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Writing The Occupation
The Articulation of Women's
Subjectivities, France 1940–1944

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Abstract

The key objective of this study has been to contribute new evidence of the articulation of women's subjectivities during the Occupation in France 1940–1944, by using contemporaneous journals as traces of lived experience. A further objective was to address the omission of the extent and riches of such primary source material in both French and British historiography of the period.

The methodological approach employed was to consider four such journals as primary sources to interrogate sites of Occupation historiographical enquiry: the *exode*, the Jewish survivor experience, *attentisme* and the role of the female *agent de liaison* in resistance activity. The contribution and originality of the research lie in its systematic analysis of the four journals, the choice of genre (diary) and the qualitative value emerging from sources that have previously been used schematically or not at all. It is now almost impossible to recover day-to-day Occupation experience through oral testimony and it is not always identifiable in archival documentation and we are therefore left only with fragmentary traces. Qualitative studies such as this research offer the means to recover elements of that detail.

The findings of the study are that women's subjectivities of the wider constraints of the Occupation are articulated in the physicalities of bodily sensations and that wider notions of loss, exile and waiting predominate. The thesis has also demonstrated the extent of the under-reporting of women's narratives during the Occupation and argues that the use of women's texts should be privileged in future work in order to redress the gender imbalance in both British and French Occupation historiography.

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Introduction

In his assessment of work on everyday life in the Occupation, Jean-Pierre Rioux pointed out that studies of the everyday and the cultural:

Are so closely allied that the sources to consult in order to understand their inter-relationships are often the same: that poorly inventoried, little-explored and under-utilized mass of eyewitness accounts, letters, notebooks and diaries, literary traces and journalistic crumbs, packed into attics or closets which could be used to organise the last plausible large-scale oral investigations. The abundance of this documentation and problems of access have tended to block or discourage its use, while the well sorted boxes of the public archives are much more tempting. Nevertheless, I believe we must not give up on building a history that begins without presuppositions in its encounter with the everyday life of the French...¹

The unpublished texts used in this study form part of the ‘little explored mass’ described above, and answer some of the questions first posed by Robert Paxton in his 1972 work, *Vichy France*, about the interaction of state and society and the evolution of public opinion. They allow us to generate what Paxton describes as ‘The empathic understanding of the agonising choices made amid multiple uncertainties and constraints by individual civil servants, intellectuals, business men and others.’² This study explores the *others* noted in Paxton’s list, with a particular focus on women.

In the last decade, there has been an outpouring of publications of diaries, memoirs and novels written by women during the Occupation in France. These include work by Agnès Humbert and Hélène Berr, both of which have been translated into English as has the most popular — *Suite Française* by Irène Némirovsky — which achieved sales which historians can only dream about.³ Such texts articulate a different, more nuanced, women’s subjectivity, in contrast to that of the triumphalist *résistancialisme* of earlier historiography such as that by Guidez (1989) on women during the Occupation, which operate as a hagiography of heroism, with photographs of Lucie Aubrac captioned; ‘A Life of adventures, bravery and of love.’⁴ Coudert (1983) and Francis (1978), whilst

¹ Jean-Pierre Rioux, ‘Everyday Culture in Occupied France’, in Fishman, Downs et. al. (eds), *France at War, Vichy and the Historians* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), p.226.

² Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p.xxxi.

³ Agnès Humbert, *Notre Guerre* (Paris: Tallandier, 2008); Hélène Berr, *Journal 1942–1944* (Paris: Tallandier, 2008); Irène Némirovsky, *Suite Française* (Paris: Editions Denoel, 2004); conversation with H.R. Kedward, 2011.

⁴ Guylaine Guydez, *Femmes dans la Guerre 1939–1945* (Paris: Perrin, 1989), p.177.

reclaiming the importance of women during the Resistance, also offer a similar straightforward narrative of action and achievement.⁵

This study is a long overdue analysis of four journals written by women during the Occupation and argues that there has not been sufficient work on the wealth of source material of women's texts and will therefore address this omission.⁶ Such texts by women do not seem to have been integrated into some recently-published research such as that by Dombrowski Risser (2012) or Fogg (2009) or Nord (2015).⁷ However, there are three main exceptions to this: Curatolo and Marcot (2011) readily reference women's journals, Rosbottom (2015) cites extensively the journal written by Berthe Auroy, which this study examines in chapter three, and Gildea (2015) uses the journal by Denise Domenach-Lallich, which will be explored in chapter four.⁸ That a leading historian of the occupation such as Gildea cites this and other texts by women suggests that these could have usefully been referenced in previous historiography. I will argue that future work should continue to address the imbalance of women's place in the overall representation of the period.

This study explores how female subjectivity is articulated during a time of crisis (the Occupation of France 1940–1944), and the notion of subjectivity is mobilised as an analytical tool to provide insight into women's experiences of the period, using the definition of subjectivity as a central philosophical concept related to consciousness, agency, personhood, reality and truth. Subjectivity can be seen as the collection of the perceptions, experiences, expectations and personal or cultural understandings and beliefs specific to a person and provides an explanation for that which influences, informs and leads to bias in individual's judgements about truth or reality.⁹ The concept of subjectivity has its philosophical roots in the thinking of Descartes and Kant's

⁵ Marie-Louise Coudert, *Elles, les Résistantes* (Paris: Messidor, 1983); Ania Francis, *Il était des femmes dans la résistance* (Paris: Stock, 1978).

⁶ Philippe Lejeune, *Journaux féminins tenus sous l'Occupation*, *Bibliographie* in Bruno Curatolo et Francois Marcot, *Écrire sous l'Occupation* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011) pp.397-411 provides an invaluable bibliography of such material.

⁷ Nicole Dombrowski Risser, *France under Fire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Shannon Fogg, *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Philippe Nord, *France 1940: Defending the Republic* (Newhaven and London: Yale University Press, 2015).

⁸ Curatolo and Marcot, *Écrire sous l'Occupation* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011), Ronald, Rosbottom, *When Paris went Dark* (London: John Murray, 2015), see for instance pp.174–177; Robert Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows: A New History of the Resistance* (London: Faber and Faber, 2015).

⁹ Eds. Carolyn Ellis, Michael G. Flaherty *Investigating Subjectivity, Research on Lived Experience*. (Focus Edition, Sage Publications, 1992) p.36

theories of what constitutes an individual, and this thesis employs their understanding that this concept of identity lies at the root of the notion of subjectivity.¹⁰

In order to explore how such female subjectivity is articulated, the study will adopt the approach of using women's texts as traces of women's lived experience of the Occupation, encompassing both published and unpublished texts, with a particular concentration on the journal as a genre. The originality of the study lies in its contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the period by using previously unpublished texts and by siting its analysis of those texts on the intersection of history and literature/text. The originality lies in the interdisciplinary of the combination of archival research to identify unpublished women's diaries, followed by close textual analysis.

Any study of the Occupation must emphasise the specificity of time, place and person, and not resort to generalisation. Although these unpublished texts are, by definition, fragmentary representations of the period, detailed analysis of the text illustrates the individuality and uniqueness of the writer's experience and contributes to an analysis of the ambivalences and ambiguities of the Occupation, whilst simultaneously giving voice to "ordinary" civilian women living in extraordinary times.¹¹ Overall, the material of the texts captures the voice of women and demonstrates how during such a period of crisis women processed their experience. Close analysis will extend our knowledge of the intricacies and nuances of the period and the impact on women's lived experience. Finally, the study is original in its intersection with literary history in that close attention is paid to the literary character of these sources as written texts which are wittingly and unwittingly constrained by the characteristics of the genre within which they appear.

In order to give clearer definition to this interdisciplinary undertaking, I will first provide a contextual consideration of the debate around gender and history. This will lead to a discussion of *écriture féminine*, and its implications for an understanding of subjectivity. There will be a brief reflection on the particular nature of diary writing, and the issues that arise from treating it as both historical and literary source before a final section that locates this study within both the broader and more focused historiography of the Occupation in France.

¹⁰ *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, (OUP, 2005)

¹¹ Works such as J.L.Crémieux-Brilhac, *Les Français De L'An 40, Tome 1* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990) and J.P.Azéma, et Francois Bédarida (eds.), *La France des années noires, Tome 2* (Paris: Seuil, 2000).

Context

Any discussion of female subjectivity during the 1940s must acknowledge the importance of the debate around gender and history, which — it can be argued — began with the publication in France of Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe* in 1949, with her opening sentence: 'One is not born but rather becomes a woman.'¹² This should be understood in context, as de Beauvoir makes an important distinction between the cultural production of 'femininity' in its physical and psychological elements and the natural existence of female beings. She observes: 'Woman is determined not by her hormones or by mysterious instincts but by the manner in which her body and her relation to the world are modified through the action of others than herself.'¹³ Forty years later, in 1989, Gisela Bock argued similarly that gender was:

An intellectual construct, a way of perceiving and studying people, an analytical tool that helps us to discover neglected areas of history. It is a conceptual form of socio-cultural inquiry that challenges the sex blindness of traditional historiography.¹⁴

Using gender as a construct in this way becomes an obvious analytical tool for an exploration of women's texts in order to discover neglected narrative representations of the Occupation of France and more widely to challenge the gender blindness in the historiography of this period.

Joan Scott's seminal work *Gender and Politics of History* (1988) introduced a level of controversy into what has become known as the 'post-structuralist' view of gender, when she argued that 'post-structuralist theory challenged the assumption that there is a fixed and permanent subject possessing total autonomy.'¹⁵ Although Scott argues for the relativist position of historicising discourse, she stated that:

The story is no longer about the things that have happened to women and men and how they have reacted to them, instead it is about how the subjective and collective meanings of women and men as categories of identity have been constructed.¹⁶

She also writes that her motivation was explicitly political and that she aimed to change inequalities between women and men, one she shared with others who wanted to change

¹² Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949) *The Second Sex* (London: Landsborough, 1960), p.8.

¹³ Ibid., p.411.

¹⁴ Gisela Bock, 'Women's history and gender history, aspects of an international debate', *Gender and History* vol. 1, no. 1 (1989), pp.7–30; cited in Sian Reynolds, *France Between the Wars, Gender and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.9.

¹⁵ Cited in ibid., p.11.

¹⁶ Joan Wallich Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p.6.

the representation of those left out of history because of race, ethnicity, class and gender, which was made more difficult without an analysis of how gender hierarchies are constructed, legitimated, challenged and maintained.¹⁷ Scott considers that the radical potential of writing women's history arose from the combination of women's experiences and the extent to which gender could be developed as a category of analysis.¹⁸ She comments that while the strength of women's history is to legitimise the narratives about women and also to establish the importance of gender difference in the conceptualisation of social organisation, its vulnerability is that it risks valuing women's experiences as a subject worth studying and then positively assessing everything women say or do, thus isolating women and consigning them to a separate topic of history.¹⁹ In adopting a critical approach to the form in which French women's experiences are transcribed, and in seeking to connect female experience with the contexts that shaped it, this study will seek to avoid this pitfall, aptly described by Reynolds as 'being over-descriptive, insufficiently theorised and overly reliant on the evidence of experience that had not been problematized.'²⁰

Other contributors to this debate include Denise Riley (1988), who provided a critical discussion of the historical construction of the category of women in history in her essay *Am I that Name?*, in which she saw the term 'women's experience' as being used to conflate a number of meanings and then glorifying the end result. Riley's criticism succinctly identifies another pitfall which this study will look to avoid as it seeks to ensure that women's subjectivities are fully integrated into historical discourse and not seen as an optional add-on.²¹ The study will avoid these pitfalls by ensuring that the evidence is adequately problematized, through the interdisciplinary linguistic approach to the primary texts coupled with the nuanced awareness of context. While the wider debate on the construction of gender and history is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to outline recent British and French discussions of gender during wartime, within which the concept of gender emerges as a subjective performance act.²² In order

¹⁷ Ibid., p.3.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.27

¹⁹ Ibid., p.20

²⁰ Reynolds, *France*, p.11.

²¹ Denise Riley, *Am I that Name?* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p.98. This tendency to see female experience as an optional add-on is a problem that continues to resonate in contemporary pedagogy, a point discussed at University of Sussex Feminist History Forum, 8 March 2015.

²² For further reading, see Michelle Perrot, *Une histoire des femmes, est-il possible?* (Marseille: Rivage 1984); Judith Bennett, 'Feminism and History', *Gender & History* vol. 1, no. 3 (1989), pp.251–72; Renate Bridenthal (ed.), *Becoming Visible, Women in History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

to draw on the most useful concepts for analysis of the primary texts, it is helpful to consider work that tackles the themes of war and female experience more widely, as well as that which deals with France directly. The prescient collection of essays by Higonnet et al. points out that gender roles are sharply defined in wartime and that women's roles remain subordinate to those of fighting men.²³ It would appear on an initial reading that this is not applicable to Occupied France, but if one substitutes 'prisoners of war' for 'fighting men' the point is indeed equally true, as is the comment that women's pre-war domestic support work was simply replicated outside the home during wartime.

Turning to work on gender and history in France, Sian Reynolds's work on the interwar period offers some useful parameters for the discussion of gender which are equally resonant for the Occupation, in that Reynolds aimed:

not so much to challenge what has so far been written as to query what has not been written, using research of recent years to ask different questions and inevitably to propose some alternative readings. It aims to apply the perspectives and finding of what is variously known as women's history, gender history or feminist history to a rather resistant historical 'site of research'... The prevailing gender blindness of so much of the historical literature has been a spur to explore how it could be otherwise. It is not a matter of putting the record straight, this account like many others will be partial in both sense of the word.²⁴

Reynolds suggests that the reason for the absence of gender as a framing structure is not adequately explained by the disenfranchisement of women who were barred from voting or standing for office before 1944 in France, since there has not been a significant focus on women in French historiography since 1945.²⁵

This study of women's texts written during the Occupation therefore builds on Reynolds's work and borrows from her caveats: the study is not a history of women in the period, nor a cultural history of women, but rather an attempt to explore what has been taken for granted and consider whether a different reading may be possible, what Reynolds describes as 'not so much a re-interpretation, more a widening of the angle of vision.'²⁶

This study therefore seeks to develop that widening of the angle of vision by treating women's diaries as a distinctive site of gendered production, in which the specific form of the text bears the marks of hitherto under-explored historical experience. However,

²³ M.R. Higonnet and J. Jensen (eds.), *Behind the Lines, Gender and the Two World Wars* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1987).

²⁴ Reynolds, *France*, p.2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.3.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.13.

any discussion of texts produced by French women which looks to focus on their form to produce insights into the gendered context that produced them must at least briefly acknowledge and detail the emergence in France since the mid-1970s of the distinct literary movement known as *l'écriture féminine*. Here, women's writing, or the "white ink" of Helene Cixous, is presented as inhabiting a realm of sexual difference that both subverts and simultaneously places it beyond the patriarchal forms of representation that had hitherto been understood as universal. Cixous's essay '*Le Rire de la Meduse*', published in 1975 and translated into English in 1976, posited the development of a feminine mode of writing and called for an acknowledgement of universal bisexuality.²⁷ Cixous' work became representative of the theoretical works of the group led by Antoinette Fouque and known as 'Psychoanalysis and Politics' and for whom the idea of sexual difference was significant as an approach to writing and who sought, as Gorrara notes, 'to locate the feminine in language as a site of subversive potential.'²⁸

A major influence on Cixous' work was the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, and her writing employs metaphors and images linking motherhood and writing. She also worked closely with Jacques Derrida, both sharing an Algerian-Jewish heritage, and her work must be seen in the context of deconstruction, a concept promoted by Derrida to show that a text is not a discrete whole but has conflicting and contradictory meanings, deriving in part from writing's consistent attempt to disguise itself as a transparent act of speech. Without necessarily following Derrida to his most radical conclusions about the nature of meaning and interpretation, it is possible to at least acknowledge his emphasis on the textual nature of texts as a basis for their interpretation. It follows therefore that any text has more than one interpretation and that the text itself links these interpretations inextricably; the incompatibility of these interpretations is irreducible and interpretative meaning cannot go beyond a certain point.²⁹ In this light, deconstruction can be seen as a concept explaining how language relies on a hierarchical system which privileges the spoken word over the written word.

This body of work inevitably received much negative peer criticism. Derrida attracted the scorn of Chomsky, for example, who commented: 'I find the scholarship appalling, based in pathetic misreading and argument such as it was, failed to come close to the

²⁷ Hélène Cixous, translated by Keith and Paula Cohen, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', *Signs* vol. 1, no. 4 (1976), pp.874–9.

²⁸ Claire Gorrara, *Women's Representations of the Occupation in Post '68 France* (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), p.23.

²⁹ Mark Currie, *The Invention of Deconstruction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.80.

kinds of standards I've been familiar with since virtually childhood.³⁰ As with Derrida, Cixous was accused of losing sight of reality, in this case of women's lives and experiences. Gorrara comments that '*écriture féminine*' was a form of writing which appealed to a highly educated and theoretically-aware readership.³¹ In that sense, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to further explore the ideas of Cixous, Derrida and those of other post-structuralist feminist writers such as Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, who also made important contributions towards the critical analysis of the politics of language and meaning and the development of feminine language.³² Given that this study considers texts written by women before this distinct literary movement emerged, there is no need to engage with the specifics of the movement for the further exploration of the texts themselves. Nonetheless, in the light of *écriture féminine*, there is a clearly a need to be alert to the gendered nature of the act of writing itself.

Here, from a historian's perspective, Scott argues that Derrida's deconstruction enables the systematic study of the conflictual processes that produce meanings, and that this contributes a significant new dimension for the historian.³³ In the same way, it is not necessary to wholeheartedly embrace the notion of *écriture féminine* to see how it might alert the historian to the role of text in constructing and re-presenting female identities.

In that respect, and somewhat in contrast to *écriture féminine*, de Beauvoir, whose work was published in 1949 and so may well have been writing contemporaneously with the texts under consideration, offers a more helpful theoretical basis for this study when examining the elusive concept of subjectivity. She considered it as always 'embodied' and that this embodiment depends and varies according to specific socio-historical circumstances.³⁴ De Beauvoir argued that:

The struggle cannot be clearly drawn between man and woman since woman is opaque in her very being; she stands before man not as a subject but as an object paradoxically imbued with subjectivity; she takes her self simultaneously as self and other; a contradiction that entails baffling consequences.³⁵

³⁰ Noam Chomsky, *Postmodernism?* (2 communications, Nov. 1995).

³¹ Gorrara, *Women's Representations*, p.23.

³² For further reading see Kelly Ives, *Cixous, Irigaray, Kristeva, The Jouissance of French Feminism* (Maidstone: Crescent Moon Publishing, 2013); Anne-Marie Smith, *Julia Kristeva, Speaking the Unspeakable* (London: Pluto Press, 1998).

³³ Scott, *Gender*, p.7.

³⁴ Renate Gunther, 'Fifty Years On: The Impact of Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe* on Contemporary French Feminist Theory', *Modern & Contemporary France* vol. 6, no. 2 (1998), p.180.

³⁵ De Beauvoir, *Second Sex*, p.40.

