

1

In the Eyes of the Beholder:
French Perceptions of Women and the Occupation,
1940-Present

Shannon L. Fogg
University Undergraduate Research Fellow, 1994-95
Texas A&M University
Department of Modern and Classical Languages

APPROVED *R J Golsan* (Richard J. Golsan)
Undergraduate Advisor
Exec. Dir., Honors Program *R J Golsan*

In the Eyes of the Beholder:
French Perceptions of Women and the Occupation,
1940-Present

After a brief, six-week confrontation which culminated in French defeat, France officially signed what they assumed would be a temporary armistice with Germany on June 25, 1940. The memories of the death and destruction wrought by World War I encouraged the capitulation of this once proud nation. The French viewed the armistice as a temporary stop-gap measure until they could sign a peace agreement with Germany. They held every belief that the Germans would view their cooperation favorably, and would thus impose more lenient peace terms than if the French Army had continued to fight their invaders. Little did the French people know that the trauma of defeat would be immediately followed by the trauma of occupation by a foreign power for the next five years.

In the wake of the defeat of the army, the nation and the government also crumbled. A country that previously appeared to be stable and powerful was now in shambles--politically, culturally, and morally. Out of this turmoil arose the government of Marshal Philippe Pétain. On July 10, 1940, the Popular Front Government of the Third Republic dissolved itself by voting full powers, including the right to revise constitutional law, to Pétain, thus creating *l'Etat français* in the spa town of Vichy. Because the National Assembly "legally" created this authoritative government, the French people considered it legitimate. Operating

government, the French people considered it legitimate. Operating from the southern, unoccupied zone of France, the Vichy government served as a link between the French people and the Nazis and was, in fact, a regime dedicated to active collaboration with Hitler's Third Reich. Robert O. Paxton argues that Vichy was not a fascist regime, but rather a conservative attempt to find a "third way" between communism on the left and fascism on the right.¹ However, Pétain's government did share some of the same ideals as fascism including anti-semitism, authoritarianism, and anti-liberalism. Furthermore, the Vichy regime was not a mere extension of Nazism in France. Rather than becoming a puppet government, Vichy sought autonomy within the confines of occupation.

Additionally, the newly established state had its own agenda for social change in France. Pétain and his government were an extreme, conservative reaction to the pre-war socialist government headed by Léon Blum. Vichy blamed the defeat of France on the decadence and moral decline of the 1930s caused, in their opinion, by the liberal and Jewish government of Blum. Pétain sought a National Revolution based on the motto, *Travail, Famille, Patrie*, (Work, Family, Homeland) that would restore France to its former glory. The Vichy regime viewed active collaboration with Germany as a means to placate Hitler and thereby allow themselves a modicum of freedom to pursue their own nationalistic goals. Vichy had an agenda that engendered internal conflicts and included a call to a return to the soil, increased religiosity, and anti-semitism. Vichy was characterized by the investigations, imprisonments, and

internments of their own countrymen. In fact, many of the atrocities of the Occupation that would later be attributed to Nazi imposition were actually a product of the internal Vichy government. Vichy attempted what turned out to be impossible; they attempted to create a new social order while under the surveillance of a foreign occupier.

The German Occupation of France is not a simple case of good versus evil or black and white. It is replete with ambiguities and remains an era in French history that is still difficult for the French to remember or to forget. The trauma of foreign occupation and the rule of an authoritarian government has profoundly affected the French people, and the repercussions are still being felt. The main events that characterize the time period began on June 18, 1940. On that day from his headquarters in London, Charles de Gaulle called for the continued resistance of the French people despite the surrender of Paris and Pétain's announcement of armistice negotiations. On June 22, the armistice was signed at Rethondes, and on July 10, Pétain was granted "full powers." August 25, 1944, marks the day Charles de Gaulle lead the liberation of Paris and began to alter the memories of the Occupation. For the purposes of this thesis, the events that have shaped the memory of the Occupation and have occurred since the Liberation are of greater significance than the events of the Occupation itself.

Evidence for the continuing obsession with the Occupation can be found in various events in French history. An example is the

establishment of the Fifth Republic, headed by General de Gaulle in 1958. Like the establishment of *L'Etat français*, this change in government also came at a time of political crisis for the French, the Algerian Crisis. Opponents of de Gaulle exploited the memories of Vichy's establishment to their advantage, stating that de Gaulle's rise to power was reminiscent of Pétain's. Debate surrounding the right of the Fifth Republic to amend the constitution served to revive the memories of Pétain's "full powers" and to confuse the past. Historian Henry Rousso states: "The past was plundered by both sides to provide historical justification for action in the present, but at the same time it was shown to be infinitely malleable, manipulable at will for rhetorical effect and slanderous purpose."² The student protests of May 1968 are another event in which the memories of the Occupation played a part. The students used slogans which invoked the Occupation such as "CRS equals SS" (the French riot police equals the SS) and "*Nous sommes tous des juifs allemands*" (We are all German Jews). The 1983 trial of the German Klaus Barbie for crimes against humanity and the 1994 trial of Paul Touvier, the first Frenchman to be tried for crimes against humanity also served to focus attention on the period. The public trials explored the actions of not only the accused, but also of France. The most recent example of the continuing impact of the Occupation is the September 1994 scandal surrounding the revelation of President François Mitterrand's early association with the extreme right and Vichy.

The Occupation also has cultural implications. Every word written and every play performed had to pass the censors. During the Occupation, there was a resurgence of the Greek tragedies such as Jean-Paul Sartre's The Flies. This story of Orestes and Electra is a resistance piece, yet was allowed to be performed on the Occupied stage. There is enough ambiguity found within the text to interpret it as pro-collaborationist, but French contemporaries sympathetic to the Resistance cause would identify it as a resistance piece. Both German critics and the French Underground praised this piece of work. By avoiding specific political references, writers like Sartre could avoid censorship. This is just one example of the dilemmas the war caused for artists in France. They were driven by the desire to create, yet some were restricted by ideology and refused to compromise themselves by participating in any collaborationist efforts. Yet others made compromises and "collaborated" in order to survive.

Like the Occupation, the issues of collaboration and resistance are complex. Following the liberation of France, Charles de Gaulle established a myth of resistance on the part of France as a whole. This was an attempt to overcome the internal divisions created by the Occupation and create a unified nation. In this version of the war, the Germans were the only enemy and there was no shame in being French. In reality, there had been widespread support of Vichy in the first year of the Occupation. The first real resistance did not occur until 1941.³ Some French did not support Vichy for ideological reasons, but rather because

of the opportunities collaboration afforded.

Cultural vehicles in the form of film and historical studies have helped bring the realities and the ambiguities of collaboration and resistance to light. Film director Marcel Ophuls put the French people under the microscope for their actions during the Occupation in his 1971 documentary, The Sorrow and the Pity. This is the first candid look at the issue of French collaboration from the perspective of the French themselves. Ophuls interviews people from every walk of life and every political persuasion. Robert O. Paxton's book Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944 also made waves in France in 1973 for its untraditional and myth-dispelling view of the period.

An important study of the cultural implications of the Occupation is found in The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944 by the French historian Henry Rousso. He explores the emotions and divisions that World War II continues to evoke among the French people. Through this process, he has discovered what he has termed the Vichy Syndrome, a type of cultural malady whose symptoms continue to manifest themselves in French society. The environment created by the Vichy regime gave rise to what Rousso has termed a *guerre franco-française* or French Civil War. The French were internally divided and at odds with themselves mainly along ideological lines. Conflicts arose over the fine differences between Nazism, fascism, socialism, democracy, resistance, collaboration, and above all else, survival. Rousso asserts:

the civil war, and particularly the inception, influence, and acts of the Vichy regime, played an essential if not primary role in the difficulties that the people of France have faced in reconciling themselves to their history -- a greater role than the foreign occupation, the war, and the defeat, all things that, though they have not vanished from people's minds are generally perceived through the prism of Vichy.⁴

This civil war appears to be one of the sources of the Syndrome that continues to plague the French.

Another major factor in Rousso's argument centers upon the concept of memory and its relationship to history. He asserts that the French collective memory of the war has been shaped through various factors, and that the memories of events are oftentimes different from history itself.⁵ Each individual as well as each group involved in the war recollects and interprets actions in the way that is most beneficial to them. Rousso demonstrates that memory manifests itself at various points in history in a variety of manners, and he labels these manifestations "symptoms" of the Vichy Syndrome. These symptoms are indicative of the trauma of the Occupation and especially the trauma of French internal divisions revealed in political, social, and cultural life. By studying them chronologically, Rousso delineates a four-stage process of evolution of the Syndrome.

