Perrault and Pierre Azema, Paris Under the Occupation, New York: Vendome, 1989, p.67.)



Figure 21 1940 German poster, defaced by inscription reading, "He replaces the father he killed". (Source: Russell Miller, The Resistance, Chicago: Time-Life Books, 1979, p.13.)



Figure 22 Jockey wearing Gaullist Croix de Lorraine. (Source: David Pryce-Jones, Paris in the Third Reich, London: William Collins Sons Co. Ltd., 1981, p.23.)



Figure 23 German use of V-sign on Chambre des députés, Paris. (Source: Gilles Perrault and Pierre Azema, Paris Under the Occupation, New York: Vendome, 1989, p.82.)



Figure 24 "La Puissance Allemagne," German poster in occupied France. (Source: Zbynek Zeman, Selling the War: Art and Propaganda in World War II, London: Orbis, 1978, p.86.)



Figure 25 Picture sequence of nocturnal graffiti artist, France, World War II. (Source: Russell Miller, The Resistance, Chicago: Time-Life Books, 1979, p.12.)



Figure 26
 Jean Dubuffet, Métro, 10 March 1943.
 Gouache, 37 cm x 30 cm.
 Private collection, New York.

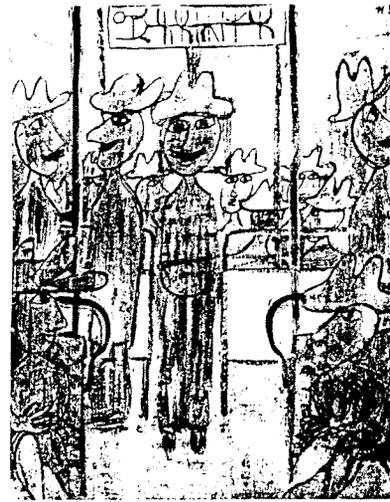


Figure 27
 Jean Dubuffet, Métro, 11 March 1943.
 Gouache, 37 cm x 30 cm.
 Private collection, New York.



Figure 28
 Jean Dubuffet, Métro, March, 1943.
 Gouache, 37 cm x 30 cm.
 Private collection, New York.



Figure 29
 Jean Dubuffet, Métro, 14 March 1943.
 Gouache, 37 cm x 30 cm.
 Private collection, New York.

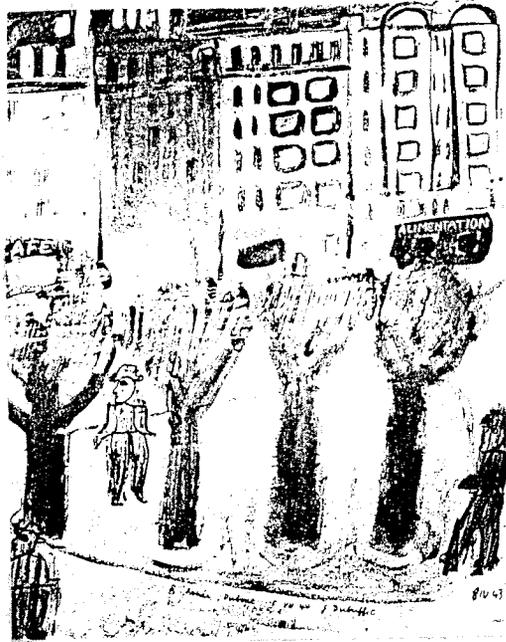


Figure 30 Jean Dubuffet, Vue de Paris, 8 April 1943. Gouache, 37 cm x 30 cm. Collection Mme. René Dubout, Paris.



Figure 31 Jean Dubuffet, Vue de Paris avec quatre arbres et trois personnages (Place de l'Estrapade), April 1943. Gouache, 37 cm x 30 cm. Collection E. Boissonas, Paris.



Figure 32 Jean Dubuffet, Message. (First words illegible) ". . . ma santé toujours excellente et je ne m'ennuie pas du tout . . .", 24 June 1944. Ink on newspaper, 20.5 cm x 26 cm. Collection Alfonso Ossorio, New York.



Figure 33 Jean Dubuffet, Message, "Dubuffet est un sale con, un foireaux, un enculé . . .", 24 June 1944. Ink on newspaper, 25.5 cm x 25.5 cm. Collection Alfonso Ossorio, New York.