This study identifies ways of reading the journals with an awareness of socio-cultural context and de Beauvoir offers insights into the gendered nature of that context. Hinton, writing on subjectivity, observes that ‘Historians have become increasingly interested in ways in which individuals have used available cultural resources to weave meaningful narratives of their personal identity.’³⁶

As alluded to above, post-modern theorists tend to view selfhood as an illusion and consideration of the notion of the individual as a historical agent was not accepted by all; Foucault stated that the notion had no more substance than ‘a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea’.³⁷ Michael Roper develops the theme of collapsing subjectivity into discourse where meaning is decentred from the individual and floats free in a world of disembodied discourse. He concludes:

To conceive of subjectivity primarily in terms of representation however, is to endorse a primarily lifeless notion of human existence in which was to deny to history the rich depths of emotional experience that surely animates us in our lives.

He describes how much cultural history leaves the reader with a sense of abstraction, confronted by claims for the meaning of public discourses for subjectivity, advanced without encountering in any depth any individual agent.³⁸ It is at this point that we can return to Beauvoir: she considers that human subjectivity is always ‘embodied’ and that this embodiment depends upon and varies according to specific socio-historical circumstances: ‘Society’s definitions of the male and female is a construct of the manner in which both men and women experience their physical existence.’³⁹

Working from the general notion of the text as a site of this embodiment, this study will therefore argue that the particular genre of text (diary) explored in the following chapters can be identified as a privileged source for the articulation of women’s subjectivity.

It is therefore important to consider the theoretical basis of diary writing and although there is considerable French work on diary writing, in particular on the nineteenth century *Journal de Jeune Fille*, other than a useful discussion by Gorrara, who notes that the diary form offers up a form of resistance to the powerlessness experienced by women writers, which I will explore in chapter two, I have been unable to identify a

³⁶ James Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.4.

³⁷ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Routledge, 1980), cited in Hinton, *Nine*, p.18.

³⁸ Michael Roper, ‘Slipping Out of View, Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History’, *History Workshop Journal* vol. 59, no. 1 (2005), p.70.

³⁹ Gunter, ‘Fifty’, pp.177–188.

body of work on women's Occupation diaries and this study does not argue that such diaries should be seen as a distinct genre.⁴⁰ I have therefore chosen to focus predominantly on work developed in the British context, as this provides the study with an original and nuanced perspective of War versus Occupation. Hinton suggests that the diary is a performance, a place where the diarist reflects on and prepares the performance, adding that, in contrast to autobiography and oral testimony, which provide retrospectively crafted narratives, the diary illustrates how 'Meanings shift from day to day, mood to mood, crisis to crisis. It is precisely this fragmentary, raw, experimental unedited nature of the diary that makes it so revealing.'⁴¹ It is this specific "raw" nature of the diary which allows it to become an ideal tool to examine in depth the articulation of women's subjectivity. The gendered difference cannot be overemphasised between this "raw" material, often unshaped by education, written by French women, and the formally written, well-educated, male, Prefect's reports found in French local and national archives, which in turn frequently form the basis of the primary sources for dominant narratives of histories of the Occupation, again predominantly written by male historians.⁴² Amongst other things, this study will also demonstrate the capacity of these texts to redress the imbalance within many such dominant narratives in French historiography, for example that of the *exode*, where there is insufficient focus on the articulation of women's subjectivity within an event for which women constituted, after all, the majority of participants.⁴³

The raw material of diaries does provide problems for the historian, as adequate contextual detail may not be provided, since as Sheridan aptly observes, a diary is a life already in motion.⁴⁴ The major problem of interpretation, however, is the issue of representation. Hinton comments that the nine Mass Observation diaries he discusses cannot possibly be representative, but that neither could ninety.⁴⁵ He nonetheless emphasises that diaries can capture something of the lived experience of individuals in the past and offer specificity of detail. Diaries, therefore, although not being representative, can be used for what cannot be discovered elsewhere and this study will

⁴⁰ Philippe Lejeune, *On Diary* (Hawaii: Hawaii University Press, 2009), pp.129–143; Gorrara, *Women's*, p. 54.

⁴¹ Hinton, *Nine*, pp.5, 7.

⁴² See, for instance: Julian Jackson, *The Dark Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Reynolds, *France*, p. 9.

⁴³ Jean Vidalenc, *L'Exode de Mai–Juin 1940* (Paris: PUF, 1957).

⁴⁴ Dorothy Sheridan (ed.), *Among You Taking Notes: The Wartime Diary of Naomi Mitchison* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.2.

⁴⁵ Hinton, *Nine*, p.17.

offer not only a gendered perspective of the Occupation but also a more intricate and nuanced narrative of *les années noires* than appears in the broader historiography. Clearly nothing can be proved from this selection of diaries, but as Hinton observed: 'Historical process can be illuminated from the contemplation of individual life histories, because in the end, it is choices made by those individuals, which drive these processes forward.'⁴⁶ It is beyond the remit of this study to explore the theoretical considerations of the diary as a historical source in further detail and the reader is therefore directed to Beattie's work on women's diaries as a helpful starting point.⁴⁷

Kedward has pointed out that attitudes to women by the Vichy regime are clear in novels, plays, magazines and social policies, but the equivalent portrayal by the Resistance is more difficult to locate, and this study contends that using diaries as a primary source will provide images of women outside the dominant Vichy narrative of housewife and mother, bringing forward images of those who function either within or around the margins of Resistance activity and offering insights into the ideology of resistance.⁴⁸ More generally, the focus on the interdisciplinary work of detailed examination of texts written in French will contribute to the wider understanding of the articulation of female subjectivity in specific socio-historical contexts.

Historiography and Intervention

Given the extent of the work published, an exploration of British and French historiography of the Occupation is beyond the scope of this study, which will be restricted instead to an initial consideration of the broader historiography of work undertaken on women during the Occupation, followed by a more focused analysis of the historiography of women's writing during this period. A chronological approach will be adopted throughout. Marking a radical departure from the *résistancialisme* discussed

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.18.

⁴⁷ Heather Beattie, *Where Narratives Meet. Libraries and the Cultural Record*, Vol 44, No. 1, pp.82-100 (University of Texas Press, 2009). See also, Suzanne Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff, *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1996) and Cynthia Gannett, *Gender and the Journal* 9 (Albany, State university of New York Press, 1992), p.191 for a discussion on the writer speculating about the future to shed light on her sense of being in a given time and yet having a grasp of change.

⁴⁸ Roderick Kedward and Roger Austen, *Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture & Ideology* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p.5.

at the start of this introduction, the seminal article by Schwartz (1987) investigated the definitions of women in the resistance and questioned assumptions around gender and activism. I would argue that this article essentially began the debate around the importance of women's role during the Occupation.⁴⁹ Invaluable French historiography such as the work by Bertin (1993), which included the issue of collaborationist women, and that of Veillon (1995) repositioned the significance of women, by providing a less hagiographic account of their roles.⁵⁰ Diamond, in her work on women in Toulouse during the Occupation, investigates the links between circumstances and motivation for political action and explores the complex ways in which women's choices were mediated by their family circumstances or individual position within the household.⁵¹ The in-depth analysis of women in a regional study provides an overview of women's daily lives during the Occupation (and beyond until 1948) and uses vivid and compelling oral testimony to offer an understanding of the nuanced impact of the Occupation on individual women. Her finding that, in general, women's focus on political activism concentrated on activities which could be combined with daily life is further developed in this study. Diamond's subsequent work on the *exode* uses contemporaneous diaries as sources to capture the immediacy of the experience and she acknowledges that while the majority of those caught up in the *exode* were women, few have left detailed accounts.⁵² Speculating that while women may have written diaries, these have remained unpublished, Diamond is swift to acknowledge that she has relied predominantly on accounts by men, but has nevertheless introduced women's narrative whenever possible. It is clear that women's voices are reflected throughout, from accounts by Simone de Beauvoir, Georgette Guillot (a secretary at the Ministry of the Interior), and Simone Perret (who was aged 16 in 1940). Diamond's ongoing interactive website (www.fleeinghitler.org) captured the public imagination and has led to further posts which continue her work to retrieve civilian testimony. This study also uses contemporaneous diaries and builds on Diamond's work by privileging women's diaries in particular.

⁴⁹ Paula Schwarz, 'Redefining resistance: women's activism in wartime France', in M.R. Higonnet et. al., (eds.) *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1987).

⁵⁰ Celia Bertin, *Les Femmes sous l'Occupation* (Paris: Plon, 1993); Dominique Veillon, *Vivre et Survivre en France 1939–1947* (Paris: Payot, 1995).

⁵¹ Hanna Diamond, *Women's Experiences during and after World War Two in the Toulouse area, 1939–1948* (Doctoral Thesis, University of Sussex, 1992). Published as *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939–1948, Choices and Constraints* (London: Routledge, 1999).

⁵² Hanna Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Valuable work, as well as that by Diamond, has been undertaken on women under Vichy; Pollard has provided a trenchant analysis of Vichy's gendered policies of natalism and familialism, and the way that women were considered primarily as mothers, wives and home makers, showing why the regime made abortion a capital offence.⁵³ Although beyond the period of this study, Duchén analysed women's rights from 1944–1968 and used accounts by Simone de Beauvoir, Edith Thomas, Catherine Gavin, and the diarists Benoite and Flora Groult in her discussion of the Liberation.⁵⁴

This brief account has indicated the development of the historiography from narratives glorifying women in the resistance to a more analytical consideration of the way in which gender roles had been broken down by war and Occupation, and the ways in which the domestic became politicised with the intrusion of politics into the home. This body of work has done much to highlight the position of women, but there has been little systematic analysis of women's diaries as sources to examine the impact of the Occupation on diverse areas of women's lives: this study aims to fill that gap.

In order to locate this study within the context of the more focused historiography of women's writing, it is important to examine the work which has already been undertaken in this field. A chronological approach is used to look at work by Gorrara (1998), Adler (2003) and more recently Attack (2012), which are helpful and illuminating in their analyses.⁵⁵ It is fully acknowledged that this study builds on this specific body of work. Gorrara notes that Rousso's ground breaking work, *The Vichy Syndrome*, which looks at the processes of memory in contemporary French life, can be considered as gender blind, in that it relies on accounts of the Occupation written predominantly by men.⁵⁶ This study develops Gorrara's exploration of the importance of women's writing in the contested history of the Occupation.⁵⁷ Gorrara, however, focuses on work written between 1968 and 1985, re-evaluating women's position in history

⁵³ Miranda Pollard, *Reign of Virtue: Mobilizing Gender in Vichy France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

⁵⁴ Claire Duchén, *Women's Rights, Women's Lives in France 1944–1968* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.7–17.

⁵⁵ Gorrara, *Women's*; Karen Adler, *Jews and Gender in Liberation France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Margaret Attack, Margaret and Christopher Lloyd (eds.), *Framing Narratives of the Second World War and Occupation in France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012); Margaret Attack, *Literature and the Resistance, Cultural Politics and Narrative Form 1940–1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989).

⁵⁶ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991); exceptions include citations by Marguerite Duras, *La Douleur* (Paris: Pol 1985), p.27; Germaine Tillon, *Le Monde*, 8 June 1971, p.108.; Simone Veil, *Le Monde*, 30 October, 1981, p.111.

⁵⁷ Gorrara, *Women's*, p.3.

subsequent to post-1968 feminist critiques of language writing and social structures. She considers the work of well-known women resisters, Aubrac and Duras, as well as those less well known, such as Malraux, Maurice and Moret. She also looks at second generation women writers, Gatard and Albrecht, who contest the myths of *résistancialisme* surrounding their parents, and Chaix and Le Garrec, who equally contest the myths of collaborationist fathers. Overall, Gorrara chooses to analyse those texts which provide an original and challenging perspective on the Occupation. In contrast, this study explores journals written contemporaneously and with a deliberate selection of two unpublished journals from archival sources. What is missing from the historiography is additional work on collaborationist women writers. There are disproportionately few texts by women involved in collaboration and this study was unable to locate any such sources of unpublished diaries in the archives consulted and only a single extant published diary and it remains true that there is almost no solid information or work on collaborationist women writers.⁵⁸ While the reasons for this are perhaps unsurprising, we can speculate that some diaries were written but have not been saved for publication or deposited in archives. This section of Gorrara's work is therefore significant in its analysis of Marie Chaix's understanding of the role played by the PPF in its endorsement of Vichy's active role in the deportation of Jews and her guilt at her consequent connection to the Holocaust through her father.⁵⁹ Gorrara also examines the Jewish narratives of persecution and the Holocaust, written from the perspective of daughters both of victims and survivors, with a focus on the mother-daughter relationship using Garnier's fictional text of a daughter's sense of lost identity after the deportation of her mother and Muller's retrospective text *La Petite Fille du Vel d'Hiv* (1991), which is the account of a child survivor's lost Jewish identity growing up in a Catholic orphanage and the loss of the Parisian pre-war immigrant Jewish community.⁶⁰ Adler, in contrast, explores French Jewry during the Occupation by examining the war-time diary of Jacqueline Mesnil- Amar, who constantly reflected on being 'foreign' (as Vichy decreed) rather than assimilated (as she saw herself) and this is

⁵⁸ A. Berthe, 'Ma prison et mes barbelés', *History Today* vol. 49, issue 8 (August 1999). Hanna Diamond cites this retrospectively published diary held at the Toulouse Municipal Archives of an alleged *collaboratrice* who had been the Director of laboratory research in the Faculty of Science at the University of Toulouse and was arrested in August 1944; Katherine Cardin, 'Life as an "enfant de collabo": Marie Chaix's evolution, 1974–2005' in Atack and Lloyd, *Framing Narratives*, pp.225–231, debates whether Chaix is able to convince the French reading public that her identity is more than simply that of 'enfant de collabo.'

⁵⁹ Marie Chaix, *Les Lauriers du lac de Constance* (Paris: Seuil, 1974), p.96.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.112 ff., 125–129.

echoed in this study where Chapter 2 explores the unpublished diary of a Jewish woman hiding in the Ardèche whose husband has been interned and who feels isolated and depressed.⁶¹ In both its choice of text, and its analytical approaches, this study therefore builds on Gorrara and Adler's work to undertake analytical research on women's texts and to shape the way in which such sources of published and unpublished journals can contribute an innovative element to the historiography of the period.

Atack and Lloyd also focus on journals — but primarily focus on reviewing and analysing fictional narratives of the Occupation — and make the pertinent observation that the creative re-enactment of writing about war brings benefits for those who suffer its consequences and also communicates the lived experience of those who may have been little studied by historians.⁶² Their website (www.frame.leeds.ac.uk) provides a database of novels, memoirs and autobiographies long out of print, and overdue for recognition, and aims to investigate to what extent cataloguing and analysing large numbers of minor and neglected texts will lead to a revision in the canon of novels about the Occupation.⁶³ Atack and Lloyd comment that forms of literary testimony can be used as a counter-cultural forum which provides an alternative reading of national myths and that their value and utility lies in the visibility of personal testimony.⁶⁴ In contrast, they point out that Boal's *Journaux intimes sous l'occupation* concerns nine well known male writers and that the many diaries written by women about the private sphere, perhaps unsurprisingly, gain no attention.⁶⁵ By the same token, the research in this study retrieves forgotten, neglected and unpublished women's diaries, endeavours to confirm the extraordinary richness of the material and shows that it is, indeed, surprising that women diarists have had so little attention.

Debra Kelly's essay in the same volume, on figures of memory in life writing narratives of the occupation, examines the 'lost manuscript, the "handwritingness" of history and the broken narrative' with reference to diaries by Agnès Humbert, Hélène Berr and Marguerite Duras, which were all translated and published in Britain in 2008.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Jacqueline Mesnil-Amar, *Ceux qui dormaient pas* (Paris: Stock, 2009). Translated as *Maman, What are We Called Now?* (London: Persephone Books, 2015).

⁶² Atack and Lloyd, *Framing Narratives*, p.243.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.5–7.

⁶⁵ David Boal, *Journaux intimes sous l'occupation* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1993); Atack and Lloyd, *Framing Narratives*, p.7.

⁶⁶ Deborah Kelly, 'Lived experience past/reading experience present: figures of memory in life-writing narratives of the Occupation', in Atack and Lloyd, *Framing Narratives*, pp.119–127; Jini Rawlings suggested these tropes in her own work dealing with war and memory. Cited in Kelly, *Lived experience*,

Kelly's focus is how publishers choose to present such work and their critical reception in the British literary press. She observes that both Berr and Humbert wrote about their own positions as respectively Jewish and belonging to a resistance group and about their gender, which resulted in Humbert's deportation rather than her execution. Kelly sees both women writing at the intersection of the personal and the public and argues for a reading of the texts in such a way as to avoid facile over-identification with the victim's suffering and to bring forward the more dynamic if more fragile identities of the writers.⁶⁷

Starting from this position, this study will develop this argument around dynamic/fragile writer identities because, despite this valuable body of work, there has been no research focused entirely on women diarists writing during the Occupation. This study will fill this gap and explore the articulation of women's subjectivity in the four diaries selected. In part, the intervention will therefore comprise the very sources used for the analysis.

Sources

The sources chosen comprise four journals written by women contemporaneously during the Occupation. This is in contrast with other historians who have generally used a combination of sources such as national and local archives, Prefect reports, newspapers, novels and memoirs, oral testimony and SOE reports. The benefits of this focus on a particular type of source material have been addressed earlier in this introduction, even if it is acknowledged that this source material cannot provide a comprehensive picture of women's diary writing during the period. Within this focus, however, the journals were selected to complement yet be different from each other, to be relatively unknown in the UK at the time of writing, to provide a vivid portrayal of the period, by writers who were not connected to the political elite. The structure of the study is that each of the four chapters will analyse a specific journal, two of which have been published and two remain unpublished in archives.⁶⁸ The identification of a structure where each chapter focuses on one journal rather than employing a thematic

p.125; Agnès Humbert, *Notre Guerre* (Paris: Tallandier, 1946); Hélène Berr, *Journal* (Paris: Tallandier, 2008); Marguerite Duras, *Wartime Notebooks* (London: Maclehose Press, 2008).

⁶⁷ Kelly, 'Lived experience', p.127.

⁶⁸ The unpublished journals were found in archives: The Ehrenburg collection in Special Collections at the University of Sussex, now located at The Keep; and the archives in the Mémorial de Caen, Normandy.

structure, using all four journals simultaneously, is in order to privilege each individual text and to consider it as a literary work with a narrative arc as well as a significant historical and social document.⁶⁹ Reading the text in the original and not in translation ensures that nuances of style and choice of language can also be foregrounded. Such a structure also allows the journal writer's response to the chronological development of the Occupation's impact to emerge more clearly to the reader. Each chapter will interrogate a different site of historiographical enquiry from *attentisme* to resistance engagement. Through using a journal as a primary source, the thesis aims to shift frames of reference and address the under-representation of women's narrative in British and French Occupation historiography. The importance of the key findings are demonstrated throughout but can be briefly summarised as follows; women's experiences of the wider constraints of the Occupation are frequently articulated through an emphasis on the physicality of bodily sensations, that narratives of loss, isolation, exile and waiting predominate, and most significantly, that little use has been made in Occupation historiography of the wealth of source material available by women, whether fragments of autobiographical recordings and journals in archives or published work.