The first stage is the Mourning Phase from 1944 through 1954. During this phase, France had to deal with the aftermath of civil war, purge, and amnesty. 40,000 French individuals were sent to

prison in 1945 for acts of collaboration, yet by 1964, all had been granted amnesty.⁶ The judicial system also demonstrated great inconsistency in the meting out of punishment. Rousso asserts that in reality, this was a period of *unfinished* mourning, a period when individual needs were overridden by the concept of the nation. On August 25, 1944, Charles de Gaulle established the founding myth of the post-war period when he made the following speech after the liberation of Paris:

Paris! Paris humiliated! Paris broken! Paris martyred!
But Paris liberated! Liberated by itself, by its own people
with the help of the armies of France, with the support and
aid of France as a whole, of fighting France, of the only
France, of the true France, of eternal France.⁷

In this manner all individual efforts and actions on the part of various groups are effaced by the concept of France itself as its own salvation. The concept of Resistance, though idealized, remained ambiguous while the résistants themselves were often ostracized or viewed as troublesome. De Gaulle was also a proponent of the concept of a "thirty years' war" which views World War II as a continuation of the first World War, but ignores the important and unique issues of irregular partisans, ideological conflict, and the genocide of the second war.⁸ The politicians of the period called for forgiveness, reconciliation, and a forgetting of the past at a time when it was most important to deal with the issues at hand. This period set the stage for many of the subsequent problems with which the French have had to deal.

The second stage is Resistancialism and Repression and covers the years 1954-1971. During this period, the Gaullist myth of resistance on the part of France as a whole became more defined and concrete. The French government also sought to minimize the importance of the Vichy regime, including its negative aspects, and its impact on society, thereby repressing many memories. The memories of the Occupation were manipulated in ways that were politically or socially beneficial. The Occupation arose as an issue in various aspects of French life, including the National Assembly, the *Académie Française*, the return of General de Gaulle to power in 1958, the Algerian War for independence, the honoring of war heroes, and the student demonstrations of May 1968. A new generation of Frenchmen was thus brought up in the shadow of the Gaullist myth and in ignorance of many issues related to the Vichy years.

The third phase, or the Broken Mirror phase, ranges from 1971 to 1974. In these years, the myth of total resistance was broken and groups formerly repressed began to speak out. Another important aspect of this phase is the "forties revival" or *mode rétro*. Writers and filmmakers sensed the public's demand for work concerning a new interpretation of the Occupation, and it thus became a popular subject.

One of the most important and influential factors in the breaking of the mirror is Marcel Ophuls' documentary film, The Sorrow and the Pity. This film, despite its shortcomings,⁹ depicts domestic issues and "eye-witness" accounts of the Occupation rather

than the role of the occupying forces. Ophuls unequally interviews many prominent witnesses from the period, the majority of whom were resisters. Through the interviews, the public sees the manner in which Vichy initiated many laws, actions, and policies through its own accord, and not at the insistence of the Germans. The civil war, the inherent anti-semitism of the French people, collaboration, and resistance are all subjects that Ophuls examines in the attempt to demystify the Occupation period. However, Ophuls' film excludes some of the important aspects of the Occupation including the role of the Communists and the Gaullists as résistants and the role of the average Frenchman. The ensuing reaction of the public, including the censorship of the film, demonstrates the impact The Sorrow and the Pity has had upon the French people.

Also included in this period is the pardon of the Frenchman Paul Touvier for his actions in World War II while the German Klaus Barbie continued to be pursued for similar actions. In 1971, President Georges Pompidou pardoned Paul Touvier for the crimes he committed as chief of the *Milice* in the Lyons region, including the murder of Jews and Resistance fighters. The statute of limitations on the two death sentences he received for war crimes in absentia came into effect in 1964; however, crimes against humanity have no statute of limitations. In his pardon, Pompidou asked, "Has the time not come to cast a veil [over what happened] and to forget those times when the French disliked one another and even killed one another?"¹⁰ In 1973, new charges against Touvier for crimes

against humanity were brought. Almost twenty years later, on April 13, 1992, the charges were dismissed because the Vichy government and the militia did not fit the definition of crimes against humanity as defined by the French Court of Appeals in 1985. The court said crimes against humanity are: "inhuman acts and persecutions, systematically carried out in the name of a state practicing a policy of ideological hegemony, not simply against people on account of their race or religion, but also against opponents of this policy...."¹¹ The judges ruled that Vichy did not practice a "policy of ideological hegemony." They acknowledged that Vichy was authoritarian but not totalitarian.

On the other hand during the Broken Mirror phase, Klaus Barbie, the German SS chief for the Lyons region, was located in Bolivia in 1971 and in 1972, the French government first asked for his extradition. In 1985, Barbie was sentenced to life in prison for his participation in the deportation of Jews and Resistance members. The Court of Appeals ruled that Barbie's crimes could be considered crimes against humanity, crimes which carry no statute of limitations. The dismissal of the charges against Touvier underlined the hypocrisy of one law for Germans and another for the French.

The fourth and final phase that Rousso describes is Obsession, which began in 1974 and continues to the present. The Occupation continues to play a central role in France, especially in Jewish memory and in politics. It is during these years that there is an increase in Holocaust revisionist thought, as well as a rise in the

extreme right whose ideologies include racism, anti-semitism, and Holocaust negationism. The trials of Klaus Barbie in 1983 and Paul Touvier in 1994 for crimes against humanity continue to bring the ambiguities and emotions of the Occupation to the public's attention. In some elections, the candidates' involvement and actions during World War II continue to be an issue. A prime example is the recent furor created by the revelation of current French President François Mitterrand's early association with the Vichy government.

Vital to Rousso's and this paper's argument is the study of the vectors of memory--the means by which perceptions of the Occupation are perpetuated and/or altered. He claims the three main vectors are commemorations, film, and historiography. The so-called cultural carriers of the Syndrome--media, literature, film, and television--all aid in drawing memory closer to actual history. Many of the ambiguities of the Occupation have been skillfully captured by authors and filmmakers and provide important insights into life and society in Occupied France, as well as the mindset and motivations of the French people.

The German Occupation, collaboration, resistance, the Vichy Syndrome. These all have cultural implications for the French. Traditionally, the research focusing on this period has been gender-biased and has explored only the cultural implications for males. Undeniably, women suffered through the Occupation, oftentimes experiencing greater stresses and strains than their male counterparts. Women have literally appeared as a footnote in

history despite the fact that they were expected and forced to assume an increased role during the war years. Women were mothers, wives, resisters, collaborators, economic and emotional heads of households, and sexual beings. They were expected to remain in the home, raise many children faithful to Vichy, and behave appropriately subservient to the men. As an important component of Pétain's National Revolution, motherhood was glorified and exalted as a woman's greatest service to her country, and the family was held in the highest regard.

The National Revolution "was the expression of indigenous French urges for change, reform, and revenge, nurtured in the 1930's and made urgent and possible by defeat."¹² In the interwar period, certain attitudes concerning women's proper role in society made an appearance. Although many members of the Vichy government cannot be considered fascistic, some were associated with fascist organizations such as the Légion or the Jeunesses Patriotes at some point in the twenty years between World War I and II. For these reasons, it is interesting to note these organizations' views of women. They also serve to demonstrate the pre-World War II origins of the traditional attitudes towards women.

Both the Légion and the Jeunesses Patriotes had women's auxiliaries in which women could participate in these movements. They were segregated by gender and were given "feminine" tasks. Both organizations also offered advice as to how a woman should act. The following is from a Légion prospectus at a women's meeting in Strasbourg:

In the troubled times in which we live, you must keep a severe watch over your private life, being careful not only to avoid scandal but to set an example of wisdom and reserve. We do not require that those who join the feminine sections of the Légion dress with austerity. We do not desire French women to stop being charming. But it is time that honest women repudiate certain ways of walking, using cosmetics, dancing, talking thoughtlessly, reading no matter what, and applauding vile plays.¹³

Similarly, the Jeunesses Patriotes explained women's tasks in the organization in an article entitled "Neither Amazons nor Suffragettes" by their leader Pierre Taittinger:

For women who want to participate in our task of salvation, it is not a question of polemicizing but of preparing. They should leave discussion in the meetings and action in the faubourgs to the men. But they can be of service to us with their good grace, their finesse, their soft tenacity, those irresistible weapons which are the privilege of French women. We will take charge of conquering the streets. They should above all conquer their homes and help us to protect the kingdom of housewives, that promised land of the betrothed.¹⁴

The home and the family were seen as the basic social unit, the organic unit on which French society was based. One facet of the National Revolution was based on the assumption that the declining birth rate in France was one of the nation's foremost problems. As a result, Vichy instituted family programs with the

ultimate goal of increasing the population. Vichy's programs were in fact an extension of policies instituted in the pre-war years. The Légion again provides an example:

In certain homes, where otherwise people live honestly, it happens that a mother congratulates herself and that others congratulate her for having only a baby or two or none at all. People smile if a young girl declares that when she is married she will not encumber herself with a large family. Such proposals are sacrilegious.¹⁵

Vichy vigorously enforced familial laws that were created prior to the inception of their own regime, such as the law that outlawed birth control in 1920 and the Family Code of July 29, 1939. The Family Code provided for monetary compensation in the form of increased family allowances for each child a couple produced.