Figure 34 Jean Dubuffet, Message, "Ledru-Rollin sortie en métro", 25 June 1944. Ink and gouache on newspaper, 21 cm x 22 cm. Collection, artist.

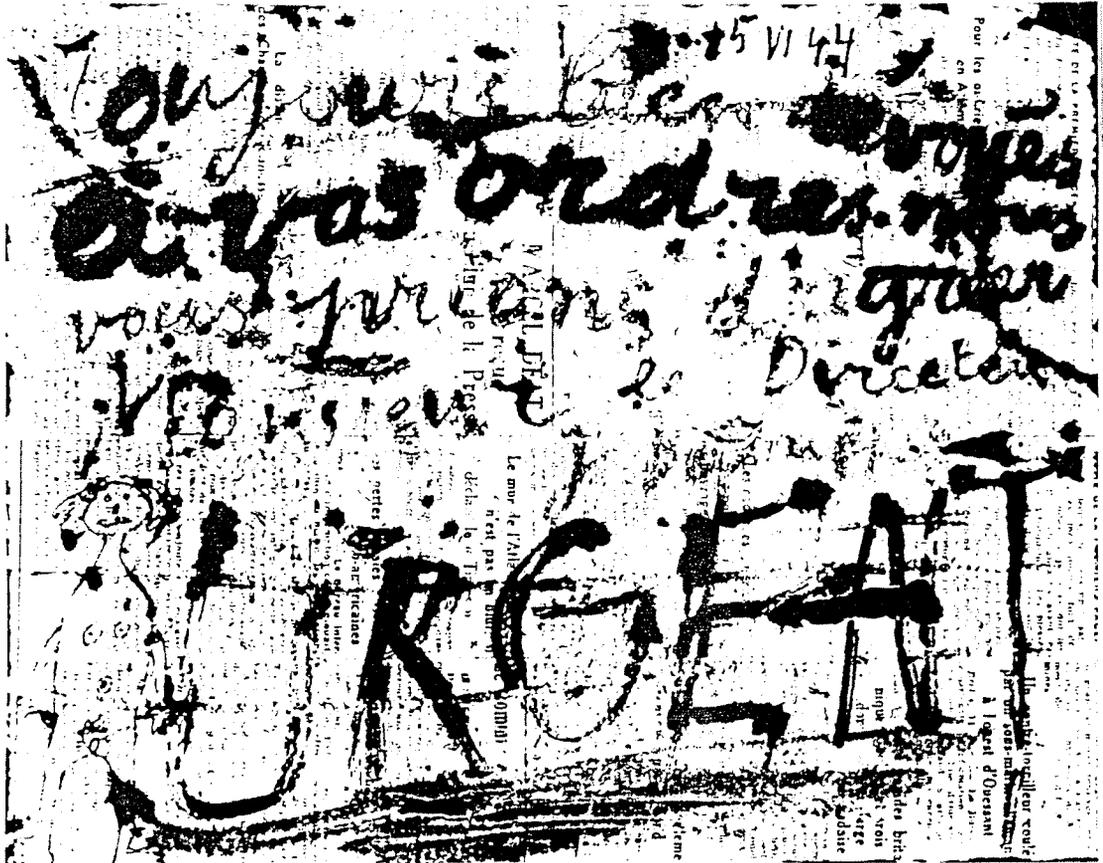


Figure 35 Jean Dubuffet, Message, "Toujours bien dévoués à vos ordres . . .", 25 June 1944. Ink and gouache on newspaper, 20 cm x 24 cm. Collection, artist.



Figure 36 Poster by André Deran, denouncing BBC "tall stories". From the collection of the Comité d'histoire de la 2e Guerre Mondiale. (Source: Philippe Masson, ed. The Second World War, Librairie Larousse, 1984. Twickenham, Middlesex: Hamlyn Publishing, 1985, p.71.)



Figure 37 Jean Dubuffet, Mur et gisant, Les Murs, plate XI, 13 January 1945.
Lithograph, 37 cm x 27 cm.