Before turning to explore each journal as a primary source, the key terminology used in this study; exile, *attentisme* and resistance, is now discussed. Exile is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as the state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political or punitive reasons and interestingly, derives from Old French for banishment. The term exile is widely used throughout the thesis, employing the meaning above, whether temporal or geographical, as explored in Chapter 2 where the writer is barred from Germany because she is Jewish. Exile is also described as:

The push and pull of love, anger and despair about a place which is part of your identity but which has also rejected you.⁷⁰

This notion of exile is also used in the thesis and the narratives of being an exile in her own country represent the writer's sense of isolation and reveal a complex mapping of emotion. This understanding of exile is used in the analysis of all four authors in the study who experienced a physical or emotional displacement from home, whether on

⁶⁹ Debra Kelly, *frenchhistorysociety.co.uk* Network blog, 5 October 2015.

⁷⁰ Edmund de Waal, Preface to Elisabeth de Waal, *The Exile's Return* (London: Persephone Books, 2014) p. ix

the *exode*; Chapter 1, through losing acquired French nationality; Chapter 2, through a sense of isolation as a result of the culture, ideology and language of the Occupation; Chapter 3, or through making a political choice to enter a clandestine life; Chapter 4.

Attentisme can be defined as waiting on events, a ‘wait and see’ approach which thought to have been that adopted by the majority of the population who neither collaborated nor resisted. *Attentisme* need not remain fixed over time but could progress from acts of civil disobedience to those of protest and even to those of resistance action. The ambiguities and reasons for choices between such acceptance and refusal could be triggered by unexpected factors and contingent events, examples of which are explored in Chapter 3.

The difficulty of defining the notion of resistance is well established and to conceptualise a term which is in everyday usage both in contemporary discourse and by historians is, as Laborie notes, almost insoluble.⁷¹ Notwithstanding the continuing conundrum of whether resistance is a *post hoc* construction, or how to define resistance engagement during the era of Occupation or how to differentiate resistance from *résistantialisme*, this study understands resistance, to use Kedward’s phrase as an embodiment of the republican, patriotic tradition.⁷² The term resistance was not in use until winter 1941 and describes a combination of both original and traditional forms of revolt, of obstinacy and individualism and

A capacity for secrecy, for carrying out orders, for holding down a legal job as cover, for infiltration and subversion, for support, liaison and endurance.⁷³

Resistance engagement is used in this thesis to include both single acts of resistance and involvement in a formal resistance network and since the study explores gendered narratives, the term does not include armed resistance or the combatant role as these were less readily available to women. Resistance engagement is used here to explore the way in which women were able to use their gender to subvert both Vichy France and the Occupation.

⁷¹ Pierre Laborie, *L’Idée de Résistance et les mots de journaux intimes* in Bruno Curatolo et François Marcot, *Écrire sous l’Occupation* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011) p.37

⁷² H.R.Kedward, R.Austen, *Vichy France and the Resistance. Culture and Ideology* (London : Croom Helm, 1985) p.4

⁷³ H.R.Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu* (London : Penguin, 2006) p.206

The sources also provide a platform to interrogate the notion of journal writing as an act of resistance and this will now be briefly explored. Picketty has differentiated the factors which characterise journal writing as an act of resistance as, initially, to react against the sense of defeat, to fight against the Vichy regime in favour of democracy, the Republic, and as a form of insurgency against the Occupation and collaboration.⁷⁴ Other factors identified included the commitment to stand up against fascism and the Nazi state, the demonstration of a determination to fight for liberty, humanism and solidarity and to oppose persecution. Also important were the wish to remain active, and the belief that it was possible to maintain one's integrity. Picketty concludes that journal writing became an affirmation of the writer's own freedom of thought and of judgement and offered the possibility of an individual resolution of moral, political and intellectual dilemmas and these characteristics are all demonstrably evident in the journals explored in this thesis.

Picketty defines five stages of development within the narrative arc of such a journal: firstly, to remain true to oneself, secondly, to provide an example of moral insubordination through silent protest, thirdly, to engage in positive dialogue with those of a similar political, moral and intellectual viewpoint, fourthly, to provide assistance to refugees or others persecuted by the regime and finally, to fight against discrimination and propaganda. The next step was to join a formal organisation in pursuit of liberation together with those with a strong sense of shared values and commitment.⁷⁵ These stages, although not clearly present in all four journal sources examined here, are visibly evident in the journal explored in Chapter 4.

Guéhenno's *Journal des années noires, 1940-1944*, translated into English only in 2014, can be seen as the seminal text of the journal as act of resistance, characterised by his silence in that he refused to publish under Vichy, bearing witness to daily life in Paris under the Occupation and his belief that it was more important to be honest than to be prudent which defined his resistance.⁷⁶ Ball notes that Guéhenno's journal is the refuge where he can express in writing his feelings about France, emphasising his solitude as the audience inevitably is also invisible and for whom the journal is inaccessible.⁷⁷ Unlike the other journal writers discussed in this thesis, Guéhenno

⁷⁴ Guillaume Picketty, in Curatolo et Marcot, *Écrire sous l'Occupation. Résistance et écriture intime*. p.29

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.30

⁷⁶ Jean Guéhenno, *Journal des années noires, 1940-1944*, (Paris : Gallimard, 1947) translated by David Ball, *Diary of the Dark Years, 1940-944* (Oxford University Press, 2016) p.117

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.xiv

sensed that the context of what he wrote, took on its full meaning only in its historical context and that its meaning would depend partly on the context of its publication.⁷⁸ In contrast, the four writers under consideration in the following four chapters, who will now be introduced, wrote with little sense of such historical context but offer a visceral immediacy, and an insight into a gendered narrative of Occupied France.

The first journal is that of Yvonne Surillet, a young woman, working in Le Havre, from a large family from Ouistreham in Normandy who is on the *exode*, while the second is that of Kate Haas, a German Jewish, professional woman in hiding in the Ardèche. The third is a published journal of retired school teacher, Berthe Auroy, from Paris, initially an *attentiste*, who takes some actions of civil disobedience. The final journal, also published, is that of a student, Denise Domenach, who becomes an *agent de liaison* in a resistance network in Lyon. The four journals thus demonstrate a regional, cultural and social reach as well as a temporal range, extending from Surillet's three month period in summer 1940 on the *exode* to Domenach's coming of age journal from 1939 to 1944. My reading of the sources directs me to the key thematic notions explored in detail in the study. Each chapter adds to the overall argument by demonstrating the accumulation of the richness of detail which deserves to be recovered from obscurity, subjected to close textual analysis and used as source material in future historiography in order to privilege the varying narratives and shaping of women's subjectivity. The first chapter invites the reader to examine Yvonne Surillet's unpublished journal, which begins with the fall of France in 1940 and chronicles her *exode* from Le Havre.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.xx

Chapter 1 — Writing the *Exode*: an unpublished text, an unheard voice, an unknown life

I was in Le Havre where I was still working in the hospital. We had bombing raids every night on the port, the warships and the barracks in town. During the night with tracer lights, you would have thought it was day time.¹

This chapter interrogates the *exode*, the mass migration of civilians fleeing the approaching German occupying troops after the fall of France in June 1940, as a site of historiographical enquiry, using as a primary source an eyewitness account of the *exode*, Yvonne Surillet's *Aide Mémoire et Anecdotes de Ma Vie*, which describes her experiences and the shifting mood of the summer of 1940. In the first instance, this chapter examines the parameters of existing research on the *exode*, which can be seen as a gendered historical event as the burden of involvement fell primarily on women. Following the broader lines of the gender and history debate outlined above, and particularly the lack of prominence given to women's voices, it is important to detail the attention given to eyewitness sources written by women in both French and British historiographies of the *exode*. On that basis, the chapter then proceeds to an initial analysis of the female articulation of subjectivities in relation to the event, drawing on Surillet's unpublished narrative of the *exode* in Normandy and of her return home. It argues that such rich and vivid sources have been unjustly neglected, repay close textual analysis, including thematic readings, and contribute to a gendered reading of the Occupation which should inform future research. This unpublished text demonstrates the impact of the allied bombardment of 1940 on the civilian population, the majority of whom were women, coupled with the destruction of the physical infrastructure of coastal towns such as Le Havre in the Forbidden Zone. It is used here to recover aspects of the historical experience of these events which have often been overlooked. Overall then, the aim of the chapter is to continue the focus of new research on Vichy identified by Paxton in 2001 with its concern to start 'from below at the level of ordinary lives', and more specifically to consider the lives of women within that framework.²

¹ Yvonne Surillet, *Aide Memoire et Anecdotes de Ma Vie* (Archives, Reference TE373, Mémorial Caen.) Undated. Transcribed from handwritten exercise book by granddaughter, 1990. Unpaginated. All translations from journals are my own.

² Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard New Order, 1940–1944* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p.xxx.

An exploration of the key works in the historiography of the *exode* reveals the extent of the gender imbalance of sources used. The event itself took place between 10 May and the end of June 1940 with Jackson dating it as follows: mid May 1940 saw the arrival of Belgian refugees, spreading to Rheims by 16 May, Soissons by 20 May, Compiègne by 28 May, Senlis by 29 May, Paris between 6–12 June and to Chartres by 15 June.³ The biblical term, *exode*, was used contemporaneously and it is estimated that around 6–10 million people left their homes and took to the road. Kedward points out that this mass migration of people had not taken place in Europe since the Dark Ages, while Amouroux comments that ‘The scenes resembled those of the first Crusade when whole villages left their dwellings to follow the road to Jerusalem. But this Crusade was only concerned with reaching the beaches of last year’s summer holiday.’⁴

The defeat of the French Army and surrender to the Germans had a profound impact on the French civilian population, for whom the memory of the 1914–1918 war remained vivid. The government left Paris, and many civilians on the *exode* saw the remnants of the defeated French army returning from the front line, presenting a miserable and ragged sight which Jackson equates with ‘the disintegration of an entire society.’⁵ Within that context of societal disintegration, it is perhaps surprising that general accounts of the Occupation often give only cursory attention to the *exode*. As Diamond points out in her 2007 study *Fleeing Hitler*, the *exode* essentially involved running away. Nonetheless, set against what was to come, even this profoundly destabilising experience seems to have occupied a relatively minor place in subsequent memories of the period: ‘The shock of returning home to the changed circumstances of the Occupation and the years of repression and deprivation which followed suppressed the importance of the exodus experience.’⁶ Furthermore, it did not fit into the Gaullist narrative of a straight line of resistance, from 1940 onwards.⁷ However, and more importantly for this study, Diamond also attributes the lack of focus on the *exode* in the general accounts of the Occupation (one might cite the work of Anglophone historians such as Gildea’s earlier work) to the absence of official sources and archives needed to

³ Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.174.

⁴ H.R. Kedward, *Occupied France: Collaboration & Resistance, 1940–44*, Historical Assoc. Studies (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), p.4; Henri Amouroux, *La Vie des Français sous l’Occupation* (1961) (Paris: Livre de Poche, 2011), p.12.

⁵ Jackson, *The Fall*, p.174.

⁶ Hanna Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler: France 1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.208.

⁷ Robert Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows: A New History of the French Resistance* (London: Faber and Faber, 2015), p.17.

complete the official history of the time, which remains the preferred historical method.⁸ As Diamond points out, because most officials including the local prefect were also fleeing, prefects' reports are either not available or incomplete. Consequently, 'the exodus and especially the return home are absent from the historical record.'⁹ This lack of focus on the *exode* is equally true of local French historians; in his study of the occupation in Calvados, Quellien devotes five lines to the *exode*, commenting that 'It was a particularly pointless flight in any case because armoured German tanks were overtaking the crowds of fleeing civilians.'¹⁰ Here, the futility of the flight seems to contribute to an unspoken justification for its relegated importance within the overall experience of the war. In that respect, one of Diamond's interviewees for *Fleeing Hitler*, Simone Perrot, offered this perceptive explanation:

We don't talk about the war much and when we do, it's more about the Resistance, as the exodus is not a very glorious time to explore. I did tell my children, but they were more interested in the Resistance. It is strange that the Resistance which touched so few people is talked about so much, yet the experience which touched so many is obscured. At the time, we were so glad to get home and to get on with our lives we just wanted to forget about it. We were home safe and sound and that was the end of it. This is the first time I've talked about it for as long as I can remember.¹¹

If the *exode* is frequently minimised within overall accounts of the Occupation, it nonetheless has received specific and dedicated attention from a number of historians, whether Anglophone (Diamond, Vinen, Jackson and Kedward) or in France (Vidalenc, Amouroux, Azéma, Crémieux-Brilhac and more recently Alary).¹² Given that the *exode* impacted significantly on women, it is worth exploring in some detail to what extent this more detailed investigation draws on a rich mass of sources by women.

Vidalenc's seminal text of 1957 draws on a wide variety of contemporary sources including general and local historical studies, British, Belgian, Dutch and German contemporary accounts and additional eye witness reports, as well as information and

⁸ Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains* (London: Picador, 2002), p.22, has only a passing reference, though does cite the journal of Marinette Rameau, described as 'a young bourgeoisie of Angers.'

⁹ Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler*, p.204.

¹⁰ Henri Quellien, *Opinions et Comportements politiques dans le Calvados sous l'Occupation Allemande* (Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2001), p.38.

¹¹ Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler*, p.210; interview with Mme Perrot (April 2005).

¹² Ibid.; Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French: Life Under the Occupation* (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 29–44; Jackson, *The Fall* (2003), pp.174–182; H.R. Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975) explores the role of the *exode* in subsequent resistance involvement; Jean Vidalenc, *L'Exode de mai-juin 1940* (Paris: PUF, 1957); Henri Amouroux, *La Grande Histoire des Français sous l'Occupation, I, Le Peuple du Desastre, 1939–40* (Paris: Laffont, 1976); Jean-Paul Azéma, *1940, L'Année terrible* (Paris: Seuil, 1990); Jean-Louis Crémieux-Brilhac, *Les Français De L'An 40* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990); Eric Alary, *L'Exode* (Paris: Perrin, 2010).

journals passed to the author by the Committee of the History of World War Two. Here is an instance of a report following the bombing of the station at Rennes on the 18 June 1940, which is noticeable for its absence of any attention to subjectivities:

On some lines the trains were only announced a few moments before their arrival at a station. Often, it wasn't clear whether this was a train with 400 passengers or 2,000, a convoy of adults or a boarding school. One would see immediately after a train had gone through with a convoy which had been suitably provisioned, the announcement of the imminent arrival of a train full of infants and for whom there were no longer any provisions. One had to fill their bottles with boiled water and in some cases the nurses were not always sure that it had been boiled. This resulted in very unequal distribution of food and water and meant that some refugees claimed to have been appropriately fed morning and evening throughout their journey, while others went sometimes an entire day or even two days without any provisions.¹³

Although citing no less than eight civilian women authors in his bibliography, their accounts in their own words are rarely provided.¹⁴ An instance of this is the mention of Gisèle d'Assailly, a nurse, who described coming across a villager in Beauce who demanded from the refugees getting water from a tap: 'Come on, where's your money? 10 sous for a glass, 2 francs for a bottle.'¹⁵ She is the author of *Diary of a Driver of a First Aid Ambulance*, and may well have been able to provide a rich record of her experience, and it would certainly have been interesting to have read more of her observations.¹⁶

However, Vidalenc does make some use of testimonies from women, such as information provided by Mlle. Smirgeld, on the evacuation of the electricity company, Forclum, who carefully records:

The first group left Paris with 10 cars, baggage, mattresses, 500 litres of petrol and 40 passengers on 10 June in the morning... The second group left the following morning, also with 40 people and the archives as well as materials and three 200 litre barrels of petrol to fill the tanks on the journey. This convoy of 6 vehicles, two small cars, two small lorries, a 2 ton lorry with a 3.5 ton trailer, having been separated from each other in the tumultuous throng at the Porte d'Orleans, were reunited, having tried to reach the Orleans road by Dourdon. It took 4 and a quarter hours to travel 13 kilometres on the main road RN 856. This eccentric convoy arrived in Orleans by the evening, having encountered lorries full of civilian men who were returning to Paris, saying that America, Russia and Turkey were all heading for the coast of France.¹⁷

Or that of Anne Jacques, also in Paris: 'The number of cars has doubled since this morning. There is an uninterrupted queue along the Boulevard de l'Hopital, which is

¹³ Vidalenc, *L'Exode*, p.194, citing A. Meynier, *Les déplacements de population vers la Bretagne*, p.52.

¹⁴ Vidalenc, *L'Exode*, pp.436, 437.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.269.

¹⁶ Gisèle d'Assailly, *S.S.A Journal d'une conductrice de la section sanitaire automobile* (Paris, Julliard, 1943), p.165.

¹⁷ Vidalenc, *L'Exode*, p.268.

now several kilometres long, and takes ten minutes to move one metre.’¹⁸ These accounts by women cited by Vidalenc are heavily outnumbered by those he cites by Dukes, Counts, Generals, Colonels, Abbots and Doctors not to mention newspaper editors and those from ministers, writers and civil servants.¹⁹ The significance of this is that the majority of those on the *exode* were women and children and it is their voice which remains, for the most part, unheard. Given that Vidalenc has access to his eight identified women civilian published authors, why does he choose not to use their own words? Anne Jacques offers a detailed and reflective account of working as a nurse in a reception centre.²⁰ One can perhaps surmise that he finds such narratives less intrinsically interesting and privileges factual detail, as illustrated earlier in the citations he chooses to select by women.

In his 1961 introduction to *La Vie des Français sous l'Occupation*, Amouroux emphasised that the majority of the earlier body of work on the Occupation:

Does not concern itself with the difficulties of daily life for the man in the street in Occupied France. History, as lived we know, not only by ministers, generals, bankers, and explorers, but also by shopkeepers, butchers, gossips, railway workers, housewives and children. It is a great temptation to be the historian for 40 million anonymous people. Why not write not only about the blood stained adventures along the routes of the Exode but also about the difficulties of buying bread each day and the battles to find enough food to live on?²¹

Despite this promising introduction, there are no testimonies about the *exode* from women, whose appearance is limited to advertisements placed in the personal columns in the local papers: ‘Mme Gentil, Hotel Mercier, Montmorillon (Vienne) seeks news of her daughters Camille and Ghislaine, left at Evreux on June 10.’²² His choice of testimonies are from, for example, Leo Leixner, German war correspondent, André Bellier, described as a worker who had taken his bicycle, and Roger Langeron, the Chief of Police.²³ Vidalenc also references women as victims, and describes the casualties of German air attacks in the cemetery at Gien, Loire, where he notes that there were about 100 civilian deaths from an aerial bombardment on 15 June 1940, which a knowledgeable eyewitness alleged were from Italian bombers:

¹⁸ Anne Jacques, *Pitié pour les Hommes* (Paris: Seuil, 1943), p.16 in Vidalenc, *L'Exode*, p.266.

¹⁹ Duc de Levis-Mirepoix, Vidalenc, p. 181; Comte de Buffières, Vidalenc, p.243; Général de Cugnac, Vidalenc, p. 205; Colonel E. Marchand, Vidalenc, p. 324; Abbé C.M. Charpentier, Vidalenc, p.310; Dr Paul Morin, Vidalenc, p.100.

²⁰ Anne Jacques, *Journal d'une Française* (Paris: Seuil, 1946).

²¹ Henri Amouroux, *La Vie des Français sous L'Occupation* [Paris: Fayard, 1961] (Paris: Livre de Poche, 2011) p.5; Vinen, *Unfree French*, p.4 notes that Amouroux had worked as a journalist under Vichy and has been described as an apologist for the regime.

²² Amouroux, *La Vie*, p.7.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp.21, 22, 23.