In pursuit of the National Revolution, the government of Pétain instituted their own laws that were oppressive and patriarchal in nature. Miranda Pollard argues that Vichy ideologically viewed women in terms of pronatalism and familialism.¹⁶ From this perspective, they established laws that relegated women to the home. The law of October 11, 1940, limited the number of working women in order to provide increased employment opportunities for men and the law of April 2, 1941, prohibited divorce within the first three years of marriage. Another law on August 15, 1941, created different elementary education programs for girls and boys.

The law of March 18, 1942, further differentiated the

educational process along gender lines. Female students participated in activities designed to accentuate Vichy's idea of the "*femme au foyer*" (woman in the home). All ambitions outside the domestic sphere were blatantly frowned upon. While their male counterparts participated in physical activities, the females were schooled in hygiene, housekeeping, cooking, laundry, and introduced to the psychology and morality of the family.¹⁷

Film and literature provide a vehicle for the exploration of the issues facing women during the Occupation. Many of the ambiguities of the period are personified through female characters, characters that simultaneously provide a uniquely feminine perspective. The symbolic equivocation of France throughout history with women is highly significant, complex, and not without ambiguous qualities. This ambiguity is especially consequential in the study of women in Occupied France during World War II. In the continuing re-examination of the Vichy years, one begins to see the growing emphasis on women and the roles they played. In studying these women, the true nature of France itself is being examined. As women have been forgotten and ignored, so have been the realities of a nation collaborating with a foreign aggressor. The portrayal of the lives of women through literature and film exemplify the ambiguities of collaboration and resistance, and underscore the patriarchal and hypocritical nature of the Vichy regime. This thesis will explore the following: first, the roles of women under Vichy and the impact of war on their daily lives by examining works of literature and cinematic representations, namely

The War by Marguerite Duras and Claude Chabrol's Story of Women; second, the manner in which these pieces figure into Henry Rousso's "Vichy Syndrome," specifically as cultural carriers of the syndrome and their effect on the memory of the Occupation; and third, the iconographic representation of the ambiguities of collaboration, the National Revolution, and the victimization of women by their own country.

Marguerite Duras and The War

The short stories of Marguerite Duras collected in her book The War: A Memoir give some indication of the moral and ethical issues that confronted women, as well as their role in Occupied France during World War II.¹⁸ First published in France in 1985, The War is Duras' fictional memoir of her participation in the Occupation and is demonstrative of the continuing obsession with the period. She prefaces the opening story, "The War," by saying she does not remember writing it and cannot imagine having "written this thing I still can't put a name to, and that appalls me when I reread it"(4). Duras also calls The War "one of the most important things in my life"(4). These statements are indicative of the depth of the trauma of the Occupation, her repression of the memories, and the continuing impact on her life.

Through the eyes of female characters that Duras herself identifies with, the stories allow the reader to gain important insights into the life of a prisoner of war wife and a female resistance member. The secondary female characters further serve

to introduce the reader to collaborationists and supporters of de Gaulle. Through the male characters in the pieces, the reader also sees the manner in which all these women were perceived in the male-dominated society.

Duras chooses to tell all her stories from a female's perspective, thus enabling the reader to experience the war from a woman's point of view. The situations and the characters themselves show that there are no simple demarcations of wrong and right, rather that when human beings with emotions are involved, there is a blurring of the line. Through analysis, one discovers the various complex emotions and attitudes of women that find expression through the characters of Marguerite Duras.

"The War" recounts the agonizing waiting experienced by wives of prisoners of war and is demonstrative of the extreme mental and physical pain experienced by these women. Marguerite Duras was herself awaiting the return of her husband from the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau. She was not alone. There were as many as two million French prisoners of war -- approximately four per cent of the French population. Fifty-seven per cent of these prisoners were married and thirty-nine per cent left children behind.¹⁹ Such separation brought about many social changes. Women were forced to become more independent, something they did not necessarily desire. They became responsible for all aspects of the home, including the economic aspects.

"The War" reflects many of the changes wrought by the absence of a family member, as well as the storm of emotions encountered

by women waiting for the return of their loved ones. The character Marguerite spends agonizing months waiting and hoping for the return of her husband, Robert L. She cannot eat, she cannot sleep, she dreams of her husband's dead body, and she makes herself literally sick with worry. She experiences physical pain as a result of the separation. She describes the pain: "The pain is so great it can't breathe, it gasps for air. Pain needs room"(7). The subject of pain is pervasive throughout the entire story. Everyone is suffering, perhaps Marguerite the most. She calls her head an abscess, intimating that it is the thinking that causes her such pain. She runs a continual fever for a period of weeks and thinks of nothing but death. She herself wants to die whether or not Robert L. returns. Marguerite feels, "cut off from the rest of the world by a razor"(45).

The return of Robert L. sheds light on the difficulties women faced after a loved one returned from a concentration camp. Robert L. was not the same man she remembered. Her pain was caused by the intense yearning for a lost object, and when he returned, he was no longer the same object. He had become an abstract in her mind and his physical presence caused a realization of how much life had changed. The first time Marguerite saw her husband again, she could not stop shrieking. She did not want to see him, and after "six years without uttering a cry," "the war emerged in [her] shrieks"(53-4). The eighty-two pound, five-foot ten-inch man she was nursing back to health was a complete stranger to her. This is reflected in the following conversation after Robert L. has

regained his strength:

Another day I told him we had to get a divorce, that I wanted a child by D., that it was because of the name the child would bear. He asked if one day we might get together again. I said no, that I hadn't changed my mind since two years ago, since I'd met D. I said that even if D. hadn't existed I wouldn't have lived with him again. He didn't ask me my reasons for leaving. I didn't tell him what they were (63-4).

During their time apart, she thought only of him, but D. was the physical presence that sustained her. After the mental anguish ended, she wanted the opportunity to love something other than the image she had maintained of her husband during the time apart. She waited until his return to leave him because it would have been morally improper for her to commit to another relationship while theirs was still unresolved.

While she was waiting for Robert L. to return, incidents in her everyday life served to remind her of his uncertain state as well as those of all involved in the war, both French and German. A dead German soldier in the streets of Paris invokes images of his mother. Marguerite pictures the woman waiting for her dead son, just as she is waiting for her husband, who may also be dead. After so much fighting and ceaseless waiting, Marguerite says she no longer knows "the difference between the love I have for [Robert L.] and the hatred I bear [the Germans]" (27). All emotions have become exhausted by the continual waiting. Perhaps the most striking statement about the role of all women in times of war is:

"we're the only ones who are still waiting, in a suspense as old as time, that of women always, everywhere, waiting for the men to come home from the war" (46).

"The War" deals with more than just prisoner of war wives. Marguerite comes in contact with several groups of women through her visits to the repatriation center. The reader is introduced to women who volunteered for the *Service du Travail Obligatoire* (STO). As of November 1943, 44,000 French women worked in forced labor camps in Germany.²⁰ Some of these women volunteered to work in the German war factories, many out of economic necessity. The STO volunteers at the Orsay center were greeted by the boos of the wives of prisoners of war. They were described as "harassed," "very dirty," "tired," and "shocked" (17). The issue of sex is also brought up through these volunteers. These women are either pregnant or prostitutes. The implication is that these are morally loose women who will compromise themselves and sell themselves to the Germans. These women willingly went to Germany to help their war effort and obviously fraternized with the enemy. Not one of these collaborators is portrayed as virtuous or patriotic. However, the ambiguity of the Occupation is again apparent. Marguerite feels sympathy for these women who have been treated like "scum" (18) by the repatriation workers. They have been treated with the same contempt that Marguerite has experienced in her perpetual appearances at the center in hopes of news of Robert L.

Marguerite describes the women who work for the repatriation

services. These women "almost all speak with the accent of the French aristocracy" or "as if they were in a drawing room" (14). These descriptions are not meant as compliments. These women come across as fake and patronizing. In this manner, Duras is also exploring the issue of class difference in the Occupation. These upper-class women have the ability to remain in France while lower-class women were often forced to serve in the STO as a means of survival. These workers inside the station are not suffering like she is. She describes these

Women in uniform, repatriation services. We wonder where these people have sprung from, and these clothes, impeccable after six years of occupation, these leather shoes, these hands, this tone of voice, scathing and always scornful whether it expresses anger, condescension, or affability (13-4).