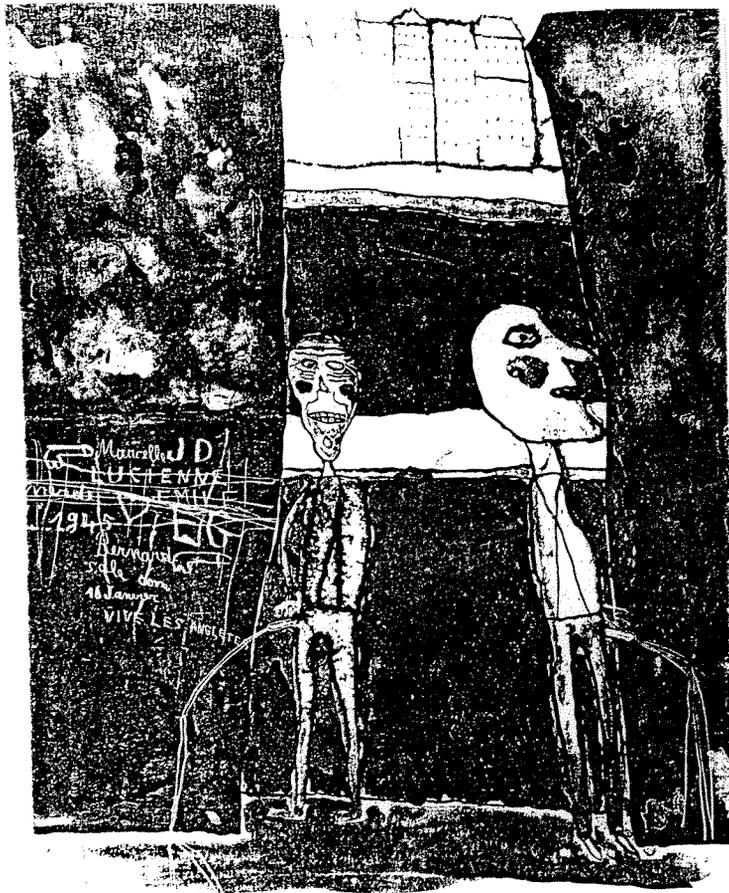


Figure 38 Jean Dubuffet, Pisseurs au mur, Les Murs, plate VIII, 16 January 1945. Lithograph, 34.5 cm x 28.5 cm.



Figure 39 Jean Dubuffet, Mur et avis, Les Murs, plate XII, January-March, 1945. Lithograph, 37 cm x 28 cm.



Figure 40 Jean Dubuffet, Homme coincé dans les murs, Les Murs, plate III. Lithograph, 36 cm x 28.5 cm.

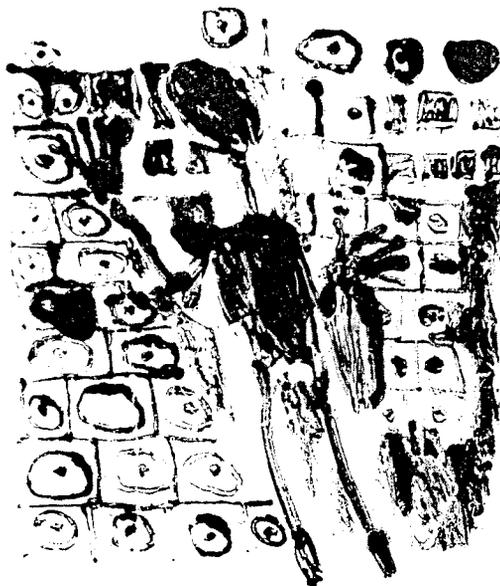


Figure 41 Jean Dubuffet, Mur et homme, frontispiece Les Murs, January-March, 1945. Lithograph, 32.5 cm x 27 cm.



Figure 42 Jean Fautrier, Tête d'Otage, No. 3, 1943. Oil on paper on canvas, 35.5 cm x 27.5 cm. Collection Sceaux Musée de l'Île de France.



Figure 43 Jean Dubuffet, Moulouse de café, Matière et mémoire, plate XXXII, 18 November 1944. Lithograph, 29 cm x 20 cm. Collection, Mr. and Mrs. R. Colin, New York.



Figure 44 Jean Dubuffet, Le Supplice du téléphone, Matiere et mémoire, plate XXX, 1944. Lithograph, 29 cm x 18 cm.