Tombe 19. An unknown woman, aged about 40, height 1 metre 65, big build, whose body was found floating in the Loire at Les Cassons. Wearing a pink slip, a black belt with a black buckle, a black oil skin, blue garter and a blue long sleeved cardigan and black suede shoes with rubber heels.²⁴

In a subsequent work, he summarises the experience of Nicole Ollier, a five-year-old child who, together with her mother and eight-year-old sister, took a train from Lille and at Arras were forced by a bombing raid to leave the train and proceed on foot.²⁵ These details are drawn from Ollier's work, *L'Exode sur les routes de l'an 1940* but interestingly, Amouroux chooses not to use her own account in her own words.²⁶ Instead, eyewitness reports actually quoted are by Pierre Mendès-France, Minister, and René Benjamin, the Maréchal's censor-bearer [*sic*].²⁷ Amouroux does however finish his chapter on the *exode* with a detailed account of some of the departmental attempts to trace the 90 thousand children lost in the panic and confusion.²⁸ Nonetheless, it is important to note that while Amouroux does not provide any analysis or overview of the *exode*, offering instead, as Azéma points out, a mass of anecdotes and detail, even this does not contain any testimony from women.²⁹

Working from a desire to provide a more analytical account of the occupation than that provided through Amouroux's amassing of anecdotal detail, Azéma's own initial work nonetheless contained only one sentence on the *exode*: 'In the face of the invasion everything collapsed. France, just like the French refugees on the exodus routes, was falling apart.'³⁰ In a later revised edition of this work, he devotes two and a half pages to the *exode* and signposts readers to only two sources: Jean Moulin and Léon Werth.³¹ He concludes that the *exode* was: 'A profound trauma not only for the 8 million people who experienced it but also indirectly for all those who heard their accounts.'³² While noting the extent of the trauma, no such accounts by women are specifically mentioned. Similarly, only a page and a half of commentary on the *exode* is provided by Crémieux-Brilhac in his 1990 study of the Occupation, for which he used sources such as Romain Rolland, whom he described as the best known French writer in the world — who

²⁴ Vidalenc, *Exode*, pp.281, 282; Amouroux, *La Vie*, p.29.

²⁵ Henri Amouroux, *Le Peuple du Desastre 1939–1940* (Paris: Laffont, 1976), p.382.

²⁶ Nicole Ollier, *Exode sur les routes de L'an 1940* (Paris: Laffont, 1969), p.82ff.

²⁷ Amouroux, *Le Peuple*, p.387.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.402.

²⁹ Jean Paul Azéma et François Bédarida, *La France des années noires* (Paris: Seuil, 1993), p.134.

³⁰ Jean Paul Azéma, *From Munich to the Liberation 1938–1944* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p.36.

³¹ Azéma et Bédarida, *La France*, p.109; Jean Moulin, *Premier Combat* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1947); Leon Werth, *33 Jours* (Paris: Editions Viviane Hamy, 1992).

³² Azéma et Bédarida, *La France*, p.113.

refused to leave his home in Vézelay from where he provided his observations of the *exode* — and Jean-Richard Bloch, founder and editor of the daily Communist paper, *Ce Soir*, who walked from Paris to Poitiers on 13 June 1940 in search of his family who had already left.³³ Crémieux-Brilhac chooses to close Volume 1 with extracts from the journal of Hyacinthe Choubaut, Chief archivist of Vaucluse, honoured for his work on the Archives of the Palais des Papes in Avignon and author of numerous publications, who provided a commentary on 1940, and yet again ensured that women's voices remain overlooked.³⁴

As has been shown hitherto, accounts of the *exode* rarely include those by women and are even less likely to include those by young women without education beyond compulsory school leaving age. Such women were unlikely to have access to a publisher, even had they leisure time to write. Diamond points out, presciently, that:

Many women recorded their Exodus in diaries and journals but since these were less likely to be published and therefore did not often reach the public domain, perhaps remaining hidden in family archives or tucked away in trunks and attics.³⁵

An analysis of Vinen's rich and intricate use of descriptions of the *exode* again demonstrates that the sources are predominantly male: Douglas Cooper, 'a wealthy and middle aged dilettante', Yves Durand and Ephraim Grenadou, 'peasant farmers', Edmond Dubois, 'correspondent for a Lausanne newspaper', Arthur Griffon and Bernard Pierquin, 'independent young men with bicycles', François Cavanna, 'a young employee of the Paris Post Office', and Zoltan Szabo, 'a Hungarian living in Paris', both also on bicycles, Stanley Hoffman, 'who later became a French historian', Albert Castières, who 'was later sent to Germany under the STO', and finally Vladimir Lossky, 'a young Russian who fleeing to Vierzon, visited medieval cathedrals en route'.³⁶

Vinen does include descriptions of the *exode* from women such as the singer Barbara, Simone de Beauvoir, Micheline Bood and Françoise Giroud, journalist, all of whom received lycée education and went on to publish well-received memoirs.³⁷ Vinen's meticulous and wide ranging research into official archives also provides accounts from

³³ Jean-Louis Crémieux-Brilhac, *Les Français de l'An 1940*, vol.1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), p.588.

³⁴ Hyacinthe Choubaut, *Journal inédit, 1939-1944* (microfilm, AD/ Vaucluse) cited in Crémieux-Brilhac *Les Français*, p.614. Crémieux-Brilhac's choice of source may be questioned since Choubaut, on 26 June 1940, suggests that it would be in the French national interest for England to be defeated as rapidly as possible.

³⁵ Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler*, p.210.

³⁶ Vinen, *Unfree French*, pp.17, 31, 83, 35, 36, 37, 42.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.34, 43.

women e.g. Madame Goirot writing to the Mayor of Brive on 12 August 1940 asking for news of her son aged 10½ who was lost in the chaos of the *exode* on the bridge at St Salut on 16 June.³⁸ He also comments on the family decisions made by Jackie, a 17-year-old half-Jewish Parisian who left behind her father and uncle to defend Paris, but he does not cite Jackie's own account.³⁹ In exploring the end of the *exode* in September 1940, Vinen comments: 'By September 1940, for teachers and academics who so often wrote the diaries, and memoirs that have influenced our view of war time France, the resumption of the academic year was experienced with relief.'⁴⁰

A similar analysis of Diamond's work reveals that she focuses on the accounts of eight writers' experiences of the *exode*, of whom only three are women: Simone de Beauvoir, teacher and philosopher, Georgette Guillot, a secretary at the Ministry of the Interior, interestingly an unpublished diary, and Simone Perrot, aged 10 in 1940 who provided an oral testimony to the author.⁴¹ But Diamond also uses a wide range of other illuminating narratives by women such as Marie-Madeleine Fourcade, and journals by the Groult sisters and by Gritou and Annie Vallotton, although she does not include any accounts by young working women who left school without further education primarily because, as she has already noted, these are not available in the public domain.⁴² It is therefore a credit to the work of archives such as those at the Caen Memorial that the identified unpublished text explored here has been obtained, catalogued and archived.

Having demonstrated the gender imbalance of *exode* sources used in both French and British historiography, this study makes no attempt to claim that this can be addressed by recovering a single text. Rather, it seeks to present the advantages of focusing on one text by mapping the potential of hearing from an insider, a woman who was on the *exode* (rather than from an external observer), and to use such a primary source to increase our understanding of historical enquiry through a gendered response. The qualitative focus of the study must also be highlighted, in that the source provides an insight into the impact of the *exode*, through the raw immediacy of the individual narrative of the destabilisation of loss of home, and promise of future shelter. In order to

³⁸ Ibid., p.37.

³⁹ Ibid., p.37. See also Nicole Dombrowski, 'Surviving the German Invasion of France, Women's Stories of the Exode 1940', in Dombrowski (ed.), *Women and War in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Garland, 1999), pp.116–137.

⁴⁰ Vinen, *Unfree French*, p.41.

⁴¹ Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler*, pp.xiv, xv.

⁴² Ibid., pp.56, 33, 172, 157, 163–4; M.-M. Fourcade, *L'Arche de Noé* (Paris: Fayard, Livre de Poche, 1968); B. and F. Groult, *Journal à quatre mains* (Paris: Denoel, 1962, Livre de Poche, 2008); Gritou and Annie Vallotton, *C'était au jour le jour, Carnets, 1939–1944* (Paris: Payot, 1995).

allow this emphasis on a qualitative approach, the text will be cited in detail to reveal the writer's own words.

Before turning to explore the text in detail, it should be underlined that the broader themes that emerge are those of sensory subjectivities: cold, hunger, discomfort and unwanted predatory male attention on the journey, and warmth, food, safety and refuge of shelter. Other more unexpected themes are the allusions to wider opportunities and sense of *vacances* presented by arriving at a new and unknown destination for a 20-year-old married woman whose husband had been away for some months and whose expectations of life would have been confined geographically and also aspirationally to those of working wife and future mother. Her return from the *exode* reveals the counterpoint theme of the loss of home and sense of exile.

The study therefore now turns to an analysis of the text, *Aide Mémoire et Anecdotes de Ma Vie* by Yvonne Surillet, a young, working, married woman on the *exode*. It is located in the Archive of the Caen Mémorial and comprises nine pages of closely handwritten text in a school exercise book. The only accompanying contextual information is a note stating that it was transcribed from the original by the author's granddaughter in 1990. Additional context is provided by the text itself: that the author was born in 1920 in Ouistreham, the Port of Caen in Normandy and was one of seven children.⁴³ She states that her father worked for the Germans for (what she describes as) a miserable pittance of a wage: it is likely that he would have been clearing the beach in 1940, following which the Atlantic Wall was built by the Germans. She tells us that in 1940 she was living in Le Havre and working in a hospital but does not say where or in what capacity. She also explains that she was married to Henri Surillet who had enlisted in the French Army, and after the defeat, made his way to Dunkirk where he was rescued by the British, and spent an enjoyable week in Bournemouth with an English soldier on leave, sharing an interest in rugby, before following orders to return to France, subsequently spending the next five years (1940–1945) in a POW camp in Nuremburg in Germany.⁴⁴

A major problem with the text is that it cannot be conclusively dated. However, the liveliness of the writing itself, the strong narrative, the use of the present tense and

⁴³ Paxton, *Vichy France*, p.166. The Third Republic already had in place the Family Allowance of the Family Code of 29 July 1939 following a long campaign for positive promotion of larger families. Vichy's policy was to promote this campaign along the same lines. Surillet does not mention her mother throughout her account.

⁴⁴ Surillet, *Aide Memoire*, unpaginated.

illuminating detail and precise dates and times which can be corroborated, indicate the contemporaneous nature of the narrative and it can be argued that the lack of confirmation of dating does not significantly detract from the opportunity to witness the process of articulating a female subjective response to the events of 1940. As with any subjective text, inconsistencies are to be expected and these will be noted where they are significant. Indeed, the text is characterised by grammatical errors in syntax, spelling and punctuation, which indicate that the author left school at or before compulsory school leaving age and her use of colloquial language as a result of the absence of formal education is one of its most original strands. The text appears to be pieced together from diary-like entries and it is possible to speculate that the writer may have kept a diary at the time which was subsequently lost or destroyed but has been used as a base-line; the detail and use of the present tense are perhaps retained in the text from having been previously written down. The post-hoc narrative, at times, indicates the way in which it has been processed and filtered through experience, as instanced in the entry about her lack of knowledge of the Armistice at the time and her retrospective clarification of its significance. The different paths of the narrative are chained together in an unsophisticated style with a focus on incident and event rather than causal connection. Nonetheless, the emotional texture as instanced by the accounts of fear, hunger and men behaving badly in the extracts cited at length below, suggests that the author enjoyed writing. Surillet began her account with the declaration of war in 1939 but, for the purposes of this thesis, I have selected her account of her *exode* and her return home. This far from exhausts the potential of this source: future research might find her description of rationing and food available during the Occupation in Ouistreham invaluable.

Having considered issues that arise from the source in its context, we can now turn in more detail to consider the ways in which Surillet articulates her subjectivities through this narrative, which is fast paced and gives a clear picture of night-time bombing in June 1940, as can be seen in the quotation that heads this chapter. However, her reaction to this is of equal significance. She describes being subjected each evening to the aerial bombing at 9 p.m. like clockwork by the English, and states: 'I prefer, rather than going to the cellar or a shelter, to get away from houses altogether, and I leave my flat and I stay outside near the harbour.'⁴⁵ As has already been evidenced in the historiographical

⁴⁵ Ibid.

analysis, it is this level of detail articulating her subjectivity which distinguishes her account from others. It is clear that the writer is a young working woman aged 20, and that she is risking her life. Indeed, Surillet acknowledges that this is a motivating factor in her decision to leave Le Havre and join the *exode*:

I think it is time that I made a decision, there are too many dangers for me here as I am not safe travelling between my flat and my work as I have a long journey on foot, and also, every night, I am outside on my own during the bombing raids. And I have not had any news of my husband for several months.⁴⁶

Her text provides a testimony of a young woman leaving not by the more usual means of foot, bicycle, or car but by ship:

I decide to leave with my neighbour along the landing, on the afternoon of 10 June 1940, I didn't know where to. Then, with other civilians, we all ran to the port towards the merchant ships which were waiting for us.⁴⁷

She continues with an illustration of the general level of ignorance about the fall of France by those on the *exode*:

On the way to the quayside, we meet some English soldiers who like us are looking to flee. They said to us, we are going back home to continue fighting without you because your leaders have betrayed us. At the time I didn't understand a word of what they were saying, unaware that there was talk in high places of an Armistice between Pétain and Hitler. If we knew nothing about it, how were these soldiers so knowledgeable?⁴⁸

The narrative continues chronologically and I suggest that Surillet's gendered response to the start of her *exode* provides an example of emotional texture which increases our understanding of the historical event and is therefore worth quoting at length:

We arrived on the quayside and could see the ships which were waiting the order to evacuate the civilians, there were even among us some refugees from Dieppe who had come here on the *exode*. At 4 p.m. we took the first boat which was leaving, a coal ship. We were more than two thousand refugees on that ship. The captain, because of the lack of time, had not enough food for everyone. The shops being shut, we too had embarked on the voyage without provisions and with empty stomachs, and with nothing warm on our backs. Out on the open sea, many, many people were ill, and also frightened by the German planes which strafed the ships.⁴⁹

Finally, the voyage reached its destination at Brest. For me, it could not have come sooner as I had a lot of trouble from yobs and men who behaved like pigs. Finally, in the evening of 12 June 1940 we had the order to disembark. At 6 p.m., we were welcomed on the quayside by the residents who were really attentive to all our needs. We were given milk, nappies and medicines

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.; Vidalenc, *Exode*, pp.183, 184 corroborates details of the confusion at the ports along the coast and specifically mentions boats taking refugees to Brest.

⁴⁸ Surillet, *Aide Memoire*; Pétain's speech declaring the Armistice was not made until 17 June 1940.

⁴⁹ Ibid.; Vinen, *Unfree French*, p.30. Experiences of the Exode could be deeply unpleasant and columns of refugees were sometimes strafed by German and Italian planes; Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler*, p.161 discusses whether German planes attacked refugees because they were seen as replacement labour for soldiers away at the front.

for the babies and their mothers, the older children received sweets, cakes and toys, myself I was given a woollen dress and jacket, and others received coats and shoes, sitting on the edge of the pavement, they distributed a delicious sandwich with hot chocolate or coffee. With full stomachs we waited for the coaches to arrive.⁵⁰

She gives the reader a vivid account of the hardships faced by a young woman and the dangers encountered. What is striking here, is the subjective dwelling on the corporeal sensations of migration, articulated in her focus on being cold and hungry, and her experiences of unwanted sexual attention from predatory males. This contrasts strongly with her depiction of the welcome and warm clothes and food she receives at Brest, and is suggestive of a range of emotional associations with being on the road, contrasted with a sense of safety and security once shelter is secured and echoes her fear of nightly bombings and lack of safety in Le Havre which precipitated her decision to flee. Her detail about food and drink and her gratitude shine through the narrative. Overall, it can be argued that this unpublished text with its gendered perspective of a 20-year-old working woman with a clear focus on physical survival, keeping warm, having enough to eat and dealing with unwanted sexual attention provides a very different narrative of the *exode* from that of the male sources detailed earlier. Its importance is reflective of the fact that it was predominantly women and children who were on the *exode*, and through it we are beginning to capture something of their perspective.

In contrast to the journey, the account of her arrival is marked by an emphasis on physical comfort, warmth and the capacity to sleep:

We left in coaches to a small village 100 kilometres from Brest near the Nantes canal where we were welcomed by Madame Tavenec in her small café restaurant, the only one locally, in the garden, where we had our first hot meal since leaving Le Havre, soup with bacon then meat with cabbage and potatoes and for dessert an egg custard. In the evening, Madame Tavenec took us to the other end of the village to sleep in a village hall where we stayed for two weeks. The first nights we slept like logs.⁵¹

Surillet remained in the Brest region until 15 September 1940. She may have received the daily allowance for adults of 10 francs per day, although she makes no mention of

⁵⁰ A. Meynier, *Les Annales de Bretagne* (1948) provides a regional study of refugees in Brittany, pp.86–155; Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler*, p.77 notes that women travelling alone were especially vulnerable to expectations of sexual favours and rape during the exodus as a result of the breakdown in moral and social values reflecting the collapse of social structures; Vinen, *Unfree French*, p.28 recounts the expectations of retreating French soldiers for sexual favours from women; Simone de Beauvoir, *Journal de Guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), p.306: 'Everywhere was full of refugees sitting down, the men at the tables in the café and the poor on the ground or on their suitcases'; Vidalenc, *Exode*, pp. 197–198, describes how two days later on 14 June, Brest was overwhelmed with refugees, and 'disorder was at its height... In the port, the crowd besieged the quayside and had to be restrained by crossed bayonets'. By 19th June 1940 Brest was declared *une ville ouverte*.

⁵¹ Surillet, *Aide Memoire*.

it.⁵² She may also have enjoyed the holiday atmosphere involved, as evidenced by the fact that she ultimately remained in Brest for 3 months and only left by the last refugee train. We can speculate that she had not hitherto had the opportunity to travel to different regions of France and certainly her detailed accounts of meals suggest that such food was not available to her in Le Havre. Here, we perhaps see a contrasting dimension of the *exode*, which focused less on its hardships, and more on the ways that the disruption to settled patterns of life can lead to new discoveries, new acquaintances and new experiences. At this point, perhaps the youth of the writer intersects with her gender to provide an unexpected moment of relative autonomy for a working-class married woman.

This sense of relative comfort is only highlighted by her depiction of isolation and a sense of exile on her return home:

After information at the station, I left for Le Havre in the first free train for refugees returning to their town. 15 September 1940 saw me on my 20th birthday without family, amongst strangers, alone apart from my neighbour from the landing of my flat, waiting for the connection to Le Havre. On 17 September, we finally arrived back in Le Havre after many stops in the middle of the countryside because of air raid warnings especially near Rouen. The first sight I had of my way back to my flat was of ruins. The barracks had gone, the buildings all around had gone, was I going to find my block of flats after such a long journey? Finally, overjoyed, I find my block, the only one still standing in the St. François district.