The greatest insult Marguerite Duras bestows upon the Repatriation workers is the label "Gaullist." The waiting women hate Charles de Gaulle because he "has always put his North African Front before his political deportees" (32). Marguerite notices the ways in which de Gaulle is already changing the national memory of the Occupation. He is quick to say that "'The days of weeping are over. The days of glory have returned'" (37). He tries to forget all the hardships, and the women whose loved ones are still missing cannot forgive him for this. He gives the nation no time for mourning and again, Marguerite condemns him for this:

De Gaulle has declared a day of national mourning for the

death of Roosevelt. No national mourning for the dead deportees. We have to keep on the right side of America. France is going into mourning for Roosevelt. For the people, mourning will not be worn (34).

Through the short story, "The War," Duras allows the reader a glimpse into the past. Through the diary of Marguerite, one learns of the social, emotional, and political views of women in Occupied France. Being the wife of a political deportee meant living with perpetual anxiety concerning the well-being of someone dear.

Some women took a more active role in the fight against the Nazis. "Monsieur X, Here Called Pierre Rabier" is the story of a woman in the Resistance who becomes involved with a German agent of the Gestapo. Women were sometimes used as Resistance fighters because their gender made them less suspicious.²¹ They were also able to use their sexuality to get close to enemy agents. Her sex is the "bait" used to extract information. This is what happens in the case of Marguerite and Pierre. The fact that Marguerite is female is both an asset and a burden, and the reader can infer that this was the case for many women in Vichy France. She gets close to this man who arrested her husband in order to receive some news of Robert L., but she is also able to relay important information to D. about German activities. Marguerite knows that her life is in Pierre's hands and at any moment he can kill her. However, she also knows that she has power over his life. Her power is ultimately enough to put Rabier on trial for his actions as an

agent of the Gestapo.

Although Marguerite is working for the Resistance, she feels ashamed about her association with Pierre. She asks herself, "does he want to make me risk the greatest possible shame, that of being seen at the same table as an agent of the Gestapo..." (90)? She feels that she is compromising her ethics by merely being seen with Pierre. The struggle between personal convictions and the desire to aid France is something that she has to reconcile within herself in order to be effective.

Fear is another facet of women's life during the German Occupation that is effectively dealt with in "Pierre Rabier." There is the fear that Robert L. will never return. There is also the continual fear that she will be arrested by Rabier or that she will unwittingly give away other members of the Resistance. Marguerite demonstrates the strength that many women do not know they possess until faced with a crisis. She says, "When it's not just your life that's involved, you find what you need to say. I find what I must say and do" (91). She likens the protection of the other members of the Resistance to the manner in which a mother protects her child: "Morland has become my child. My child is threatened, I risk my life to defend him. I am responsible for him" (91). The role of mother is one that only a woman can fill, and it serves to further differentiate the experiences of men and women in Occupied France. She is deathly afraid that her face or her trembling voice will give her away. Instead, like many women, she finds courage within herself.

However, this inner strength contrasts with Marguerite's description of herself in "The War" which serves to demonstrate the complex and ever-changing emotions women experienced:

This evening I think about myself. I've never met a woman more cowardly than I am. I go over in my mind other women who are waiting like me--no, none is as cowardly as that. I know some who are very brave. Extraordinary. My cowardice is such that it can't be described... (22).

Despite Pierre Rabier's involvement in the deportation of many innocent Frenchmen, including her own husband, Marguerite is compelled to tell the whole truth about him. The information that she was able to gather as his companion will be enough to put him on trial for his actions against the French. During his trial, Marguerite feels a moral obligation to tell the judge about the Jewish child he did not turn in. This is a uniquely feminine reaction and the judge is clearly exasperated by her behavior. He is unable to comprehend that she is able to testify against Rabier and at the same time enumerate his good points. However, Marguerite feels some affection for the man she has gotten to know. She knows that just as he has spared the life of this child, he has spared her life. This lonely man who joined the Gestapo because he had not been able to buy an art bookstop. This is a man who wanted companionship, who wanted to brag about his arrests and deportations, who was Marguerite's last link to Robert L. Their relationship is full of these subtle nuances that makes the Occupation such an ambiguous and unreconcilable period.

The main character in "Albert of the Capitals" has changed drastically from the earlier Marguerite. Duras states that this is the same person, but gone is the fearful, waiting wife. Instead, Thérèse is a strong, confident woman, dedicated to the ruthless prosecution of collaborators. However, there are traces of femininity within the seemingly cold interrogator. Even in the midst of all the men, "She was absent, solitary," (122) still waiting for her husband, but she is not consumed by this waiting.

During the questioning of the informer, one sees the ways in which Thérèse distances herself from what is occurring. As Albert and Lucien disrobe the man, she envisions herself elsewhere--at the cinema or walking along the Seine. She also contemplates the fact that anyone could be in the situation she is in. Everything that has happened is the result of circumstances that could have happened to anyone. She feels morally obligated to question the man. In her mind, "she is justice, justice such as there hasn't been on this soil for a hundred and fifty years" (136). She channels her rage into what she has determined to be justice.

The other women in the story do not have such strong convictions. After watching the informer severely beaten, there is a division in the group witnessing the interrogation. The women in the group are sympathetic to the informer. This is an indication of the natural feeling that women harbor. It appears that Thérèse is impervious to these feelings. However, she has merely suppressed her feelings during the questioning. Her first priority is to be a member of the Resistance, then she can be a

woman. However, the other women in the group do not understand her and treat her as an outcast after the interrogation. All five women who left the interrogation refuse to speak to Thérèse and do not care that Albert eventually confessed as a result of the torture. Yet she is not as callous as the men involved. This is demonstrated by the fact that once they receive the desired information, Thérèse wants to see the man set free and she then begins to cry.

"Ter of the Militia" also demonstrates the conflicts between women's emotions and their duties. Thérèse and D. have a young man that they are transferring between centers. Again in this story, Thérèse is in control of her emotions and in a position of power. It has been argued that women in such positions were not perceived as women per se, but as "honorary men." Such a label infers that, "she possessed courage, tenacity, intellectual or strategic prowess, so-called 'virile' qualities, in spite of herself."²² This seems to be the case when one examines the manner in which Thérèse is treated by the Spaniards in "Ter" and the authority she is entrusted with in "Albert."

However, her femininity is not lost. In both cases, Thérèse retains the traditional role of a woman, that of an object of desire. Ter is attracted to Thérèse and treats her like a lady even though she is transporting him to detention. Duras states again that the character in the story is herself and that she "is the one who feels like making love to Ter" (115). She cannot control the physical desires of her body despite the feelings she

should harbor towards his actions, another contradiction of the period. Her maternal instincts also make an appearance in her dealings with Ter. She describes him as a child, a youth in search of attention. When he asks for bread and playing cards, it is Thérèse that he turns to and who provides him with these luxuries. The reader gets the impression that he asks Thérèse because he trusts her and she takes on a maternal air.

Marguerite Duras' memoirs are in and of themselves a symptom of the Obsession phase of Rousso's Vichy Syndrome. Duras claims that she discovered the memoirs hidden away in some old exercise books she was searching through after a magazine asked her for pieces she had written while she was young. The fact that she repressed the memories for forty years gives some indication of the atmosphere of the post-war years. These writings did not re-emerge until an era when it had become acceptable to discuss the trauma of the occupation and the divisions it had created within society.

Throughout the stories there is evidence of the other phases, particularly the inception of Resistancialism and the stunting of the mourning of the French people. Through the character of Marguerite, we see the creation of the Gaullist myth of resistance, the manner in which de Gaulle influenced the mourning of the nation, and the ways in which the memory of the war is beginning to change. In "The War" the entry for April 28, 1945, deals with the imminent liberation of Europe: "Peace is visible already. It's like a great darkness falling, it's the beginning of

forgetting" (47). Duras' female characters harbor intense animosity towards de Gaulle. As previously mentioned, the female repatriation center workers are labeled derogatorily as Gaullist, and D. expounds on the subject:

'What you see here is the Gaullist staff taking up its positions. The Right found a niche in Gaullism even in the war. You'll see--they'll be against any resistance movement that isn't directly Gaullist. They'll occupy France. They think they constitute thinking France, the France of authority. They're going to plague the country for a long while, we'll have to get used to dealing with them' (14).

Several important issues are raised in this passage. Gaullists are first linked with the Right and thereby with Vichy. By choosing the word "occupy" the Gaullists are also symbolically linked with the Nazis. There is likewise a foreshadowing of the effacement of the participation of individual resistance groups by resistancialism. The resistance movement that Marguerite/Thérèse participated in will be one such group.²³

The War is an important piece of literature in terms of the exploration of the roles and world-view of women in Occupied France that it affords. The diary-like format of the piece gives it an air of authenticity. The fact that Marguerite Duras herself experienced the war and the roles of the characters she writes about makes her an eye-witness and an authority on the subject matter. Additionally, she provides a distinctive and historically ignored perspective as a female writer. The emotions, biases, and

situations that were unique to women are finally discussed from a first-hand point of view. The War also lends credibility to Henry Rousso's assertion of a "Vichy Syndrome." Many of the symptoms he describes are reflected in the stories, and the publication date of the book confirms the continued obsession with the era. Undoubtedly, Marguerite Duras' view of her life and the Occupation has been colored by "the prism of Vichy."