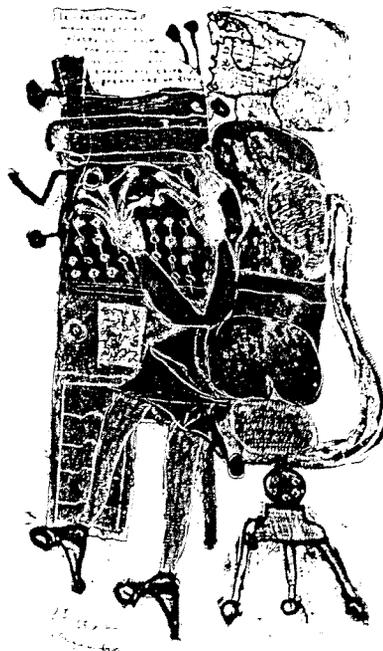


Figure 45 Jean Dubuffet, Dactylographe, Matiere et mémoire, plate XVIII, 25 October 1944. Lithograph, 26.5 cm x 16 cm.

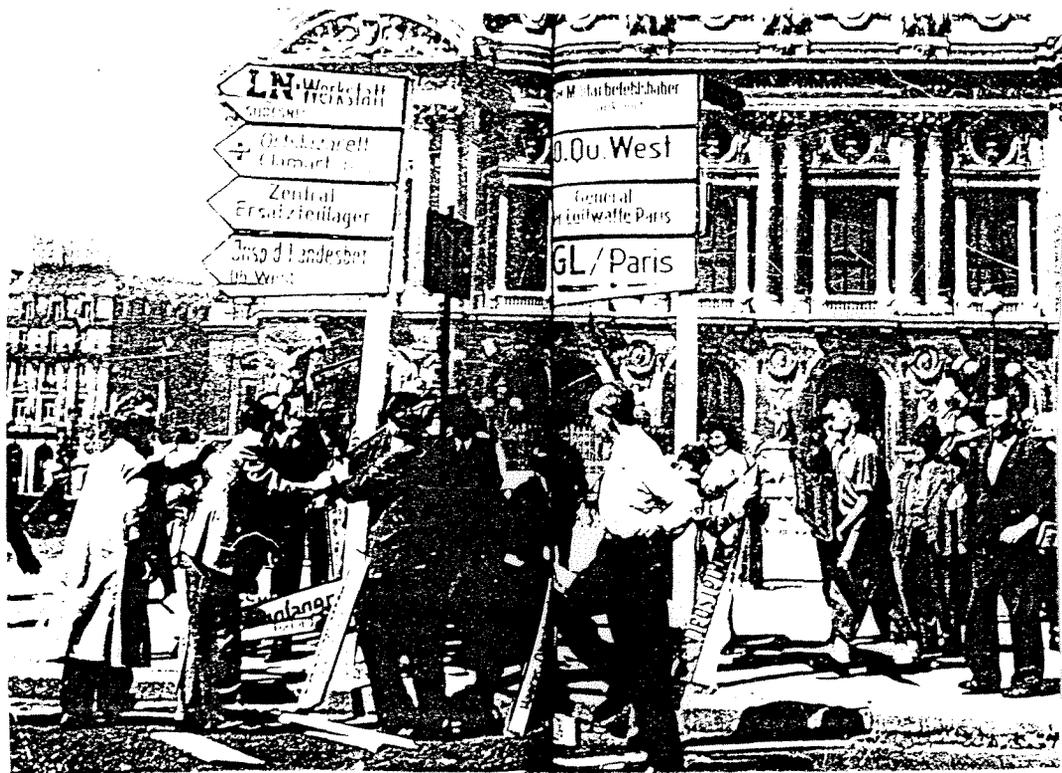


Figure 46 Resistance fighters dismantling German signs, 1944. (Source: David Pryce-Jones: Paris in the Third Reich, London: William Collins Sons Co. Ltd., 1981, pp. 208-209.)

Appendix A

Luc Bérumont: "Le temps du beau plaisir . . ."

Written in 1942 and published in 1943, this is the tenth of a series of 15 consecutive pieces in verse in *La Huche à pain*.

Le temps du beau plaisir serpente par des plaines
Où les blés vont rugir avec leurs lions roux.
Les enfants couleront de ces toisons oisives:
Un peuple est à mûrir dans les caves de l'août
Des lèvres, par milliers, sucent la terre ouverte.

C'est le cargo du blé, c'est l'océan du sang
On entend s'élever des vivats à la lune
Les morts sont à nourrir la bouche des vivants
Un étendard de vent bat à la grande hune.

Les couchés dresseront leurs poings d'épis luisants
De leurs ventres fendus jailliront des armées
Tout retourne à l'été, tout rentre dans le rang
Le boulanger pétrit des neiges explosées.¹

¹ Ian Higgins, "France, Soil and Language: Some Resistance Poems by Luc Bérumont and Jean Marcenac", *Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture and Ideology*. H.R. Kedward and Roger Austin, eds. (Totawa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1985), p. 207.