On my landing, I found my concierge, who told me there had not been a single bombing raid since June 10 1940 when I had left. I was delighted that they were over. Alas, a real welcome home, that night, an English air raid and bombing attack from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. the next morning. Happily, I had slept as soon as I had arrived back in my room which was very cold, and with no glass in the windows. The bed was icy cold and there were mice in it.⁵³

Here the disruptive impact of the *exode* is perhaps most keenly felt: home no longer feels like home: summed up by the powerful depiction of broken windows and mice nesting in the bed. Indeed, such is the shattering of domestic stability, and virtual homelessness, that at the end of September 1940, Surillet left Le Havre and returned to live with her family in Ouistreham near Caen.⁵⁴

Does Surillet's narrative help us to understand the exodus? Does her account reflect what Jackson describes as 'irrational panic, collective trauma, revealing the underlying

⁵² Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler*, p.181.

⁵³ Surillet, *Aide Memoire*.

⁵⁴ Nicole Dombrowski Risser, *France under Fire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.257 points out that Le Havre was bombed by the British nightly from 16–28 September 1940 (note the discrepancy in dates with Surillet), and that 94 civilians died and 179 were injured, resulting in a new exodus. The water supply was paralysed and buildings demolished included the Stock Exchange, City Hall, Post Office, Barracks and one hospital. On September 28, the RAF demolished a further 1000 buildings, all of which serves to contextualise why Surillet left again.

fears of a population that had from the start not been psychologically prepared for the strains of war?’⁵⁵ Surillet’s decision-making would confirm that panic was involved; a seemingly spur of the moment decision, ill prepared in respect of provisions and clothing, and taking the first boat leaving with no apparent planned destination.

Or does her account support his alternative reading of the *exode* as ‘A rational response by defenceless civilians to the consequences of military disasters for which they were not responsible but from which they wanted to escape’?⁵⁶ Surillet’s decision-making is equally explicitly based on wanting to escape from the bombing raids, during which she feels in danger and defenceless. She undoubtedly misses the guidance of her husband who is away in the army, but she is insightful about the impact of military disaster:

On 18 June 1940 on the radio from London, De Gaulle asked all the French in France to join him in England by any means possible, many people from Brittany left with their families from the Sein Islands in fishing boats to re-join De Gaulle, one of the army chiefs who wanted to continue to resist and fight against the enemy. My husband, Henri, does not understand any of the army orders, why had the army made over one million soldiers return to France who had been refugees in England there on the spot from 27 May to 9 June 1940, and would have been able to continue fighting the war with De Gaulle instead of becoming prisoners of war in Germany.⁵⁷

In many ways then, Surillet’s narrative supports both of Jackson’s readings of civilian experience during the *exode*.

Using Surillet’s account as a source to interrogate the *exode* as a site of historiographical enquiry gives us a clear understanding of the impact of the *exode* on young working civilian women, and of the allied bombardment and the destruction of towns such as Le Havre. The narrative offers a shift in our perceptions of the *exode* and provides a gendered reading with compelling details of the historical experience of the *exode* and contributes to our understanding of the study of Vichy, from the gendered perspective of a young working woman, from a family of seven without the advantages of post compulsory school leaving age education and for whom the *exode* was arduous and dangerous. The specific features recovered through the text are the subjective associations of the contrasts between the cold, hunger and unwanted male sexual attention on the migration and warmth, food and physical refuge on safe arrival, the unexpected widening of opportunities and enjoyment of the holiday atmosphere and the return from the *exode* to homelessness and the family. Surillet’s articulation of her

⁵⁵ Jackson, *Fall of France*, p.177.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Surillet, *Aide Memoire*.

subjectivities as portrayed in her narrative provides a significant contribution to the period, filling in the gaps left by the absence of women's written testimony of the *exode*, providing a voice for those who have been for too long unheard, and offering details of unknown lives. This chapter has attempted to resolve aspects of historical experience which have been overlooked such as the inadequacy of the study of the lives of *others*: in this instance, women's narratives of the *exode*, by identifying an unpublished woman's text as a primary source and demonstrating that the articulation of the writer's subjectivities makes some small contribution, not just towards redressing the gender imbalance of sources in British and French historiography of the *exode*, but towards shifting our understanding of this historical event.

We have seen in this chapter how the journal can capture the immediacy of responses in a catastrophic and destabilising event (the *exode*), giving insight into the motivations of an individual who chose flight as the only viable solution. The following chapter continues to examine the relationship between the expression of subjectivities in the face of overwhelming circumstances and the physicality of bodily sensation and the exploration of Kate Haas' journal further extends the temporal, social, regional and experiential reach of this study. Surillet wrote as a young, French, Catholic woman without higher education, living in Le Havre. In contrast, Kate Haas wrote from the perspective of a 35-year-old, highly educated professional German-Jewish woman in hiding, who had been living in Paris since 1933, and whose experience of exile extended well beyond the period of the *exode*. Within this extended temporal space, the chapter therefore raises the question of whether the practice of writing a journal itself may become an act of resistance to the chaos in which individual women found themselves.

Chapter 2 — Writing as an act of resistance: Exile in the Ardèche: an unpublished text by Kate Haas

What have we done that we have been torn apart and punished like this? We did not choose our mother, and we certainly did not approve of Hitler. But one cannot say this to anyone and if one ever could say it to somebody, then they would shrug their shoulders and say they could not change it. We are grains of sand lost in time by world history.¹

This chapter interrogates the Jewish survivor experience as a further site of Occupation historiographical enquiry by using an unpublished journal as a primary source to explore the nature of female experience. The journal was written by a Jewish woman in hiding during the Occupation and the gendered response of the source maps out the potential for the shift in our understanding of this period of crisis. It would be invidious to draw a meta-narrative from the analysis of one text in a field of scholarly historiography, memoir and testimony.² Instead, I will argue that close analysis of such a source can offer a different way of approaching archival sources and that the focus here on the subjective understanding of the lived experience provides an insight into the gendered response of a Jewish woman in exile. This source is not a replacement for archival documents and accordingly I contextualise the text with the relevant historiography in order to protect its historical validity. In this chapter the corroboration of historical validity is achieved by foregrounding the analysis of the text, by focusing

¹ Kate Haas, unpublished journal, 21 September 1939. Translation by Beatrix Dimmock. SxMs96, Elton Ehrenberg Papers, 1819–2001, The Keep, Falmer, Sussex.

² Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p.369, point out that during 1940–1942 the Vichy regime acted largely on its own and its persecution of the Jews had catastrophic effects on French Jews, resulting in their depiction not as victims but as the problem and also that Vichy provided more help to Germany than anywhere else in western Europe. Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940–1944* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p.184 notes that by summer of 1942, 20,000 Jews had been interned in French concentration camps in the Free Zone, following the law of 4 October 1940. Julian Jackson, *The Dark Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.360 notes that between 6 August–15 September 1942, in the Free Zone, the French authorities exceeded the 10,000 Jews they had agreed to arrest. Anette Wieworka, *Déportation et génocide, entre la mémoire et l'oubli* (Paris: Plon, 1992) examines the time it took to put the Holocaust into perspective. Serge Klarsfeld, 'Vichy-Auschwitz, Le Rôle de Vichy dans la solution finale de France' in M.L. Cohen and E. Malo (eds.), *Les camps de Sud-Ouest de la France* (Toulouse: Privat, 1994) provides a detailed account of Vichy's role in the deportation of Jews. All of the above corroborate that the dates of internment and deportation of Robert Haas, cited by the writer, are likely to be correct. See Jacqueline Mesnil-Amar, *Ceux qui ne dormaient pas, Journal 1944–1946* (Paris: Editions Minuit, 1957) (Paris: Stock, 2009), pp.19–23 for a narrative of a Parisian Jewish woman waiting. See Simone Veil, *Une Jeunesse au temps de la Shoah* (Paris: Stock, 2007) for an autobiographical account of a Jewish deportee and camp survivor. See Saul Friedlander, *Quand Vient le Souvenir* (Paris: Seuil, 1978) for an autobiography of a child losing his Jewish identity in order to survive. See also Karen Taieb (ed.), *Je vous écris du Vél'd'Hiv, Les lettres retrouvées*. (Paris: Laffont, 2011).

on the source as text and as a literary construction as well as a socio/historical document and finally by highlighting its linguistic features.

The chapter commences with some reasons why the journal has been identified as a viable historical source, providing contextual detail and discussing the reasons why the journal was written. It then proceeds to an analysis of how the author's subjectivities are articulated by adopting a reading strategy based on three broad themes that emerge from the text: loss, exile and waiting, which are interlinked in the analysis with the concepts of agency, political understanding and resistance. The use of the text demonstrates specificities of time, place and person which are critical to a broader understanding of the period.

This journal has been selected as a case study because it was produced by an "outsider" from the perspective of the dominant Vichy narrative of woman as housewife and mother. It was written by Kate Haas, a Jewish businesswoman whose Jewish husband had been interned, who herself risked deportation, who had no children, whose business had been Aryanised and who was exiled in a rural hamlet far from her home in Paris. In that sense, this journal provides a useful counterpoint to the other texts examined in the study, in that this writer articulates the specific subjective realities of the impact of Vichy's anti-Semitic legislation and policies. To some extent therefore, it invites us to focus on the differing realities faced by Jewish communities in France between 1940 and 1944 and how these changed over the period. However, Kate Haas's experiences point to a further reason for selecting the text: she was born in Germany, moved to France and was naturalised in 1933 and did not therefore consider herself to fit the Vichy criteria of 'foreign Jew'. The text she produced articulates this struggle with otherness, imposed by the Vichy regime, and in doing so gets to the heart of key debates within the historiography of the French Occupation. On the one hand, it is impossible to explore the impact of Vichy's anti-Semitic policies of identification, *raffles* and deportation on the subjectivities of the writer of this diary without considering the Jewish experience separately. On the other, the text is witness to the urge not to be treated separately, whether by regimes or historians. The dilemmas it both articulates and seeks to resolve therefore bring into sharp relief the nature of Jewish experience during the Occupation, where we must be mindful of claiming its singularities, but aware of the risk that such claims might carry in confirming the original logic of exclusion implemented by the Vichy regime.

It is vital, therefore, to provide contextual detail before offering an analysis of the text. Kate Haas's journal remains unpublished and was written contemporaneously to the events it records. The journal provides the reader with a fluid understanding of the historical present of both time and place; the timeline covers the period from the declaration of war in 1939 to its end in 1945, recording experiences initially in Paris and subsequently, from 1942, in Accons, a rural hamlet outside Le Chélarde in the Ardèche.³ The significance of Kate Haas' text lies also in its mediation of historical reality in that it gives a wealth of detail of lived experience and a gendered perspective of rural life during the Occupation. The text can also be read as the narrative of a village offering sanctuary and protecting a Jewish woman from 1942 to 1944.⁴ The journal foregrounds the writer's subjectivities, which reveal the reach and impact of Vichy legislation but relegates contemporary political events to the background with the result that while this journal offers a narrative representation of the Occupation, it is not that of a conventional narrative with a detailed account of events that periodically shifts into factual reporting, such as the journal kept by another Jewish writer, Hélène Berr.⁵

Before setting out a reading strategy for the journal, some biographical and further contextual detail will help to situate the text appropriately and will provide a clearer focus on the author of the text. Furthermore, some exploration of the reasons why the author wrote the journal will serve to elucidate the nature and scope of the entries. Referred to as Haas in this study, Kate Haas was born Catherine Oppenheimer, on 9 September 1904 in Stuttgart. Known as Kate, she obtained a degree in Law and Economics at the universities of Munich and Tübingen in 1929, having two years earlier married Richard Haas, also from Stuttgart and like her, a non-observant Jew. He had studied Chemistry and was a Docteur/Lecteur at Halle University, having worked in Berlin in the textile industry. From 1930 to 1933, they were both living in Basle in

³ This unpublished text provides a powerful parallel to the published account by a British woman, active in the Resistance, living not far away in Vallerauges in the Cévennes: Janet Teissier de Cros, *Divided Loyalties* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1965).

⁴ In marked contrast to the experiences of Irène Némirovsky recorded in *Suite Française* (Paris: Denoel, 2004), Kate Haas was protected by the village and returns to Paris in 1945; H.R. Kedward, *The Pursuit of Reality, The Némirovsky Effect* (University of Reading: Stenton Lecture, 2008) for a discussion on the fictional representation of subterfuge and hiding and a glimpse of how the reality of her own fate might have been different; Caroline Moorehead, *Village of Secrets* (London: Vintage, 2014) describes how a Cévenol village protected Jewish children and adults.

⁵ Hélène Berr, *Journal 1942–1944* (Paris: Tallandier, 2008). See Daniele Sabbah, 'Hélène Berr's Journal' in M. Attack and C. Lloyd (eds.), *Framing narratives of the Second World war and occupation in France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), pp.128–137 for an exploration of how Berr's journal shifts into reportage.

Switzerland, and it was because of this that Haas seems subsequently to have chosen to continue listening to the Swiss news on the radio. In 1933 they moved to France for what were described as ‘racial reasons’ and although no entry permit was needed — because as German nationals they could not be employed — they founded and jointly ran an industrial oil business in Paris and, by 1939, had 20 employees. On 8 September 1939 Richard was briefly interned, before being released on 2 October. He then worked for the Air Ministry but in May 1940 he was again interned and Haas herself was also interned in Gurs, west of Pau in the Pyrenees, before being released in June 1940. The couple moved, possibly in October 1940 (although this cannot be conclusively dated), to Accons, where they knew friends, also in hiding and an area sympathetic to the plight of Jewish refugees.⁶ The mayor of Accons was committed to helping refugees and his daughter rented out a room in her house to the couple before they moved to a derelict mill.⁷ The Ardèche is close to the Cévennes which is significant in that its proximity enabled communication links with an area which throughout the Occupation supported Jews, refugees and resisters, actions that can be attributed to a mix of longstanding Protestant religion, a history of protection of refugees, and the force of hospitality within Cévenol culture more generally.⁸ Moorehead in her 2014 work on the village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in the Cévennes, which rescued thousands of Jewish children and adults, comments that traders travelled from Le Chélarde on market day and that on 6 July 1944 there was a battle with German troops not far away at Le Chélarde.⁹ Although Richard Haas was arrested in Le Chélarde on 22 August 1942 by French *gendarmes*, Haas remained in Accons throughout the Occupation, protected by the local community. She did not receive written confirmation until February 1945 that her husband had been deported from Drancy to Auschwitz on 2 September 1942.¹⁰

Why did Haas keep a journal? She herself offered several different reasons. She explained that she had kept a journal 10 years previously which she had subconsciously

⁶ H.R. Kedward, *In Search of the Maquis: Rural Resistance in Southern France, 1940–1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.153 points out that nearby Aubenas in the Ardèche contained pockets of strong Popular Front support and p.247 became established as a place where refugees’ provisioning was made possible by *maquis* ability to secure false ration cards.

⁷ I am indebted to Notes by Michael Newman (2003), held with the Journal, for biographical and contextual detail.

⁸ See Philippe Joutard et. al. (eds.), *Cévennes, Terre de refuge 1940–1944* (Montpellier: Presses du Languedoc et Club Cévenol, 1987).

⁹ Caroline Moorehead, *Village of Secrets* (London: Vintage, 2014), p.301.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the Vichy regime’s cultural and economic anti-Semitism and complicity in the persecution and deportation of French Jews, see Paxton, *Vichy France*, pp.168–185; Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France*, p.269. In the Ardèche, police rounded up 137 Jews.

written for her husband without knowing it; this time, she knew that she was writing it for him.¹¹ She stated that she wrote only for her husband and that her scribble was an expression of her love.¹² She decided that writing the journal would also help her to remember everything that had happened so she could tell her husband about it afterwards.¹³ In 1942, she reiterated that she was writing the journal for him, with the reservation and the fear that she might never see him again.¹⁴ However, in June 1943, after a break of eight months, she recorded that:

I start again to keep a diary. For the umpteenth time? First the teenage diary. Then the great diary of the student years, then three times for Richard to bridge the separation. This time without much hope in this way: an account just for me, because I have the feeling that I am starting to lose myself completely. I dream away hours and days and if I continue like this, I will soon be without substance and empty. I must collect my thoughts again and must try to make something out of myself that has some shape.¹⁵

These reasons explain why the entries are not made on a regular basis but break off and resume and give differing amounts of content to differing periods of time. The tropes of what Kelly terms the ‘handwritingness of history’ (the handwriting of the author as a physical link to history) and the ‘broken narrative’ (the status of a narrative that is interrupted due to events) can usefully be applied to this text, as Haas breaks the narrative when her husband returns home and resumes when he is re-interned.¹⁶ The ‘broken narrative’ also reflects the different motivations for writing the journal and the author herself appears to confirm that she sees her narrative as ‘broken’ when she adds at the end of the above entry: ‘Another reason for the diary, an attempt to mould my writing style again, which has gone completely wild. I hope that when my thoughts have taken shape again, my life will also become possible again.’¹⁷ Haas makes an explicit connection here between the act of writing and the sense of identity survival. Writing her journal became an act of resilience which enabled her to resist the intolerability of being seen as an assimilated Jew and allowed her to remain organised internally and therefore to maintain her sense of physical self and, more importantly, her sense of Jewish identity. I suggest that writing the journal was of such importance to her because it became an act of resistance to the Occupation and to her well-founded fears

¹¹ Haas, 20 September 1939.

¹² Haas, 21 September 1939.

¹³ Haas, 2 October 1939.

¹⁴ Haas, 9 September 1942.

¹⁵ Haas, 8 June 1943.

¹⁶ Debra Kelly, ‘Lived experience past/reading experience present’ in Attack and Lloyd (eds.), *Framing narratives*, p.124.

¹⁷ Haas, 9 September 1943.

of arrest and deportation, thus ensuring her survival. This entry also exemplifies the study's analytic framework of the sources being evidence of processes of gendered identity formation. This notion of writing as an act of resistance will be further explored throughout the chapter.

Having established the context in which the journal was written, the chapter will look at the nature of the text itself before adopting a reading strategy based on the highlighting of distinct but interconnected themes as a means to its exploration and analysis. The journal covers the period 1939–1945 but, as has been discussed earlier, is not continuous and represents a 'broken narrative'. The first section covers the period from 20 September 1939 to 5 October 1939 when her husband is first interned, the journal then resumes when he is re-interned on 9 September 1942 and continues to 4 October 1942. The journal restarts on 8 June 1943 but only continues until 12 June 1943 and restarts on 3 January 1945 and continues until 18 January 1945. The text held in the archive is handwritten, in German and French, re-typed in German and French and translated into English in 19 pages.¹⁸ The language is complex in respect of grammar and vocabulary and indicative of a writer who writes easily and fluently, as might be expected of a graduate-level education and the writing is therefore significantly different from Surillet's text discussed in the previous chapter. Haas writes with precision about incidents, such as when Richard is arrested, and articulates her subjectivities concisely with clarity and expression and even detachment. For example, on the day Richard was interned in September 1942 she notes having paid a visit earlier to friends: 'We had wanted to encourage the Scholts who were present and feared deportation, we just did not know we were speaking on behalf of ourselves.'¹⁹ The language is vivid and the focus throughout remains on the writer's inner world, and little sense of place is conveyed to the reader. People are cited more frequently than place. The interiority of the journal, that is the writer's daily articulation of the impact on her of her husband's periods of internment, is compelling in its immediacy:

Writing a diary is an abstention from intimacy to any other person, withdrawing into a shell. Why? My whole thinking is concentrated on Richard. And nobody is interested in that. Essentially, each human being is only interested in their own small self.²⁰

¹⁸ The translation is by Beatrix Dimmock. I have read the journal in the original, but for the purposes of this study will use the English translation.