Claude Chabrol's Story of Women

Story of Women, directed by Claude Chabrol, also deals with the roles of women during the Occupation, although in a very different manner. Like Duras' memoirs, this film emerged in the Obsession phase of the Vichy Syndrome during which there has been a greater emphasis on the plight of women during the war years. This 1989 piece deals with many of the complex issues that confronted women; the cinematic representation of the women presents the viewer with a visual filter through which the ambiguities and hardships of Vichy are available for interpretation. Film is an important vector of memory due to its general popularity and its ability to reach and influence a large audience. Such is the case with Story of Women. The iconographic representation of women in this film causes the viewer to question the patriarchal nature of Vichy and the National Revolution, the motivations for collaboration, and the ability of a nation to turn against its own people.

Story of Women chronicles the activities of Marie Latour and

is based upon the true story of Marie-Louise Giraud.²⁴ Although Marie is the main character, she is not the narrator. Rather, Chabrol uses her as a tool to explore the hypocrisy of Vichy and the National Revolution. One critic attributes Chabrol's approach to his chauvinism,²⁵ while another views it as a stylistic method designed to create the patriarchal perspective prevalent during the Occupation.²⁶ The story is told from the viewpoint of Marie's seven year old son, Pierrot. However, he is not the narrator, for the viewer is privy to experiences concerning Marie that Pierrot never witnessed. Chabrol's choice is telling; Pierrot is a male, yet one discovers that he will also become a victim of Vichy's internal policies.

Whatever the perspective, the roles of women during the Occupation can still be studied through this film. Marie is a prisoner of war wife, a mother, and an opportunist. Through her associations, the viewer is also introduced to a female Jewish deportee, a prostitute, the "ideal," Catholic Vichy woman, and nuns. Each of these women represents a specific issue relevant in the understanding of the effect of the gender politics of Vichy on the lives of women, and they all embody ambiguity. No aspect of their lives is simple and their actions are often contradictory.

Through these characters, Chabrol is able to focus on the complexities and inequities of collaboration, resistance, and the National Revolution. Women were expected to serve Vichy through their reproductive capabilities; anything else was considered an attack on the state. However, the tenets of "*Travail, Famille,*

Patrie" subjugated women and attempted to limit their reproductive rights. Within the ideology of the National Revolution, there is a depersonalization of women. Accordingly, they were viewed as marginal members of society. Any activity outside the acceptable sphere resulted in severe punishment. In a manner of speaking, the National Revolution accorded women with a degree of power--they were the only ones able to replenish society. However this power was limited to the domestic sphere where they were still expected to remain subservient to their husbands and to live within the constraints imposed by the paternal and pronatalist ideals of Vichy.

A problem arises when four per cent of the population are prisoners of war and over 1.14 million women are left alone as heads of households, 780,000 of which are now single parents.²⁷ The additional 90,000 men killed in the brief confrontation with the Germans²⁸ represents an additional two per cent of society. Despite the ideology of the National Revolution, women were forced to become the economic and nurturing supporters of the family. Women did not necessarily desire the increased responsibility, but they often found it difficult to relinquish this role if and when their husbands returned.

The story of Marie Latour is disturbing in many ways, and Chabrol uses her eventual fate as a means to indict the government of Pétain. Marie is a working class woman whose husband is a prisoner of war. She is left alone to raise her two children, a job that is all the more difficult due to the current situation in

France. The family is reduced to searching the countryside for nettles for food. Marie is now solely responsible for the economic and emotional well-being of her family, and the stress is apparent in the manner in which she treats her children.

As a favor, Marie performs an abortion on a neighbor who wishes to terminate the pregnancy because her lover is being sent to Germany as part of the STO. The homemade abortion is successful and the neighbor presents Marie with a phonograph as an effusive expression of gratitude. This unexpected gift is Marie's introduction to the potential the practice could hold for her and her family. Various women with a spectrum of reasons are referred to the Latour apartment for Marie's services. Chabrol uses the physical beautification of Marie and her surroundings to suggest the profitability of her undertaking.

Like Duras' character of Marguerite, Marie is a prisoner of war wife, but this is where the similarities end. Whereas Marguerite was consumed with waiting for the return of her husband, Marie uses her freedom to her advantage. Marie's husband will return from the prisoner of war camp early in the film, but the whole experience seems to have emasculated him. He never reassumes the traditional role of head of the household. Marie continues to be the source of income for the family, and her reluctance to relinquish this role is personified in her refusal to reestablish a sexual relationship with her husband. Symbolically, she no longer wants to submit to this domination. It is also her attempt to control her reproductive ability. After two years of suffering

and the constant struggle for survival exacerbated by the dependence of her children, she wants to assure that she will have no more children.²⁹

In one scene, she goes as far as to tell Paul that she no longer loves him. The changes in her life have been so profound that he no longer has a place in it. At another point, Paul criticizes Marie, telling her that the soup is too thin and she responds by saying "It's hard these days." This is an acknowledgement of Paul's lack of contact with the realities of the Occupation. The viewer also sees Marie challenging her role as wife as she washes Paul's clothes. She again rebuffs his sexual advances and says, "I've been a slave since I was fourteen. I don't see how it'll change."

The viewer senses a certain hostility towards men or perhaps a heightened sympathy towards women on the part of Marie. Marie's insight into the effect war has on men is "Lose a war and a man's like a wounded bull." This is the opinion she holds of Paul, and it influences her attitude towards him throughout the film. Her best friends are women, usually on the margins of society, symbolic of the position women were allotted in Vichy. Marie is herself on the margins as an abortionist in defiance of the ideologies of the National Revolution. She clearly loves her daughter and lavishes affection on her while virtually ignoring her son. The favoritism displayed toward Mouche and hostility displayed toward Pierrot suggests that she is redirecting the frustration stemming from her inability to control her life imposed by the patriarchy of Vichy

at her son.

Marie's treatment of her children allows for the exploration of the role of a mother in Occupied France through Chabrol's direction in Story of Women. As previously mentioned, Marie was both the economic and emotional head of the household. The viewer sees her bartering with a farmer for the price of a plot of land from which she and her children can dig potatoes. At first, Marie is performing abortions in order to provide for her family. She states that before the abortions, she worked out of her home, knitting angora sweaters, a job that was not highly profitable and barely sustained the three of them. The viewer watches as she is able to buy cookies and jam for the children with the money she receives for doing "favors" for women. Soon after the rendering of these services, we see Pierrot dressed in new school clothes and pajamas, and the family is able to move out of their previous squalor. In later scenes, after Marie has been jailed for her practices, she continues to express concern for her children. She wonders who will look after Mouche and Pierrot, and again claims that if it had not been for the abortion money, her children would be close to starvation.

Also in the early stages of the film, the viewer is introduced to the issue of the deportation of Jews through the character of Rachel. Marie and Rachel were friends, yet Marie claims she never knew that Rachel was Jewish. Marie goes to visit her at the café where Rachel worked and she is no longer there. Marie's reaction to the news of the deportation--"Rachel is not Jewish...she would

have told me so"--underlines the criminal nature of Vichy justice.³⁰ This also foreshadows Marie's own arrest.

The deportation is also an important facet of the National Revolution. Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton assert in Vichy France and the Jews:

Vichy measures against Jews came from within, as part of the National Revolution. They were autonomous acts taken in pursuit of indigenous goals. The first goal was to block further immigration of refugees, especially Jewish refugees, into a country hardly able to feed and employ its own people.[...]The second Vichy goal was to encourage the re-emigration of the refugees already there, insofar as wartime restrictions permitted.[...]The third goal was the reduction of the foreign, the unassimilable, the "non-French" in public life, the economy, and French cultural life.³¹

Vichy was responsible for the deportation of approximately 76,000 Jews, less than three per cent of whom returned alive after the war.³² In this manner, we see the true motives of the Vichy regime and the killing they were willing to accept as a means to achieve their "nationalistic" ends.

Marie was an abortionist who acted against this "nationalistic" doctrine of Vichy, and for this reason some may venture to call her a resister. This would be a false assumption, for in reality, Marie acted first upon her survival instincts and later from greed. Chabrol intimates an affiliation between Marie and the resistance through various methods. However, these actions

only show the ambiguity of resistance. Marie herself asserts, "I'm for the Resistance," and Paul undermines her assertion by saying, "You're not for anything, you're just against me." The implied link is at times more subtle. In one scene a man, presumably a member of the Resistance, jumps from a second story window in an attempt to flee from the police. He is fatally shot, but before he dies, he grabs Marie and stares into her face. She is visibly disturbed and says: "He looked at me as if he knew me. I had the feeling...." It is as though they are connected on some subconscious level. In reality, Marie had no convictions, as is demonstrated through her associations in the film.