Appendix B

Paysage

V
OI LA ?
CI MAISON
Où NAISSENT
LES È
TOI LES
ET LES DIVINITÉS

CET
ARBRISSEAU
QUI SE PRÉPARE
A FRUCTIFIER
TE
RES
SEM
BLE

C O U C H É
B MANTS N
VOUS È
VOUS
SÈ
PA MBS
RE MEM
R B R B
E B R B
a
UN CIGARE B
i r u b e
i u q u e
i l u m e

Guillaume Apollinaire, "Paysage", Calligrammes: Poems of Peace and War (1913-1916), (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p.30.

Appendix C

LES MURS

Les murs sont compagnons,
Posés toujours qu'ils sont pour le coude et la
paume
Et dressés vers les yeux,

Ayant un peu de terre
Où confier leur bonté quand ils en ont excès

Et paraissant avoir prouvé leur innocence
A se trouver dans l'air tout en vivant de noir.

Bien des murs sont tachés
De mousse ou de lichen couleur des vagues

Qui à peine émergés
De l'eau tiède et du sel où vivre prend figure

Laissent de pierre à nu
Aussi gros que la plaie à ne pas trop montrer,
Plutôt chérir quand on est seul.

C'est dans les murs
Que sont les portes
Par où l'on peut entrer

Et par l'une
Arriver.

Ils ont affaire à l'air
Pour quelques distractions.

Le vent de mer y passe
En poussant dans le ciel et la chair des garçons,

Y porte feuille ou moucheron
Et la caresse.

Ils ont affaire aussi
A la pluie, aux lessives.

Mais le soleil
Est un pouvoir.

Les murs quand ils sont hauts,
Surtout ceux qui n'ont pas fenêtres et rideaux,

Qui ont traînées parfois de gris jaune et de noir
Dessous les cheminées,

Sont bons pour être écrans aux visions des passants
Qui n'y trouvent pas forme ni leçon,
Mais soupirail:

Un géant rouge a fait grand signe
Et sur les toits ses pieds vont vite.
C'est au ciel qu'il s'en prend,
C'est à l'été. Il a du feu entre les bras.
Il a laissé tomber un astre ou un enfant.
Il dit: Vengeance. Il se rassoit.

C'était un pauvre.

Il y a du terrible dans le monde
Et ce sera

Un mur à travers champs, contre un prunier,
Auprès de la charrette et ses timons dans l'air,
Sous le soleil qui fait durer l'immensité.

Un mur qui n'aura pu
S'habituer

Et ne croit plus
Réduire l'espace à travers plaines.

Voir les dedans des murs
Ne nous est pas donné

On a beau les casser,
Leur façade est montrée

Bien sûr que c'est pareil
En nous et dans les murs,

Mais voir
Apaiserait.

Des murs
Sont laids.

Ils n'y auront pas mis
Du leur.

Faits pour cacher,
Pour empêcher,

Amidonnés parfois
De lessons de bouteilles.

--- Ils n'arrêteront pas
Les foules du triomphe.

Parfois les routes
--- Nous y allions pour le plaisir ou le devoir --
Étaient bordées de murs.

Ils nous donnaient la verticale,
Du soleil blanc, la route encoure
Et du loisir,

Mais ils nous séparaient
De la fraise attardée dans la fraîcheur du bois

Où toucher deux genoux
Qui ont tant de raisons de trembler sous les
feuilles.

On ne serait pas tellement plus mal

Devenus le mur au bord de la place
Où les enfants jouent entre des vieillards,

Lui qui de toute la ville ne sait que la colère.

---On pourrait deviner aussi
Un mur caché par le feuillage, à la campagne,
Pour être heureux.

Que peut un mur
Pour un blessé?

Et pourtant
Il en vient toujours dans les batilles
S'y adosser,

Comme si la mort ainsi
Permettait de mourir

Avec plus de loisir
Et quelque liberté

Un homme
Est devenu jaloux des murs,

Et puis, têtue, c'est des racines
Qu'il ne peut plus se démêler.

Il assoit à l'écart
Un corps habitué,

Exclut les portes,
Exclut le temps
Voit dans le noir

Et dit: amour.

Eugène Guillevic
Terraqué (1942)

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