¹⁹ Haas, 9 September 1942

²⁰ Haas, 8 June 1943.

Given the prominence given to “interiority” here, it is appropriate to approach the text on its own terms, following the distinct but interconnected themes of exile, loss and waiting which emerge and, which are, in turn, underpinned by the key concepts of initiative, agency, and political understanding. Such themes and concepts are summoned directly from the text and provide a productive way of reading the journal because they show, as Haas notes in the extract cited above, how she tries to make something of herself that has some shape. This reading strategy also seeks to abolish distances between the writer during the Occupation and the reader today by indicating that the writer is aware of her place both in wartime and in a future time, as in the opening citation of the chapter.

There is no doubt that the theme of waiting, which is articulated on the first and last pages, dominates the journal. The journal opens on 20 September 1939 when Haas’s husband has been arrested and the first entry chronicles in detail and at length how Haas felt waiting without news, describing how this impacted on her physical health. She recorded a number of symptoms, including being completely discouraged and in a state of blankness, and being unable to think straight. In a similar way, the journal closes in January 1945, denoting another long day of waiting without hope.²¹ The circular structure of the chronological entries conveys to the reader the significance that waiting plays in the articulation of subjectivities and also demonstrates that the combination of waiting and the lack of news about her husband had a destructive impact on Haas’s ability to cope with daily life. She feared that she was going crazy and commented that her whole life consisted in waiting and hoping that all will pass.²²

Clearly, the experience of waiting was shared by many people during the Occupation but the experience of Jewish women was palpably different from those French wives who were waiting for the one and a half million prisoners of war, since they knew where their husbands were being held and could send and receive letters and care for them by sending food parcels.²³ They considered their loss as temporary and internalised Vichy’s dominant social norm of the *femme au foyer*.²⁴ In contrast, Haas’s journal corroborates that for her, it was the “not knowing” that was the most difficult:

²¹ Haas, 6 January 1945.

²² Haas, 9 September 1942 and 8 June 1943.

²³ Karen Adler, *Jews and Gender in Liberation France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²⁴ Sarah Fishman, *We Will Wait: Wives of French Prisoners of War* (New York: Yale University Press, 1991), pp.149.

This not — even-knowing — where you are, makes me sick. I do not even know whether you got my letters. I could not even fulfil your wish to bring you something to eat. Thursday, I heard it was allowed to bring blankets and coats but nothing to eat. I then brought a package to Colombes on Thursday afternoon. There, I heard that I could also bring food. Friday, I was there in order to hear that nothing more would be accepted in the afternoons. Saturday morning it was said that you had been evacuated. I know that you are working for a farmer somewhere near Orleans or Nevers, but I do not know anything for sure. Maybe all of that is just gossip.²⁵

Waiting continues to dominate the journal after Richard is arrested by the French *gendarmes* in the Ardèche in August 1942. This entry in the journal emphasises Haas's despair at not being able to write to her husband and her fear of not being able to hear from him for months or years.²⁶

Associated with the theme of waiting are those of loss and exile and they are foregrounded throughout the journal. Haas writes at length about the loss of her husband, describing him as her whole world, with such feelings being expressed in almost every entry:

I have a longing for Richard: mentally and bodily. Whether I will ever have the joy to see him again? Today it is 291 days since we were torn apart. I had hoped that time would act as a healer. But the wound is still as open as on the first day. How long will all this still last? There are many hours when I think of suicide — very many in fact. But then the thought of not knowing definitively keeps me back and that we might see each other again after all.²⁷

Throughout her journal, her sense of loss led her to pose a series of questions on its magnitude, and her feeling that without Richard, she was not fully alive. She documented her realisation of how few real friends they had as they had become solitary as a couple because they had always been so happy together.²⁸ Multiple journal entries articulate her subjectivities of loss, pain and distress:²⁹

Now, it is five weeks since we are separated! How distant everything already feels... This sudden tearing apart is too hard, this being crossed out of the life of the other is too hard to endure. And still this infinite time in front of us.³⁰

This theme of loss echoes that of waiting and, whilst there are other published gendered rural narratives of loss, Haas's account is significant in that although she does not consciously deploy such Jewish identity designation throughout the journal, the moments when she does so illustrate aspects of the specificity of isolation, difference

²⁵ Haas, 20 September 1939.

²⁶ Haas, September 1942.

²⁷ Haas, 8 June 1943.

²⁸ Haas, 20 September 1939.

²⁹ Haas, 9 September 1942; Haas, 23 September 1942.

³⁰ Haas, 24 September 1942.

and persecution of a Jewish woman.³¹ These themes are expressed in the entry of 21 September 1939 at the opening of this chapter, or when she comments that ‘Since Richard had come to France in 1933 and was already married he should not have been arrested so this uselessness is twice as incomprehensible.’³² Unconsciously, the text reflects her Jewish identity designation through her lack of identity card and full food ration cards as she frequently wrote about the support of the villagers in giving her food, such as the trout, coffee and a courgette by Madame Plantier.³³ She seemed unaware that the villagers were concerned that she risked deportation and believed that she must look unwell because they had such pity for her and always gave her lunch or dinner.³⁴

No exploration of the themes of waiting and loss would be complete without an accompanying analysis of how the theme of exile is treated in the journal. Exile is taken here to mean the specificity of the lived experience of being Jewish in France during the Occupation, which differs from other experiences of exile because it refers to living in the country in which one had been born — or for Haas, in the country in which she and her husband had chosen to move to and in which they had been accepted as assimilated Jews (and accordingly held naturalisation papers). When Haas’s husband is interned in 1939 when they are living in Paris, she writes:

The strangest thing is that one notices nothing at all of this war. Life continues, almost as before. The metro is running, cars go by, people are on the street, children play in the parks, the telephone rings, people whom one knows call, work is done in the workshop. Only you are absent for an unknown time.³⁵

This description of Paris is almost commonplace in published accounts of the Phoney War but what is of significance here is that for Haas the war has begun in reality and her description is that of being an exile in Paris.³⁶ From September 1942, by then living in the Ardèche, in the Free Zone, regular entries record Haas’s sense of her own exclusion despite the practical, emotional and material support and — most importantly — food provided by the villagers of Accons. Indeed, she regularly commented on the villagers’ pity for her, which only served to reinforce her isolation.³⁷ The German Occupation of

³¹ Andrée Monneret, *Intimité en temps de guerre* (Lyon: Editions Capédita, 2011) offers that of a devout Catholic mother and wife of a *déporté* from the Haute Savoie with similar accounts of depression and lack of political engagement.

³² Haas, 9 September 1942.

³³ Haas, 10 September 1942.

³⁴ Haas, 20 September 1942.

³⁵ Haas, 20 September 1939.

³⁶ See Berthe Auroy, *Jours de Guerre* (Paris: Bayard, 2008).

³⁷ Haas, 20 September 1942.

the Free Zone in November 1942 makes no difference to Haas's articulation of her sense of exile as, throughout the journal, she wrote that she felt isolated and alone, despite also noting frequent visits to people she knew in Le Chélard named Schlesinger, Steen, Rosenthal, Rosenberger, Roth, and Schiff and even in one entry noting that she did not want to join the emigrant community by moving to Le Chélard.³⁸ Her sense of isolation is reinforced when she recorded that although one friend was in a similar situation to her, they did not talk about it, adding that the adversity was so great that there was nothing more to say about it.³⁹ Summing up her feeling of exile, she described herself as being just a visitor everywhere, and that she is even treated for free by the dentist out of pity.⁴⁰ It is noteworthy that this sense of exile is expressed consistently from 1939 onwards, despite her lived experience of the changing political realities of the Phoney War in Paris, Occupied Paris, the Free Zone, the Occupation of the Free Zone, and post-Liberation.⁴¹

Exile can also be defined as the subjective experience of feeling apart from others, and this is also conveyed throughout the journal. Haas revealed her insight in commenting that in the presence of others she displayed a very different nature and succeeded in chatting about all or nothing; politics, books, the weather, with food and provisions always the main topic, but that when she was alone, howling misery came over her and she stayed in bed for hours with no energy to do anything.⁴² Her sense of exile is confirmed when Madame Plantier (whose son has been called up for the *Service du Travail Obligatoire* in Germany), from whom she collected milk and food and who offered her a friendship which she reciprocated, commented that while the whole of the French population was suffering, only the Jews had money and were doing well. Haas noted that she may become a scapegoat again in the village.⁴³ However, there are no further entries recorded on this subject which is unfortunate, as it would have been useful to have seen Haas's perceptions of the villager's understanding of anti-Semitic propaganda.⁴⁴

³⁸ Haas, 9 September 1942, 10 September 1942, 12 September 1942, 16 September 1942, 20 September 1942, 22 September 1942, 12 June 1943 and 10 September 1942.

³⁹ Haas, 9 September, 1942.

⁴⁰ Haas, 2 October 1942.

⁴¹ Haas, 25 January 1945.

⁴² Haas, 8 June 1943.

⁴³ Haas, 12 June 1943.

⁴⁴ For discussion of anti-Semitic propaganda by the Vichy regime see Jackson, *Dark Years*, pp.354–355. The Vichy regime issued no anti-Semitic posters or film documentaries nor required Jews to wear the yellow star.

Analysing the entries in the journal thematically in this way demonstrates that for Haas, waiting, loss, and exile were dominant features of life during the Occupation, which are repeatedly articulated throughout her journal. Nonetheless, in contrast to these themes of waiting, loss and exile, the distinct but inter-linked concepts of initiative, agency and political understanding also emerge from the journal and it is helpful to examine how these are explored. What actions did Haas take during this period, either on her own behalf or with others, in order to protect herself from arrest and what actions did she take to secure her husband's release? After her husband was interned in September 1939, Haas's journal entries detail her focus on trying to manage their jointly-owned and run industrial oil business in Paris, denoting her clear belief in the importance of agency and her explicit wish to keep the business going for her husband. She noted that everything was already more difficult than before and that it was her husband who had kept up-to-date with chemical matters.⁴⁵ She commented that funds had been made available so that the business could continue because she was ashamed that their assets had been frozen.⁴⁶ In October 1939, she realised that she had been working so hard that she had no strength left and this level of purposeful energy running the business is very different from the aimless drifting state she experiences in exile in 1942 and 1943, when she described herself concocting activities out of nothing, describing long grey monotonous days broken only by trips to find food and visit neighbours.⁴⁷ To further underscore this contrast, agency is clearly observable in 1939 when Richard had first been interned, in that Haas went to the Commissariat to try to obtain a pass to visit him in Vierzon, which, as she noted, was of course refused, and that she had not expected a different outcome but had hoped nevertheless. She then attempted to gain his release through a friend, who was described as unremitting in search of new possibilities, and having been previously so near the goal had then found a new avenue to pursue the very same day.⁴⁸ Agency here was successful and Richard was released on 2 October 1939, having been interned only since 8 September. Agency again features in the journal after Richard was arrested by the *gendarmes* in Le Chélar, in the Ardèche, on 22 August 1942. Haas recorded that she had sent what she described

⁴⁵ Haas, 20 September 1939.

⁴⁶ For a discussion on the Aryanisation of business, see Paxton, *Vichy France*, pp.176–180; Jackson, *Dark Years*, p.356, notes that Aryanisation had ensured that by the summer of 1941 half the Jews of Paris had been deprived of any means of existence.

⁴⁷ Haas, 8 June 1943.

⁴⁸ Haas, 22 September 1939.

as a ridiculous telegram to Laval and even a letter to Pétain.⁴⁹ The content of her letter to Pétain will be discussed below and there is no doubt that letter writing to both Laval and Pétain was a frequent recourse for many women waiting for news.⁵⁰ I argue that such activities as writing, sending letters and telegrams, became for Haas, an act of resistance. Action having secured her husband's release in 1939, Haas described in September 1942 asking a friend who had done all that was possible at the time of her husband's arrest, to telephone the camp at Fort Barreuse, where she understood Richard had initially been taken and recorded that it was suggested instead that she wrote. She asked if the friend still wanted to take steps towards Richard's release and whether it would make sense to instruct a reputable lawyer, and was advised that he would seek advice and that he had another attempt continuing in Vichy but that there was not much hope.⁵¹ The journal does not contain any explanations of why the couple had such connections. Having been told that consulting a reputable lawyer would be throwing away good money, Haas herself took action, again writing as an act of resistance, recording that at a friend's house, a French lawyer dictated a letter to her to send to Lyon to continue to try something for Richard.⁵² She noted that two more friends had confirmed to her once again that nothing could be done for Richard, but questioned in the journal whether another acquaintance might have the necessary connections, but without taking any further action herself. She described writing one further letter, one attempt amongst many others and added that, although it will be of no use, she followed every mirage.⁵³ Arguably writing this letter was for her, in maintaining her Jewish identity, one further act of resistance. By the end of September 1942 there are no further entries in the journal about taking action and this lack of focussed activity would seem to compound the destructive impact of waiting, loss and exile. The following comment corroborates the link between the themes of waiting, loss, and exile and agency and the importance of examining the themes in parallel: 'I dream a lot — however, I start believing that I am too much a dreamer. I lack the courage for any action.'⁵⁴ The lack of

⁴⁹ Haas, 9 September 1942.

⁵⁰ Nicole Dombrowski Risser, *France under Fire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.274 argues that such letters by civilian women describing the violations of their security and well-being are part of a gendered linguistic community, crafting war-time definitions of human rights. See also similar unpublished letter to Pétain from a Jewish woman, Mme. Levinsohn, July 1943 in archives in Musée Jean Moulin, Paris.

⁵¹ Haas, 9 September 1942.

⁵² Haas, 22 September 1942.

⁵³ Haas, 23 September 1942.

⁵⁴ Haas, 2 October 1942.

agency recorded in the journal is puzzling to the contemporary reader because a number of incidents are described which she found frightening: these included someone knocking loudly on her door for ten minutes at 4am, a gendarme keeping watch on the local bridge, and a general belief in the village that she and others would certainly be arrested by 15 October 1942.⁵⁵ Haas took no action other than continuing to write her journal, writing for her becoming an act of resilience and resistance. The only physically protective action she considered for her own safety, in order to avoid arrest, was a possible retreat to the Catholic Church.⁵⁶ The only record of her meetings with the priests of Le Chélar and Accons is that of 12 June 1943. It is possible to speculate that this may account for another avenue of agency she may have explored: along with the papers in the archive is an undated edition of *L'Espoir*, the pamphlet for wives of Prisoners of War, produced by the Vichy regime to maintain morale amongst women.⁵⁷ It is possible that the priests gave this to Haas, and she may have considered joining a local group and hoped that this organisation could offer her both practical and emotional support. From the pamphlet, she would have recognised the same challenges as those facing the French wives of Prisoners of War, in that they both faced the sudden transformation of having sole responsibility for finances and food, provisions and transport at a time of increased hardship, and she may also have anticipated an understanding of her experience of waiting and sense of loss — if not that of exile. Whether or not Haas joined the organisation, the existence of this pamphlet alongside her journal is an indication of the intricacy and complexity of any analysis of the Occupation, where the actions and motivations of individuals are subject to conflicting pressures, choices and constraints.⁵⁸

The final theme that emerges from a reading of this journal is that of Haas' broader political understanding. In exploring the extent and depth of her political understanding of events, it is helpful to recall that she and her husband had moved from Switzerland to France in 1933 for "racial reasons" and that her naturalisation papers are dated 1933. Both were running a business and had contacts in Paris and yet appeared not to understand the implications of the anti-Semitic legislation of the Vichy regime.

⁵⁵ Haas, 26 September 1942 and 27 September 1942.

⁵⁶ Haas, 27 September 1942.

⁵⁷ There is no mention of *L'Espoir* in the journal.

⁵⁸ For further discussion of women and *prisonniers de guerre*, see Fishman, *We Will Wait*.

The first Jewish Statute was issued by Vichy on 3 October 1940 and was not imposed by the Germans. Over the following year twenty-six laws and twenty-four decrees on the Jews followed and the Second Statute of Jews was then issued in June 1941.⁵⁹ Vichy then broke with the Republican tradition of treating religion and ethnicity as individual private matters and in July 1941 ordered a census of all Jews in the Free zone. The impact of these anti-Semitic regulations on professionals such as the Haases was to deprive them of working by seizing their assets, Aryanising their business, preventing them from finding likely alternative professional employment and putting them at risk of arrest.⁶⁰ Furthermore, in July 1940, a commission had been set up by the French Justice Minister to review 500,000 naturalisations made between 1927 and 1939 and 40 per cent of those 15,154 whose citizenship was revoked were Jewish.⁶¹ The impact of this was that the Haases were now deemed to be foreign/unassimilated Jews, since they had been naturalised in 1933. This had far reaching implications as, in October 1940, departmental *prefects* had been given authority to ‘intern, assign to supervised residence or enrol in forced labour any foreign Jews in their department.’⁶² The impact of this was that on 22 August 1942 Richard Haas was arrested by French *gendarmes*, interned, and sent to Drancy. On 2 September 1942 he was deported to Auschwitz.⁶³

It is important to explore, in detail, the concept of political understanding emerging from Haas’ journal in respect of her own position as a Jewish woman living in Vichy France, as it interrogates the central paradox of the journal. Jews in the Occupied Zone were required to wear the yellow star from May 1942 and by July 1942 13,000 Jews had been arrested. Most of this would have been known to the Jewish population in France. However, it is not clear how well it would have been known that in March 1942, the first convoy with over a thousand Jews left from Drancy to an unknown destination. Haas’s letter to Pétain, dated 2 September 1942, indicates a possible answer to the question why she had not understood that her husband was at risk of deportation. She wrote how she and her husband both wholeheartedly loved France, citing her husband’s expertise as a chemist and his development of a textile process with which they had hoped to serve France’s interests. It would appear that Haas thought that such actions

⁵⁹ *Témoignage Chretien, Cahiers 6, 7. Avril-mai 1942*. p. 216 commented that: ‘The French have not been idle — fifty seven texts in less than a year is an excellent anti-Semitic performance.’

⁶⁰ Jackson, *Dark Years*, p.356.

⁶¹ Paxton, *Vichy France*, p.171.

⁶² Dombrowski Risser, *France Under Fire*, p.229.