Through the examination of the prostitute Lulu, different facets of collaboration are explored. Meeting at the hairdresser's, Marie and Lulu form a mutually beneficial association. Lulu's outlook on males--"Men've always treated us like horses"--coincides with Marie's own viewpoint. Driven by curiosity and the desire to escape the binds of Vichy, Marie questions her new friend about her practices. Again, money is first and foremost on Marie's mind as she asks how much Lulu makes in a day. The prostitute's answer is typical of the ambiguity of collaboration and also ironic: "Krauts pay through the nose. It's a matter of principle." The immediate post-war revision of the definition of collaboration and resistance would lead one to believe that collaborationists had no principles whatsoever. Lulu also has a condemnation for the French people. When Marie asks her if the Germans like to whip her, she simply responds, "No more than

the French." Lulu later rents a room from Marie to which she brings her clients. Her astute summation of Marie's suggestion for her to move in: "When you make money, you always want more."

It is in their initial discussion that Marie will inform Lulu of her own clandestine activities. Despite the fact that she appears to be the idealized, meek housewife, she tells Lulu that she too does things against the law. She offers to help her new-found friend should she ever be "in trouble." It is as if Marie is compelled to tell Lulu about her success as an abortionist in order to gain some recognition, some acknowledgement that she will not be suffocated by the patriarchal impositions of Pétain and his government.

The women for whom Marie performs abortions also give an indication of the mindset of women. Her neighbor Ginette asks for an abortion at the insistence of her lover. Due to the uncertainty of his fate in Germany, he feels it would be better not to make any promises. This is ironic considering it is the *Vichy* government that is sending him to Germany, the *same* government that advocates the bearing of children. Here is a man who will work for the enemy, and as a result will go against the doctrine of the French State.

The second woman Marie offers her services to could not "stand the loneliness" and is pregnant. The implication is that she has been having sexual relationships with any available Frenchman. She is compelled to seek out Marie because her husband is a prisoner of war still interned in Germany. There is no way for her to

explain the pregnancy. Through some unexplored female network, she learns that Marie may be able to help her and this woman offers Marie 1,000 francs to rid her of the physical manifestation of her shame. This is just one example of the understood bond between women in Chabrol's film. They form an unspoken support system in the face of the oppression imposed by the National Revolution. Marie inexplicably has knowledge of the methods of abortion. Women throughout Cherbourg know who to turn to for these services. Despite this knowledge and Marie's ostentatious display of wealth, none of these women denounce Marie, rather they view her as an important member of their society. In her own right, Marie never judges the women who desire her services regardless of their motivation. Take for example the woman who visits the Latour apartment because it is the third time "a Bismarck knocked me up." This introduces the type of women who will be brutally persecuted after the war for their "horizontal collaboration" with the Germans.

The final woman we meet who has turned to Marie for assistance has the most poignant story. She is married and pregnant with her seventh child in as many years. They all live in one room and she has attempted various means to rid herself of the child. When they fail, she seeks the aid of Marie. The family had been idealized, as had fertility, but this woman sees none of the glory and has experienced nothing but pain: "I feel like a cow. I hate myself. I don't like my children. I put up with them but I never loved them." She would rather die than have another child and this is

her eventual fate.

After this woman's death, her sister-in-law confronts Marie with the news and also introduces the concept of Vichy's ideal woman. However, this woman is still not a pure Vichy character. Dressed in black and wearing a gold cross around her neck, the woman visits Marie with two of the orphaned children. She tells Marie that their father committed suicide after the death of his wife and she is now caring for the six children. She sees it as a trial from God, one that she willingly accepts. She also expresses her belief that Marie is a murderer, for even children in the womb possess a soul. She epitomizes the conservative, Catholic woman that Vichy idealized; she spouts the rhetoric of the National Revolution.³³ However, her actions do not coincide with the vociferousness of her beliefs. She pays for her sister-in-law's abortion and also tells Marie that she is not going to turn her into the police, yet another demonstration of the ambiguity of the period.³⁴

Interestingly, in this scene, Chabrol's camera focuses on the knitting needles and unfinished angora sweater that is in the room. The knitting is a symbol of what the proper woman would have been doing in her home. This contrasts with what is actually happening under the roof--prostitution and abortion. A similar scene that underlines the difference between one's words and one's actions centers upon the entire Latour family. Gathered around the dinner table, the family listens to a speech by Marshal Pétain extolling the virtues of the National Revolution on the radio. Ironically,

Marie has obtained the goose they are eating from the man she is considering taking as a lover.

Marie will eventually start a flagrant affair with this collaborationist. He treats Marie like a prize to be won, and Marie assumes the role of sex object in this context. Lucien wins Marie's affection at the same time that he wins the goose in a competition staged by the Germans. He decapitates the goose while wearing a mask reminiscent of an executioner's cowl, a foreshadowing of Marie's fate. The sword he wields is a powerful phallic symbol suggestive of the imminent nature of their relationship. The fact that he dons this Mother Goose mask is ironic considering it is their affair that will be the impetus for her denunciation and subsequent beheading.³⁵

In the film, Marie is denounced to the government by her husband. Throughout the course of the work, the viewer sees Paul's continued loss of masculinity. He loses his job and is reduced to wearing pajamas and playing at cutouts all day. Paul denounces his wife, not because of his ideological alignment with Vichy, but because he has lost the control of Marie's sexuality. As long as her illicit activities benefit his quality of life, he is content to let it continue. But once she has made him a cuckold, his wounded pride prompts him to anonymously inform Vichy of her conduct.

What happens next is perhaps the most profound expression of the hypocrisy of the National Revolution: Marie is arrested for her performance of twenty-three abortions and the letting of rooms

to prostitutes. Jailed in her native town of Cherbourg, Marie is forced to sign a legal document from the State that she does not understand. As a result, Marie is sent to Paris to appear before the State Court. She naively believes that the State Court is reserved for the prosecution of communists and cannot understand why her actions are considered commensurate with other crimes against the state. At one point, not understanding her confinement, she says, "I didn't kill anyone after all," but "It's as if I murdered the President."

Her lawyer explains to her that she is being made an example, but Marie does not know what example she is. He tells her, "Anything that goes against morals is considered to go against the State. They claim there are more abortions than births, so the nation's in danger." Marie's response: "Husbands are prisoners, young men are sent to Germany." Monsieur Fillon's only answer is evasive: "That's another question." All Marie knows is that she is a poor, uneducated woman with dreams of becoming a singer. She feels that the men that run the court cannot understand her plight and the stresses that forced her into these activities in order to ensure the survival of her family. She promises not to do it again and has been told that if she confesses, things will be easier for her. Despite the promises, the confession, and the assurances of her lawyer that the court almost never gets the maximum sentence, especially for a woman, Marie is sentenced to death and sent to the guillotine for her actions.

Marie's final moments are intercut with scenes that remind the

viewer of her role as mother and the hypocrisy of the judgement. The viewer sees Marie's daughter screaming and crying and Pierrot knocking his head against the wall in their mother's absence. Marie's lawyers are sitting in a park in which "good" mothers push their children in white baby carriages, discussing her fate and their own impotence in the face of the National Revolution. They acknowledge their role in the deportation of French, Jewish children and the desire for revenge and the cowardice on the part of the government. Her lawyer feels as if they have been castrated, but in the end, Marie is the one who loses her head.

Another facet of the Occupation that the French people have had to come to terms with is the involvement of the Catholic Church as proponents of the ideals of Pétain. The Church has been traditionally associated with the conservative right, therefore their association with Vichy is not a complete surprise. Problems arise in the areas in which the Church actively participated as accomplices to Vichy's agenda.³⁶ Chabrol explores one such area through the introduction of Catholic nuns as Marie's jailers. A friend gives Marie a First Communion medallion on the day of her execution and Marie symbolically renounces her religion by tearing the medallion from her neck after reciting her own personal Hail Mary: "Hail Mary, Full of Shit, Rotten is the Fruit of Thy Womb."

An interesting technique employed by Chabrol to further the development of Marie as victim is again her appearance. Gone in the final scenes is the beautiful, well-groomed Marie. In her place is a small, frail figure without any adornments. Physically,

Marie resembles the patron saint of France, Joan of Arc.³⁷ This comparison underscores the ambiguities of the period. Both the National Revolution and the Resistance claimed this saint as a symbol. However, they manipulated her image in contrasting ways. Chabrol's Marie displays qualities of both iconographical representations. The Joan of the Resistance and de Gaulle was portrayed as a sensuous savior of the nation, freeing the French from their Occupiers and the oppression of the internal government. The earlier, sensual Marie is reminiscent of this caricature. Vichy's Joan was more modest and was fighting the eternal enemy, the British. The final image of Marie being led to the guillotine is reminiscent of this Joan. She is dressed in drab, unflattering peasant clothing and her hair has been shorn. She invokes images of the androgynous Joan of Arc. In this manner, Vichy strips her of her sexuality, and her crimes which deal with the feminine sphere are effaced.