⁶³ Miscellaneous Papers deposited with Haas’ journal, p.15.

would have saved her husband from deportation and, although they clearly had not, that these factors would now secure his release. Despite this letter, her journal entry of 22 September 1942 confirmed that she was unsure whether he would return at all.⁶⁴ Most striking, in the letter to Pétain, is the evidence that Haas had a political understanding of the destination of the deported: 'My husband has been taken in a convoy, which it is said, will leave for Poland.'⁶⁵ How does Haas know this? There is no further explanation and the central paradox of the journal is that, if by 2 September 1942 Haas was aware of the destination of the convoy, why had she taken no action to protect her husband from deportation on 22 August 1942? This raises the question of whether she only learnt this information after Richard had been arrested, or whether (as seems more likely from the letter to Pétain) she believed that she and her husband would be exempt from all legislation as assimilated Jews and French citizens. It is also paradoxical that despite Richard's arrest and deportation and her own political understanding, she took no subsequent action to protect herself from deportation. This is compounded by the fact that she had an accurate and informed political understanding of the camps: 'I just heard news about Poland, hunger, epidemics, maltreatment and murder. May God protect my husband and give me the strength to persevere.'⁶⁶ Her broader political understanding must have come in part from listening to Swiss radio, as she regularly commented on broadcasts: 'On the radio it was said that Hitler will resign in favour of Goring to give France and England the chance to assume peace. Unfortunately, Goring is equal to Hitler.'⁶⁷ On 9 September 1942, she was also alerted by the radio to the disputes between the Catholic Church and Vichy, caused by the Jewish arrests in the Free Zone and the separation of children from their mothers.⁶⁸ She was aware of the Church's position towards Jews locally and recorded that the local priest had asked people to be charitable to Jews and that this instruction had been followed.⁶⁹ This is borne out in the journal with constant references to the kindness of different villagers but in particular, to that of the Plantier family, who regularly cooked for her and offered her food and also friendship. Whether she had a political awareness of the risks that

⁶⁴ Haas, 22 September 1942.

⁶⁵ Letter to Maréchal Pétain, 2 September 1942.

⁶⁶ Haas, 16 September 1942.

⁶⁷ Haas, 2 October 1939.

⁶⁸ Cardinal Gerlier, Archbishop of Lyons, one-time lawyer and Catholic youth leader was outspoken in his protests about deportation of the Jews in September 1942. See W.D. Halls, 'Catholics, the Vichy Interlude and After' in S. Fishman et. al. (eds.), *France at War* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), p.231.

⁶⁹ Haas, 10 September 1942.

villagers took on her behalf is unclear as she did not record this in the journal.⁷⁰ She did, however, have a political understanding both of the Church's position towards Jews and that of the Vichy Regime. This becomes apparent in her slightly elliptical reference to official contemporary discourse about the Jewish presence in France when a farmer completed some drainage work for her. She observed:

The unassimilated Jews? One would only have had to see this elderly farmer in my company today in order to refute this saying. One could really feel that he felt with me in his simple manner and that he tried to show his friendship. He offered to saw my wood for nothing.⁷¹

Despite her grasp of the political issues surrounding now-dominant notions of the unassimilated Jew, she does not appear to recognise that as far as Vichy was concerned, this applied to both her and Richard. This apparent lack of understanding about the political reality of anti-Semitic legislation is further evidenced by her entry wondering why she and Richard deserved such misfortune and suggesting that it might have been because they were too self-righteous and that she was therefore planning to change.⁷² In articulating such subjectivities, the journal demonstrates the inherent contradiction of her knowledge of the destination of the convoys on the one hand and her lack of understanding that she and her husband were not exempt from anti-Semitic policies and legislation on the other. It is perhaps significant that she articulated her political understanding of the destination of the convoys in her letter to Pétain, while in her own journal she blamed herself:

And yet every bit in me is screaming for Richard and my thoughts circle again and again, about this absurd fate that has hit us. Why, why? Punishment because we were so happy and did not think about the sorrow of others? And furthermore, is it a sin to be happy?⁷³

This internalisation of blame is significant in that it clearly has become paralysing for her both physically, in that she spent a considerable time sleeping, and emotionally, in that she was unable to lead the external independent life without Richard that she described that she would enjoy: reading, studying English and mathematics and visiting friends.⁷⁴ The internalisation of blame led her to lapse into despair, inactivity and

⁷⁰ For details of sheltering Jewish refugees in the Ardèche, see Kedward, *In Search of the Maquis*, pp.247–251. The strength and skill of the FFI in nearby Privas ensured that the German garrison was evacuated and the maquisards liberated Privas on 12 August 1944: Ibid., p.211.

⁷¹ Haas, 27 September 1942. This may also refer to the policy where non-French Jews in the Free Zone were offered for deportation in place of naturalised Jews in the Occupied Zone by the Vichy regime.

⁷² Haas, 9 September 1942.

⁷³ Haas, 4 October 1942.

⁷⁴ Haas, 8 June 1943.

suicidal thoughts.⁷⁵ For Haas, it can be argued that the injustice of Richard's arrest appears to stem not from the fundamental injustice of the act to remove unassimilated peoples from within France but from the fact that they were both counted as unassimilated. It could be further argued that Haas's refusal to consider herself unassimilated is also marked by a certain form of class prejudice on behalf of the wealthy assimilated Jewish population against Jewish groups who — as well as being poor — were more obviously Jewish in their dress, religious observance and dietary habits, a type of ambivalence towards Jewish identities that Michael Marrus observes in some French Jewish responses to the Dreyfus affair.⁷⁶

Finally, her political understanding, again from the radio, extended to the wider theatre of war: she was aware of Stalingrad and the failed British landings on Sicily on 9 June 1943 where she adds her own comment indicating that she has the ability to grasp wider political realities: 'Otherwise quiet on all fronts! Preparation before the storm! This waiting is unbearable: the nerves are tense and impatience great.'⁷⁷ Despite her level of political understanding there are no entries, however coded or oblique, of participation in, or knowledge of, active resistance. There are no entries at all during 1944, the year in which there was a brutal skirmish between the German occupying forces and the local resistance at La Motte Chateau in Le Chélar, on 5 and 6 July where over 70 resistance fighters were killed and hundreds injured and over 30 civilians killed and others injured.⁷⁸ There are no entries for either the local Liberation or that of Paris and one can speculate that she is unable to share in the joy of Liberation and in January 1945, journal entries indicate that she continued to articulate feelings of loss and waiting.⁷⁹

The vivid recordings in the journal shift our perceptions and understandings of the Jewish survivor experience, revealing how Haas articulates her experiences of the Occupation, which, while tied to the specificities of time and place in the Ardèche in 1942, take on a more universal character in their expression of loss, isolation and exile. This chapter argues that voices such as Haas have been under-represented in historical accounts and the study foregrounds the text of this journal in order to enact a process of

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Michael Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation. A Study of the Jewish Community at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

⁷⁷ Haas, 22 September 1942 and 9 June 1943.

⁷⁸ Notes by Michael Newman, 2003, papers held with journal and confirmed by Moorehead, *Village of Secrets*, p. 301.

⁷⁹ Haas, 3 January 1945.

recovery. The thematic approach used provides a useful reading strategy, in demonstrating that for Haas, waiting, loss and exile dominate and that these are interlinked with the separate but complementary concepts of action, initiative, agency, and political understanding. The central paradox of the journal remains that given the writer was aware of the destination of the convoys of deportees and the reality of the death camps, why did she take no action to protect either her husband, before he was arrested in September 1942, or herself, after the Free Zone was occupied in November 1942. The specificity of her subjective experiences remains the primary focus of the journal and the significance of this text is that it demonstrates the destabilising reach of loss and exile. Consequently, for Haas, the act of writing the diary became an act of resilience in maintaining her Jewish identity and, in thus ensuring her identity survival, writing became an act of resistance. The study argues that the interrogation of the text maps the potential for a nuanced awareness of the power of the dominant subjectivities of waiting, loss and exile which provide a gendered understanding for historiographical enquiry into the Jewish survivor experience.

The preceding chapters have examined notions of physical and bodily sensations as expressions of subjectivities in the face of the destabilising impact of the Occupation and the predominance of key thematic concepts of waiting, loss and exile that emerge in response. From looking at writers who give accounts of their flight or who write as an act of individual resistance and survival, we turn in the following two chapters to explore the experiences of Berthe Auroy and Denise Domenach. In the case of Auroy, we will explore the journal of one who moved from the position of *attentisme* in respect of the occupier, to taking small steps of resistance action. In the case of Domenach, the journal was written by a woman who became fully engaged in resistance activity. In both cases, the journals provide ample evidence to contest any impression given by existing historiography of the Occupation in France that the role of women was insignificant.

Chapter 3 — *Attentisme* or action? Berthe Auroy

The newspapers, radio and posters are silent about the mass arrests of Jews and communists, both mixed up in the same hatred. In certain neighbourhoods, especially in the 11th arrondissement, there have been huge round-ups. The area is surrounded, the police are posted at the metro exits, stopping pedestrians and cars and even going up into the stairways of the houses. All papers are checked and Jews and communists are arrested.¹

In this chapter, the theme of *attentisme* and its place within Occupation historiography is interrogated. Using a published journal as a source, it explores the ways in which *attentisme*, waiting for the outcome of the war before making a commitment, shapes the articulation of subjective experience. This chapter also argues that the voice of the older woman civilian as eyewitness is under-reported in the historiography of the period and by exploring Berthe Auroy's journal, *Jours de guerre*, the study performs an act of historical rescue.

It should be acknowledged, however, that Auroy is cited (although not in her own words) in Vidalenc's seminal text on the *exode*.² Alary, in his more recent work on the *exode*, cites her briefly, using her own words.³ Nevertheless, despite emphasising that the majority on the *exode* were women and children, in one section, Alary only references seven women out of sixty-nine sources, two of which are by women who were not on the *exode* but were working in a professional capacity as social workers or nurses, an important distinction because they remain observers not participants.⁴ In contrast, Cobb uses Auroy as a source for eyewitness comments on the Liberation of Paris, indicating that such under-reporting is now beginning to be addressed but that the act of recovery is still needed.⁵

This text has been selected firstly because it privileges the account of an older woman, a retired teacher, and secondly because the narrator is that of a woman moving beyond the exploration of writing as a form of resilience and consequently of resistance, as depicted by Haas in the previous chapter, to a position of small steps of clandestine action along the path of resistance engagement. The gendered narrative of this source

¹ Berthe Auroy, *Jours de guerre, Ma vie sous l'Occupation* (Montrouge: Bayard, 2008), p.179, journal entry dated September 1941.

² Jean Vidalenc, *L'Exode de mai-juin 1949* (Paris: PUF, 1957) p.277. See his note that Auroy's then unpublished manuscript was given to him by the Director of the *Archives Nationales*.

³ Eric Alary, *Exode* (Paris: Perrin, 2010), pp.326, 327.

⁴ Ibid., pp.195–246; see, for example, Anne Jacques, *Journal d'une Française* (Paris: Seuil, 1943); Gritou et Annie Vallotton, *C'était au Jour le Jour, Carnets 1940–1944* (Paris: Payot, 1995).

⁵ Matthew Cobb, *Eleven Days in August* (London: Simon and Shuster, 2013), pp.153, 261.

offers the potential for a further shift in our historical understanding of the spectrum from *attentisme* to acts of resistance and in particular of the fluidity of motivation for action which is illustrated by the focus on the articulation of the writer's subjectivities. The text offers information, insight and immediacy which can be hard to recapture in archival sources and is no longer possible to recover through oral testimony. Paying close attention to this journal gives it qualitative value as a historical source, providing further traces of the expression of the majority's initial response of *attentisme* to the Occupation. Auroy's journal was written contemporaneously but not published until 2008, providing the reader with the advantage of far greater biographical detail than was available with the unpublished texts previously explored.

The chapter turns, firstly, to offer that biographical detail in order for the text to be understood within the cultural, social and political context in which it was written between 1940 and 1944. Secondly, I consider the author's motivation for keeping the journal and the nature of the contemporaneity of the text before finally turning to an analysis of the themes and the reading strategy used to elucidate how the author articulates her shifting understanding of the historical situation she inhabits.

Berthe Auroy was born on 17 May 1880 in Bourges (Cher) where her father was a typesetter and compositor.⁶ She obtained a diploma in Primary School teaching in Bourges in 1900, and initially taught locally, until 1916 when she moved to Paris to teach first at the *Lycée de Versailles* and subsequently in 1919, at the *Lycée Jules Ferry* in the 9th *arrondissement*. In 1940, aged 60, at the time of writing her journal, she was completing her final days before retirement at an unidentified *lycée* in Chartres and was living in Paris at 90 Rue Lepic, in the 18th *arrondissement*, in Montmartre, near the *Moulin Rouge*.

Her text centres round the lives of herself, her older sister Jeanne and a number of friends. Jeanne had also been a teacher, neither of the two sisters had married and they maintained separate flats within a few hundred metres of each other in Paris. They also shared the long-term rental of a holiday cottage in the village of Vinerville (Eure and Loire), which would not have been unusual within their social milieu and which was to play a critical role in their ability to source food and supplies from the local countryside. Auroy was a member of the privileged middle class: well-read and well-travelled, she

⁶ Auroy, *Jours de guerre*, p.21. Introduction by Dominique Veillon and Anne-Marie Pathé.

played the piano, and counted contemporary artists and musicians amongst her friends.⁷ In particular, she had travelled to the USA and spoke English.

She had kept journals of her travels and, significantly for this study, was already a published author: during their teaching careers, she and Jeanne had written several books for children and she had separately worked on translations together with her friends, Helene Isserlis and Lois Perkins–Maréchal.⁸ Auroy and Lois had also co-authored a travel book about the USA.⁹ In contrast to the writers of the unpublished texts considered in previous chapters, Auroy was therefore not only a well-educated professional, an experienced teacher and translator but also a published author and a confident writer and this is illustrated in the fluency and immediacy of the prose and in its careful depiction of detail.

Auroy's close friend, Lois Perkins-Maréchal, was born in USA, came to France in 1919 and married Maurice Maréchal, whose son Jacques was taught by Auroy at the *Lycée Jules Ferry* in 1931. Lois and Auroy shared interests in the arts, literature and travel and went to New York together in 1934. When, in October 1940, Lois decided to return to the USA, Auroy missed Lois and made her motivation for keeping her journal explicit in her final paragraph:

The war will have lasted almost six years, six years which have seemed like twelve, so heavily has been the burden of suffering weighing on my shoulders.

And so, my war journal is finished, undertaken for the benefit of Lois, whom now that hostilities have ended, I confidently await her return.¹⁰

The Bayard edition used here is that of the original version, described as being written with the full force of her emotion, although given its length, only around 70 per cent has been published.¹¹ It is intriguing to know what has been omitted but there is no information on this available. A further motivation for keeping a journal was that as a teacher and published author, she used writing as a way of making sense of what was happening around her, by recording as accurately as possible the facts available to her, and her subjective response. This motivation for writing is evidenced by the fact that

⁷ Ibid., p.424

⁸ Ibid., pp.425, 426. Berthe and Jeanne Auroy, *Adaption of plays and fables for marionette shows for children* (Paris: Fernand Natan, 1930); Hélène Isserlis and Berthe Auroy; (transl) *Veluminaires d'Ivan Bilibine* (Paris: Boisvin, 1931); Lois Perkins-Maréchal, *Journal d'une écolière américaine en France*, adaption française, Berthe Auroy, (Paris: Fernand Natan, 1941)

⁹ Auroy, *Jours de guerre*, p.426; Lois Perkins-Maréchal, Berthe Auroy, *En route pour l'Amérique* (Paris: Fernand Nathan, 1935).

¹⁰ Auroy, *Jours de guerre*, p.412.

¹¹ Ibid., p.20.

she also included newspaper articles and cartoons in her text, adding her own comments, thoughts and feelings.¹² Claudel notes in his introduction that Auroy did not set out to write a book but simply to provide an account of her daily life for an absent friend, avoiding nothing, neither embellishing nor obscuring details and that this is what makes it a precious document, a view with which this study concurs.¹³ The text is written contemporaneously, and although the journal does not finish with the Liberation of France but, unusually, with the end of the war on 15 August 1945, for the purpose of this study, the period after 1944 will not be explored.

More is known about how the text was written than with the previous unpublished texts, as Auroy recorded that when she considered that the risk of denunciation was too great to continue writing, she put her eight exercise books in a metal box and buried them in the garden, where they remained until Spring 1944 when the house was requisitioned by German troops. She then hid them elsewhere until Liberation later in 1944.¹⁴ After December 1942, she wrote on scraps of paper which she sewed into a velvet cushion and, after Liberation, she put all the disparate pieces of the jigsaw together and edited them. There are gaps in the narrative because of the reasons outlined above, and there are also some inaccuracies of dating, for instance, that of Hitler's one and only brief, five-hour visit to Paris which she gives as 1941 instead of 1940.

This presents some difficulty, as it is hard to understand why she made such an error and it throws into question whether dates of other significant events are also inaccurate. However, it would seem to be explained by her own editing process, and a close reading of the text indicates no further major errors. Understandably, there are inaccuracies as a result of writing contemporaneously: for example, the figure of 25,000 given for the arrests at the *Vel d'Hiv* on 16 July 1942 is inflated and we now know should be 13,152. Similarly, she makes no mention of the transit camps such as Drancy nor Auschwitz as these were not known about by Auroy at the time of writing but she does write about The East and Upper Silesia and the journal must be read in the context of the uneven nature of knowledge about the destination of deportees.

Having established the contextual detail surrounding the production of the journal, we can now discuss the key themes covered in the text and explore what reading

¹² Ibid., pp.144 ff. She comments on a newspaper cutting of 17 December 1941 on the Order that Jews in the Occupied Zone be fined one thousand francs: 'A little Christmas present for the Jews in the Occupied zone from the Germans.'

¹³ Philippe Claudel, 'Introduction' in *ibid.*, p.9.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp.20 ff.

strategy can be most usefully employed to understand the author's articulation of responses to the position of *attentisme*. A major component of the text is the narrative of her friendship with the Isserlis family and their flight from Paris following Vichy's implementation of the anti-Semitic policies of the Third Reich, which this study argues is a further contributory factor in Auroy's move towards resistance activity. This text also provides valuable insight into the specificities of place; of the social, cultural and economic conditions which existed in 18th *arrondissement* Paris during the Occupation. However, as with the reading strategy adopted for exploration and analysis of the unpublished journal of Kate Haas in the previous chapter, I will adopt an approach that highlights the distinct but interconnected themes of exile and waiting, and how they connect with the related concepts of agency and initiative, to open out onto a broader political understanding of the lived situation, to materialise in Auroy's case in a form of resistance.

In the previous chapter, we saw that a sense of exile derived from a geographical dislocation, reinforced by a legal implementation that insisted on Haas's status as an alien. In Auroy's case, the sense of exile emerges from a different source, namely the subjective sense of feeling apart from others in the face of the arrival of an Occupying power which is now imposing its own mark on once familiar places. Writing in August 1940, when she returns to Chartres, where she had taught until two months before, Auroy writes:

Chartres, a German town. The grey uniforms of pilots mixed with the regular grey green uniforms everywhere. They came out of the hotels, the shops, the coaching inns, the brothels, on foot, on horseback, on cycles, in vans, it was raining Germans!

On the lycée, shamefully, a ten metre banner hung all along the main facade, reading in huge letters: "National Socialists Protection for French Refugees."

And the red and black flag with the swastika flew at the Head Teacher's window.¹⁵

She recounts how the *lycée* is full of whistling German soldiers, that her classroom has twenty grubby mattresses along the walls for refugees, that the Head Teacher's flat has been pillaged along with the belongings of the boarders, and that the German headquarters are based in the *Hotel de France* where she used to have coffee.¹⁶ The entry demonstrates that the wider constraints of the Occupation are articulated by bodily sensations, hearing whistling soldiers and reminders of drinking coffee. Her palpable

¹⁵ Ibid., p.98, 99.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.99.

sense of exile and displacement is revealed in her comment that the *lycée* staff had looked after the geraniums in the windows, only for the Germans to benefit.