In the final scene, Marie is led to the guillotine by a priest, judges, and lawyers--all visual representations of the patriarchal and oppressive nature of Vichy. The guillotine falls, and an inscription appears: "Have pity for the children of those who are condemned." The role of Marie as mother is again re-emphasized by the adult voice of Pierrot reflecting on the date July 30, 1943, the day his mother is murdered in the name of the State. Her role as mother is likewise important in Chabrol's indictment of Vichy. Marie is guilty of "robbing" France of her children while Vichy is guilty of deporting thousands of Jewish

children to what they knew was certain death in Germany. Pierrot and Mouche have also been victimized, as they have been robbed of their mother.

The filmic representation of Marie Latour allows for the exploration of the role of women in Occupied France. A prisoner of war wife, a poor working class woman, a mother left alone to fend for the survival of her family, an opportunist, an abortionist, a sex object, a woman victimized because of her gender by her government--these are the roles of Marie captured by Claude Chabrol in Story of Women. Symptomatic of the Vichy Syndrome, the film works to bring the collective memory of the Occupation closer to the realities of the period. Chabrol uses a "cultural carrier" to demonstrate the ambiguities of collaboration and resistance. As much as Charles de Gaulle worked to alter the memories of the French people, turning France into a nation of victims dedicated to active resistance against the Nazis, Chabrol's film serves to demonstrate the opposite. Instead the nation must face the realization that they were oftentimes victimized by *l'Etat français*.

The women in Chabrol's film--opportunists, prostitutes, and even nuns--contrast greatly with the characters in the writings of Marguerite Duras. This does not make one set more "real" than the other, it simply underlines the spectrum of roles women assumed in France between 1940 and 1944. Regardless of a woman's convictions or lack thereof, they all share a common bond of suffering. Indeed women in France suffered through World War II. By studying

representations of women, one can obtain a better understanding of the lives of these women. One will find their strengths, their courage, their triumphs, their failures, and their heartbreaks.

France has historically been equated with women. Her patron saint is Joan of Arc and in post-revolutionary times, she has been symbolized by Marianne. In 1940 France was viewed as a woman weakened by decadence and had thereby become morally loose. This woman needed to be tamed. This was one of the reasons the nation turned to Philippe Pétain, a World War I hero who was a reminder of the idealized bygone era. However, the conservatism of his government further victimized women and the country. The ideology of fascism excludes women except as a "*femme au foyer*." The National Revolution was a reaction to this supposed French decline. Works of literature and films provide the opportunity to examine the ways in which their creators perceived this world.

Undeniably, the French continue to be plagued by the inability to come to terms with their past. Story of Women directed by Claude Chabrol and The War: A Memoir by Marguerite Duras demonstrate the central role the Occupation continues to play in France, as they did not appear until forty years after the fact. Perhaps the only concrete conclusion to be drawn about the German Occupation is that it is an era replete with ambiguities. By exploring female characters in cultural carriers of the Vichy Syndrome such as literature and the cinema, one can examine the effect of these ambiguities on the lives of women. It can truly be said that the perceptions of the period are strictly in the eyes

of the beholder.

1. Robert O. Paxton, Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order 1940-1944, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 228-33. For an examination of the history of fascism in France, see Robert Soucy, French Fascism: The First Wave, 1924-1933, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986).

2. Henry Rousso, The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 71.

3. This is the date given by Robert O. Paxton in Vichy France, 38. The Resistance will criticize his work because of this date.

4. Rousso, The Vichy Syndrome, 9. It is important to note that this *guerre franco-française* was not acknowledged in the Gaullist myth of resistance. The myth sought to minimize the divisions among the French people and to create the memory of France as a country completely unified against their invaders.

5. For an introduction into the manner memory may be affected and or altered, see Chapter 8, "The Power of Suggestion" in Elizabeth Loftus, Memory: surprising new insights into how we remember and why we forget, (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1980).

6. Rousso, The Vichy Syndrome, 53-4.

7. *Ibid.*, 16.

8. *Ibid.*, 17.

9. Included in its criticisms is Ophuls' virtual omission of women in the documentary. There is only one woman who testifies in the film as a participant in the events of the Occupation. For an in-depth examination of the film's shortcomings and its role in the Vichy Syndrome, see Rousso, The Vichy Syndrome, 100-114.

10. "Judging History," The Economist 323 (April 25, 1992), 56.

11. *Ibid.*, 57. There was a strong reaction on the part of the French people after the dismissal of the case. Some believed it was the court's attempt to whitewash Vichy and exonerate the entire collaborationist government of crimes against humanity. On November 28, 1992 the French Supreme Court ruled that Touvier must stand trial on charges of crimes against humanity for the execution of seven Jewish hostages.

12. Paxton, Vichy France, 143.
13. Robert Soucy, French Fascism: The First Wave, 1924--1933, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 35.
14. Ibid., 80.
15. Ibid., 35.
16. Miranda Pollard, "Women and the National Revolution," in Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture & Ideology, edited by Roderick Kedward and Roger Austin, (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Nobles, 1985), 36.
17. Ibid., 41.
18. Marguerite Duras, The War: A Memoir, translated by Barbara Bray (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986). All quotes are from this edition and are indicated in the body of the text.
19. Sarah Fishman, We Will Wait: Wives of French Prisoners of War, 1940-1945, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), xii.
20. Paxton, Vichy France, 366.
21. For the first-hand accounts of two female French Resistance fighters, see Shelley Saywell, "Le Réseau: France, 1939-45" in Women in War, (New York: Viking, 1985).
22. Paula Schwartz, "Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France," French Historical Studies 16 (Spring 1989), 136, 138.
23. Ironically, this movement was lead by François Morland, the code name for the man who will eventually become the President of France, François Mitterrand. Remember that Mitterrand will be involved in a scandal in September 1994 when his biography exposing his early association with the Right and Vichy appears.
24. Chabrol's film is based upon the novel, Une affaire de femmes by Francis Szpiner which chronicles the wartime activities of Marie-Louise Giraud and her trial. See Francis Szpiner, Une affaire de femmes: Paris 1943, exécution d'une avorteuse (Paris: Balland, 1986).
25. See Rosemarie Scullion, "Family Fictions and the Reproductive Realities in Occupied France: Claude Chabrol's Une affaire de femme." L'Esprit Créateur 33 (Spring 1993): 85-103.
26. This theory is expounded in Leah D. Hewitt, "Vichy's Female Icons: Chabrol's Story of Women." I am indebted to Dr. Richard J. Golsan for this unpublished article.

27. Fishman, We Will Wait, xii. The calculations are my own.
28. Rousso, The Vichy Syndrome, 5.
29. Scullion, "Family Fictions," 88.
30. André Pierre Colombat, The Holocaust in French Film, (Metuchen, N.J., & London: The Scarecrow Press, 1993), 96.
31. Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, Vichy France and the Jews, (New York: Basic Books, 1981.), 13-14.
32. Rousso, The Vichy Syndrome, 7.
33. Remember that Vichy's pronatal policies had their origin in the pre-war birthrate crisis.
34. The fact that Marie accepts the payment gives an indication of her character. Clearly, her conscience does not affect her, further proof that she performs abortions for economic rather than ideological reasons.
35. Hewitt, "Vichy's Female Icons," 16.
36. In contrast to the role played by the Catholic Church in Story of Women is the role the Church assumed in Louis Malle's film, Good-bye, Children. In this film, a private Catholic school harbors Jewish boys from the Germans.
37. This idea is first explored by Leah D. Hewitt in "Vichy's Female Icons: Chabrol's Story of Women," 5-8.

Bibliography

- Anouilh, Jean. Antigone. New York: Hill and Wang, 1958.
- Ardagh, John. France Today. New York: Penguin Books, 1990.
- Atkin, Nick. "The Cult of Joan of Arc in French Schools, 1940-1944," in Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture & Ideology, edited by Roderick Kedward and Roger Austin. Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Nobles Books, 1985.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. The Blood of Others. Translated by Roger Senhouse and Yvonne Moyse. New York: Pantheon Books, 1948.
- Bernstein, Richard. "War Memories Haunt, and Divide, the French." The New York Times, November 3, 1984.
- . "French Collaborators: The New Debate." The New York Review. (June 25, 1992): 37-42.
- Brown, James W., and Lawrence D. Stokes, eds. The Silence of the Sea/ Le Silence de la mer: A novel of French Resistance during World War II by "Vercors". New York/Oxford: Berg, 1991.
- Camus, Albert. The Plague. Translated by Stuart Gilbert. New York: Vintage International, 1948.
- Carrier, Peter. "Rewriting Vichy After Fifty Years." Contemporary Review 261 (November 1992): 232-35.
- Cismaru, Alfred. "Antisemitism in France." The Midwest Quarterly 34 (Spring 1993): 283-93.
- Colombat, André Pierre. The Holocaust in French Film. Metuchen, N.J., & London: The Scarecrow Press, 1993.
- Duras, Marguerite. The War: A Memoir. Translated by Barbara Bray.

- New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.
- Dutourd, Jean. The Best Butter. Translated by Robin Chancellor.
New York: Greenwood Press, 1955.
- Finkielkraut, Alain. Remembering in Vain: The Klaus Barbie Trial
and Crimes Against Humanity. Translated by Roxanne Lapidus
with Sima Godfrey. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.
- Fishman, Sarah. We Will Wait: Wives of French Prisoners of War,
1940-1945. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991.
- Fourny, Jean-François. "La ligne de démarcation." L'Esprit
Créateur 33 (Spring 1993): 53-62.
- Golsan, Richard J. "Hotel Terminus via the Vélodrome d'hiver:
Collaboration and the Aesthetics of Denial." L'Esprit Créateur
33 (Spring 1993): 75-84.
- Green, Mary Jean. "The Bouboule Novels: Constructing a French
Fascist Woman." 1995.
- Grenier, Richard. "Laying the Nazi Ghost." National Review 46 (May
16, 1994): 26+.
- Gumbel, Andrew. "Vichy Slaughter." New Statesman & Society 7
(March 25, 1994): 20-1.
- Hewitt, Leah D. "Vichy's Female Icons: Chabrol's Story of Women."
1995.
- Higgins, Lynn A. "Unfinished Business: Reflections on the
Occupation and May '68." L'Esprit Créateur 33 (Spring 1993):
105-10.
- Hirschfeld, Gerhard, and Patrick Marsh, eds. Collaboration in
France: Politics and Culture during the Nazi Occupation, 1940-

1944. Oxford/New York/Munich: Berg, 1989.
- Houlding, Elizabeth A. "Simone de Beauvoir: From the Second World War to The Second Sex." L'Esprit Créateur 33 (Spring 1993): 39-51.
- "I Was Good and He Was Evil." Newsweek 121 (June 21, 1993): 44.
- Jacobs, Gabriel. "The Role of Joan of Arc on the Stage of Occupied Paris" in Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture & Ideology, edited by Roderick Kedward and Roger Austin. Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Nobles Books, 1985.
- Judt, Tony. "Truth and Consequences." The New York Review 41 (November 3, 1994): 8-12.
- "Judging History." The Economist 323 (April 25, 1992); 56-7.
- Kaufmann, Dorothy. "'Le Témoin compromis': Diaries of Resistance and Collaboration by Edith Thomas." L'Esprit Créateur 33 (Spring 1993): 17-28.
- Kritzman, Lawrence D. "Duras' War." L'Esprit Créateur 33 (Spring 1993): 63-73.
- Krumeich, Gerd. "The Cult of Joan of Arc under the Vichy Regime," in Collaboration in France: Politics and Culture during the Nazi Occupation, 1940-1944, edited by Gerhard Hirschfeld and Patrick Marsh. Oxford: Berg, 1989.
- Loftus, Elizabeth. Memory: surprising new insights into how we remember and why we forget. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1980.
- Lottman, Herbert R. The Left Bank: Writers, Artists, and Politics from the Popular Front to the Cold War. Boston: Houghton

- Mifflin, 1982.
- McMillan, James F. Housewife or Harolt: The Place of Women in French Society 1870-1940. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981.
- Markham, James M. "The Bad Pétain Haunts the Good One." The New York Times, February 11, 1988, 4Y.
- . "Fugitive Nazi Collaborator Seized From a Catholic Priory in France." The New York Times, May 25, 1989.
- Marrus, Michael R., and Robert O. Paxton. Vichy France and the Jews. New York: Basic Books, 1981.
- Morgan, Ted. "L'Affaire Touvier: Opening Old Wounds." The New York Times Magazine, October 1, 1989, 32-3+.
- . An Uncertain Hour: The French, the Germans, the Jews, the Klaus Barbie Trial, and the City of Lyon, 1940-1945. New York: Arbor House/William Morrow, 1990.
- Morris, Alan. Collaboration and Resistance Reviewed: Writers and the Mode Rétro in Post-Gaullist France. New York: Berg, 1992.
- Montherlant, Henry de. Queen After Death or How to Kill Women in The Master of Santiago and Four Other Plays. Translated by Jonathan Griffin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951.
- Paxton, Robert O. Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order 1940-1944. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.
- Pollard, Miranda. "Women and the National Revolution," in Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture & Ideology, edited by Roderick Kedward and Roger Austin. Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Nobles Books, 1985.
- "Resistance on trial." The Economist 296 (July 27, 1985); 44.

Riding, Alan. "French Angered at Ruling on Nazi Collaborator." The New York Times, April 15, 1992.

---. "Rulings Jar France Into Reliving Its Anti-Jewish Roll in Nazi Era." The New York Times, May 10, 1992, 1+.

---. "Vichy Aide Accused of War Crimes Is Slain in France." The New York Times, June 9, 1993, 3.

---. "The Painful Past Still Eludes France." The New York Times, June 11, 1993.

---. "France Confronts Vichy Past in War Crimes Trial." The New York Times, March 16, 1994, A3.

---. "War Crimes Trial Opens in France." The New York Times, March 18, 1994, A5.

---. "At His Trial, Frenchman's Memory of Nazis Is Dim." The New York Times, March 27, 1994, 6.

---. "Frenchman on Trial: Testing the Role of the Nazis." The New York Times, April 3, 1994, 10.

---. "French Lawyers Assert Man Tied to Jews' Death Was Nazi." The New York Times, April 14, 1994, A8.

---. "Frenchman Convicted of Crimes Against the Jews in '44." The New York Times, April 20, 1994.

---. "Mitterrand's 'Mistakes': Vichy Past is Unveiled." The New York Times, September 9, 1994, A4.

Roussio, Henry. The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. The Flies. In No Exit and Three Other Plays.

- Translated by Stuart Gilbert. New York: Vintage International, 1989.
- Saywell, Shelley. "Le Réseau: France, 1939-45." In Women in War. New York: Viking, 1985.
- "Scandalous Sanctuary: France arrests a fugitive." Newsweek 113 (June 5, 1989): 44.
- Schwartz, Paula. "Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France." French Historical Studies 16 (Spring 1989): 126-51.
- Scullion, Rosemarie. "Family Fictions and the Reproductive Realities in Occupied France: Claude Chabrol's Une affaire de femme." L'Esprit Créateur 33 (Spring 1993): 85-103.
- Singer, Daniel. "Mitterrand Le Petit." The Nation, October 10, 1994, 380-382.
- Soucy, Robert. French Fascism: The First Wave, 1924-1933. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. "Letter from Paris." Salmagundi 97 (Winter 1993): 21-8.
- Tolansky, Edith. "Les Cahiers du Silence," in Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture & Ideology, edited by Roderick Kedward and Roger Austin. Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Nobles Books, 1985.
- "Touvier's troubling trial." The Economist 311 (June 3, 1989): 49-50.
- "The Touvier trial: Old wounds." The Economist 331 (April 23, 1994): 53.
- Ungar, Steven. "The Face, the Nation: Vichy from Afar." L'Esprit Créateur 33 (Spring 1993): 111-6.

Valls-Russell, Janice. "The Touvier Controversy: Confronting Collaboration in France." The New Leader 75 (June 29, 1992): 9-11.

---. "From Dreyfus to Touvier: Remembering Anti-Semitism in France." The New Leader 77 (May 9-23, 1994): 8-9.

Vercors. The Silence of the Sea. Translated by Cyril Connolly. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1944.

Wadham, Lucy. "Vive l'histoire: Is France finally accepting its part in the Holocaust?" New Statesman Society 5 (May 1, 1992): 18.

Wallace, Bruce. "Crimes against humanity: A trial focuses on French collaboration with Nazi Germany." Maclean's 107 (April 4, 1994): 28-9.

Wright, Gordon. France in Modern Times: From the Enlightenment to the Present. Fourth Edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 1987.

Zaretsky, Robert. "The Eclipse of Memory." The Virginia Quarterly Review 65 (Autumn 1989): 636-46.

Filmography

Le Chagrin et la pitié (The Sorrow and the Pity), 1971, Marcel Ophuls, Alain de Sédouy and André Harris.

Le Dernier métro (The Last Metro), 1980, François Truffaut.

Coup de foudre (*Entre Nous*), (Between Us), 1983, Diane Kurys.

Au revoir les enfants (Goodbye Children), 1987, Louis Malle.

Hôtel Terminus, 1988, Marcel Ophuls.

Une Affaire de femmes (Story of Women), 1989, Claude Chabrol.