In contrast to the sense of powerlessness that arise from these passages that deal with the arrival of an Occupying power, the concepts of agency and initiative are depicted in Auroy's text by her departure on the *exode* on 11 June 1940 where, in contrast to Haas, she made a decisive plan to leave and then spent the next few days packing carefully before burying one suitcase of silverware in the field behind her summer cottage.¹⁷ The theme of waiting is explicit from the opening entries of her fifty page account of her *exode* and in this respect is markedly similar to Haas in that she described being in Paris waiting to leave; in Chartres waiting for the car belonging to her friend Hélène Isserlis to collect her; when this does not arrive, waiting to hear from her sister and finally, waiting endlessly for a train.¹⁸

It should be noted how Auroy consistently uses physical and bodily sensations as a way of articulating her subjective experiences, a trait shared with both writers, Surillet and Haas, considered in the preceding chapters. Significantly, the fact that subjectivity is expressed primarily in terms of physicalities applies equally as much to writers such as Haas and Auroy who are confident in their prose style as to Surillet who, despite being unused to writing, articulates her experiences of the *exode* in markedly similar expressions that highlight the memory of bodily sensations. Surillet's account of arriving at her final destination parallels that of Auroy below:

I let myself fall into an armchair, all energy spent to recount the story of my painful journey. I asked only for a little warm soup if there was any left and some water, just water to drink! Mme B made up a bed and with real delight, I took off all my clothes which I had been wearing for the last four days. The sheets were clean, the silence exquisite.¹⁹

However, while Auroy's text can clearly be linked to those considered in previous chapters through the themes of exile and loss, it differs in the space it accords to Auroy's developing sense of broader political understanding of the implications of the Occupation, and the actions she took in the light of that understanding. Her journal shows the connections and the fractured spaces between protest, revolt and resistance activity and reveals her expressed ambivalences, fears, and increasing confidence, as she took the steps on her path from civil disobedience to resistance action. The absence

¹⁷ Ibid., p.40; see also Alary, *Exode*, p.144. June 11, 12, 13, were the busiest days of the *exode* during which almost 2 million people left Paris.

¹⁸ Auroy, *Jours de guerre*, p.4.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.60.

of the heroic narrative or *résistantialisme* is noteworthy: instead her identity is expressed by self-effacement, self-deprecation and wry humour.

In that sense, the diary entries of 1942 and 1943 take on a great importance, because it was during this period Auroy documented the political realities of the identification and subsequent arrest and deportation of the Jewish community in Paris. I have chosen a set of incidents that are marked both by compelling writing, and the role they play in documenting the fractured journey which Auroy makes from *attentisme* as a passive bystander to engagement in clandestine acts of resistance. The text offers us the chance to understand this shift in gendered terms, and enhances our understanding of a crucial aspect of the history of the Occupation, revealing the nuanced manner in which motivation for action developed. These entries also highlight the changed social and cultural specificities of Paris, which in June 1942 was a different city to the one Auroy had left on her *exode* in June 1940. The city's transformation was marked, and she documented the new and visible specificity of a place both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time, where road signs were in German, occupying soldiers patrolled the streets, and the German High Command controlled public buildings and flew the swastika flag. She also noted the long queues outside food shops as a result of food shortages and rationing.²⁰ An additional, visibly specific change, derived from the decree of 29 May 1942 which made it compulsory for Jews over the age of six years old to wear the yellow Star of David and which came into force on 7 June 1942. Although the wearing of the yellow star was not, of course, specific to Paris, it would nevertheless have been strikingly visible in Paris which had one of the largest Jewish communities in France.²¹

This decree marked a further step in the policy of the identification of Jews, which had begun in the Occupied Zone on 22 October 1940 with the stamp *Juif* on identity cards.²² This was followed on 7 February 1942 by the curfew for Jews from 8pm to 6am.²³ Visibly specific to Paris was the policy that Jews wearing yellow stars were only

²⁰ Ibid., pp.137, 138, for an account of queuing at 5 am outside the butcher, in the dark, and the freezing cold, trying to shelter from the snow and the wind in January 1941.

²¹ Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940–1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.359 makes the point that Vichy did not immediately follow this measure unilaterally imposed by the Germans, more out of fear of public reaction than concern for the Jews.

²² Ibid., p.359. The definition of *Juif* included race and meant anyone of the Jewish religion or having three Jewish grandparents or two if the spouse was Jewish. The policy of stamping identity and ration cards was subsequently adopted by Vichy in December 1942.

²³ Ibid., p.359. By the time the deportations had begun in July 1942, the Jews of Paris had been excluded from participation in normal daily life and forbidden to own bicycles and radios, allowed to shop only between 3pm and 4pm, banned from cinemas, restaurants, libraries, public gardens and sports fields.

allowed to travel in the last carriage of each metro train.²⁴ That the introduction of this policy was a significant factor in Auroy's broader political understanding of the Vichy regime is evidenced by the details she noted about the wearing of the yellow star by her friends and her concerns for the welfare of children, adding: 'I am ashamed that humanity has sunk to such depths.'²⁵

Auroy's friendship with Hélène Isserlis occupies a key role in the narrative and our understanding of the text is enhanced by further contextual detail. Hélène had arrived from Russia around 1895 together with her friend Mania. They had both qualified as doctors, married two brothers Alexander and Grégoire Isserlis, also Russian Jews, and by 1940 were well integrated into Parisian society. During the period Auroy spent as governess to Dinette Isserlis, she developed a close friendship with Dinette's parents, Hélène and Grégoire Isserlis, and was also welcomed into the wider family and knew Dinette's cousin, Tamara Isserlis. In June 1942, Tamara, aged 24, had completed her studies in medicine in Paris and was due to submit her thesis at the end of the month. Tamara's parents, Mania and Alexander, had moved to the Unoccupied Zone, and were living near Nice.

Auroy's journal entry for 5 June 1942 recorded a discussion with her friend, Hélène, who suggested that:

The Germans will not go as far as to impose a yellow armband as that would raise the indignation of the French, and that in Belgium the measure did not last long because the Aryans also wore yellow armbands as a form of protest. One could not believe in such wrong, when it was a beautiful day and there was some real milk in one's coffee.²⁶

Auroy documented that on 7 June 1942, Dinette, aged 28, wore three yellow stars, one over her heart with a tricoloured ribbon to affirm her French nationality and one on her bag and one on her umbrella. Once in the street, she brandished her umbrella at a group of German soldiers who ostentatiously turned away. Auroy then commented on why Dinette wasn't arrested and that her cousin Tamara was not so fortunate, recording on June 1942:

Tamara had planned to go to a concert and because Jews were subject to the curfew after 8 pm, she planned to remove her yellow star and should she be asked for her papers, she would leave her identity card with its "Juive" stamp at home. Unfortunately, she had the terrible idea, just like Dinette, of wearing a tricoloured ribbon which drew her to the attention of a German officer, just as she was about to get into the *first* carriage. The officer seized her roughly by the arm, and

²⁴ Auroy, *Jours de guerre*, p.229. She notes accurately that there were no official decrees or notices, that it was left to the ticket collector to inform passengers of this new measure.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.227.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.226.

Tamara had the unfortunate reflex of trying to defend herself, without realising who had grabbed hold of her. The German pulled off the tricoloured ribbon and asked to see her papers. Realising that she did not have her identity card and was by then sitting down, he shouted at her “get up — a dirty Jew has no right to sit down. It’s the Eastern front for you” and he mimed being shot. She spent the night in a dark basement with 600 others who had been arrested, in appallingly overcrowded conditions. The following morning, they were all taken to Tourelles, a former army barracks by the Porte des Lilas. I don’t know how she managed to make a telephone call to her friend who informed her Aunt Hélène.²⁷

It is at this juncture in the narrative that Auroy documented how she decided to take a small step of her own. She noted that many of those arrested with Tamara were not even Jewish but had wanted to show their support for Jews, by also wearing a yellow star made of paper. She added that she, herself, had made a handkerchief in the form of a yellow star with a black outline to wear in the breast pocket of her jacket. Her comments reveal the significance of the nuances and ambiguities and uncertainties surrounding her small act of civil disobedience: recording that *if* she had worn it and displayed it ostentatiously that she would have faced being arrested. She explained that Hélène had sent her a telegram to say that they could not accept her gift of a new handkerchief and to come without it.²⁸ Her response is articulated in her comment that: ‘Et je me suis tenue tranquille.’²⁹ This should be translated as meaning both that she kept out of everything and that she remained silent. She simply wrote that she accepted the advice in the telegram from her Jewish friend and, with this comment, she is making a statement that she will not take the action Dinette and Tamara and many others had taken and it demonstrates a clear example in June 1942 of her position of caution and *attentisme*. For Auroy, at this stage, the extent of her form of protest about the compulsory wearing of the yellow star is this carefully recorded example of her own small step, the making of her yellow star handkerchief and finally not wearing it. The uniqueness of the individual’s experience and the ambiguity of her actions will be recalled when Auroy takes other decisions in the future. She learnt that she herself risked the same fate as Tamara, had she displayed openly her own hand-made yellow star handkerchief, but was protected, ironically, by a telegram from Tamara’s aunt, her friend Hélène. This detailed incident emphasises her sense of danger from the possible arrest for a non-violent gesture of solidarity towards Jews. It alerts the reader, who was intended to be her close friend Lois (who had left France for the USA), but is today the

²⁷ Ibid., p.230. Tourelles Barracks on Boulevard Mortier, Paris, was used by the Germans as a transit centre for departures to the East.

²⁸ Ibid., pp.230–231.

²⁹ Ibid., p.23.

contemporary reader of the published text, to the risks Auroy faced in her own country, in the capital city, in her own neighbourhood and to the feelings of being an exile in her own country.

The previous chapter considered journal writing as an act of resilience which became an act of resistance for the author. Close reading of Auroy's text results in an interpretation of the act of writing the journal as similarly an act of resistance, as it is carried out clandestinely but, in contrast to Haas, Auroy includes a significant amount of content which would put her at risk of arrest if expressed in a public place. An example of this is how, in winter 1940, she described in detail the anti-Semitic and anti-British propaganda posters on Parisian walls and commented that they contained nothing but ugliness, hatred and cruelty, that no one believed them and that in spite of the death penalty for those who defaced such sacred posters, one saw from time to time, scrawled all over them, "*Vive de Gaulle!*".³⁰ Later in this chapter, further instances to substantiate the interpretation of her journal writing as an act of resistance will be cited in her comments on *Maréchal* Pétain, while the act of journal writing as an act of resistance can also be found in the notion of this text as a "witness text": that is one where the writer reacts immediately to events by writing.³¹ An analysis of the text reveals that Auroy, through the act of writing and expressing her thoughts, feelings and commentary on political events, consolidated her opposition and resistance to the Vichy regime, in the process providing the contemporary reader with a resistance discourse.³² The act of considering the wearing of a yellow star in public as a non-Jew must be seen in this specific context as an act of refusal, revolt or civil disobedience, often a precursor to resistance activity.³³

On 9 June 1942, the text shows that Auroy continued to consider acts of civil disobedience, writing about the prison visit Dinette had made to her cousin Tamara in

³⁰ Ibid., p.127; see Dominique Veillon, *La Collaboration, Textes et débats* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1984) and Pierre Bourget and Charles Lacretelle, *Sur les murs de Paris, 1940–1944* (Paris: Hachette, 1959) for discussion of posters.

³¹ Debra Kelly, 'Lived experience past, reading experience present' in Atack and Lloyd (eds.), *Framing narratives of the Second World War and occupation in France*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p.123.

³² Sybil Oldfield, paper given at Recounting Resistance Conference, University of Sussex, 15.05.14. For a wider discussion of this issue, see S. Oldfield, *Thinking against the Current, Literature and Political Resistance* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013). Jean Guéhenno, *Journal des années noires, 1940–1944* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947) can be interpreted as a diary which is an act of resistance. Guéhenno received the *Médaille de la Résistance*. Translated into English for the first time by David Ball, *Diary of the Dark Years, 1940–1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

³³ H.R. Kedward, paper given at Recounting Resistance Conference, University of Sussex, 15.05.14.

Tourelles prison. Auroy described the reported detail of the other prisoners arrested for wearing a yellow star, revealing the extent of such revolt in Paris in June 1942: all the students in the final year at Sévigné College, including one girl who had stuck yellow stars on her belt to read the word 'Victory'.³⁴ Other non-Jewish women wearing yellow stars had written 'Breton', 'Aryan', 'Honorary Jew' and 'Christian.'³⁵ Tamara herself was reported to be in good spirits and working in the sick bay, and hoping that she would be released on 30 June to present her thesis at the University.³⁶

However, Auroy then recorded that on 18 June visits were stopped and they learnt that Tamara would be transferred to another camp on 22 June and she writes: 'I refuse to believe that Tamara will be deported to the East, it would be too terrible.'³⁷

Auroy documented in her journal the attempts made by the Isserlis family to contact those who were in positions of influence to secure Tamara's release, and in particular for her to be able to submit her thesis on 30 June 1942, all of which proved to be futile. She commented that 'Nothing had stopped Tamara from climbing into a truck to be deported to Upper Silesia on 22 June.'³⁸ Auroy reports that they had not known that ransom money might have secured Tamara's release, as 5000 francs had done so for the fiancée of one of Tamara's fellow prisoners who was on the truck and was then allowed to go free.³⁹ Tamara and 65 other prisoners were deported from Tourelles during the night of 21/22 June 1942.⁴⁰

Tamara Isserlis died in Auschwitz.⁴¹ Her final letter, sent from the train, was delivered by SNCF workers from Vitry-le-François (Marne) and dated 22 June 1942.

Auroy does not articulate the emotional impact on her of Tamara's deportation, but her gradual transition from bystander to *résistante* can be interpreted by close reading of the text which reveals that she made more frequent comments in June 1942 on anti-Semitic propaganda, for instance, that the poster in the metro showing a Jew wearing a yellow star pick-pocketing an Aryan who is wearing a yellow star in solidarity was an

³⁴ Auroy, *Jours de guerre*, p.418. This was Jo Cardin, who spent three months in Drancy.

³⁵ For an account of this see: Francoise Siefert, *J'ai voulu porter l'étoile jaune* (Paris: Laffont, 2010).

³⁶ Auroy, *Jours de guerre*, p.232; Dominique Veillon, historian and editor of the published *Jours de guerre* (Paris: Bayard, 2008) meeting with Veillon in Paris, 20 June 2014, confirmed that the thesis had been submitted posthumously and remains available in the University medical library. Tamara's medical degree was awarded posthumously in 1947.

³⁷ Auroy, *Jours de guerre*, p.234.

³⁸ Ibid., p.237.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.418.

⁴¹ Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, Yad Vashem, obtained in Holocaust Museum, Berlin, November 2013; further details of her arrest are corroborated by www.memorialdelashoah.org.

idiotic poster which could only alarm five or six year olds or those with a learning difficulty.⁴²

It is her recording of warnings of the increasing danger that the Jewish community faced in Occupied Paris in July 1942 which shapes the narrative structure of Auroy's growing engagement with consideration of acts of clandestine resistance, albeit somewhat fearfully, noting the preparations for Hélène and Grégoire Isserlis to flee Paris to the safety of the Unoccupied Zone, in response to which she articulated her sense of loss connected with the physical pleasures derived from food:

Who would have thought that this lunch on Friday 3 July would be the last that we would have in this dear home. Hélène had specially made me a magnificent *galette* covered with strawberries from the garden.⁴³

However, when Hélène and Dinette left their home to come to stay in her flat in Paris, she expressed her fear that the constant comings and goings would attract the attention of the concierge and other neighbours. She was also anxious that her friends conceal their yellow star when passing the concierge, and noted with approval that Grégoire positioned his hat over his star.⁴⁴ After three days staying at her flat, she wrote on 5 July 1942 that it had been decided that it would be unwise to prolong their stay and that Hélène and Dinette would stay with her sister who lived opposite.⁴⁵ Auroy had, however ambivalently, now undertaken her first act of resistance, in clandestinely sheltering Jews who did not have the right to stay away from their registered address. The penalty for Auroy, had she been denounced or arrested, could have been imprisonment or deportation. The journal records other ambiguities such as that there was briefly talk of her going to Dijon to discuss with a *passeur* (usually, but not always, a member of the resistance who would help people cross the demarcation line), employed by the railways who was able to smuggle his customers into a sealed wagon with the undoubted knowledge of the Germans, and she commented ironically: 'our occupiers are of course incorruptible.' In the event, it was decided that she should not go to Dijon, as the *passeur* did not know her.⁴⁶

Despite recording her fears that Dinette had left her yellow star visible at the very moment that the concierge went up in the lift, she then wrote: 'I was determined to

⁴² Auroy, *Jours de guerre*, p.239.

⁴³ Ibid., p.240.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.242.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.243.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.243.

accompany my friends to Bourges, discreetly without letting it be known that I knew them, despite the *passeur* discouraging this.’⁴⁷ Although playing no active role in their escape, and sitting in a different carriage to Hélène, Grégoire, Dinette and the *passeur*, Auroy’s role, I would suggest, should be interpreted both as an offer of emotional support to her friends and simultaneously as her own act of revolt in passively participating in clandestine activity, moving her further along the path of resistance activity. Inevitably, she documented that her fear re-surfaced on the morning of 9 July 1942 at Paris’ Austerlitz Station as the *passeur* had said that leaving the station was the most potentially dangerous moment, and again, at Vierzon, when they changed trains, she wrote about her unease at seeing Germans everywhere.⁴⁸ However, on joining her friends at the station restaurant in Bourges, she remarked that ‘We were served an ample meal which was quite delicious. We all relaxed a little.’⁴⁹ Again it is clear that her account is marked by recourse to a memory of physical and bodily sensation, and this is further illustrated in her description that before her friends left her she sat worn out and exhausted on a bench, with a heart full of anguish and how the following morning, 10 July 1942, after an anxious night, she waited for the promised phone call due at 8 am to confirm that they had safely crossed the demarcation line. Her throat remained constricted until finally, at 1 pm, the phone rang, all was reported to be well, and at that point she described relaxing and bursting into tears.⁵⁰

We can view this incident as a further step on her route to resistance, revealing as it does the fractures and discontinuities involved in moving away from the position of an *attentiste* bystander. It is an honest and revealing portrait of the very real fears, ambiguities and ambivalences of a sixty-year-old retired school teacher who as a civil servant loyally served the state throughout her working life before deciding to become involved in illegal and clandestine activity.

Auroy continued to record her political understanding of events, commenting on 9 July 1942 on the rumours that she hoped will not happen, that measures against the Jews may extend to the Unoccupied Zone in two or three months.⁵¹ On 15 July 1942 she describes at length the *Vel d’Hiv* round up of Jews which took place in the 15th arrondissement of Paris and, as already mentioned, gives the number as 25,000 foreign

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.248.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.247.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.248.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.249.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.252.

Jews. The notes in the text suggest that this figure was inflated as the result of Parisians' horror at such an event and correct the figures to 12,884 of which 4,051 were children, 5,802 women and 3,031 men.⁵² The date of the entry is also incorrect, the round-up took place on 16 July at 4 a.m. The explanation for this error is presumably her own editing policy, discussed earlier, which illustrates that diaries cannot be relied on for factual accuracy but are invaluable for providing fragmentary, raw, unedited material, such as her observation that the police in charge of the operations were French 'because the French government had cowardly agreed to undertake this sinister task.'⁵³

A further detail illustrates the ambiguity and ambivalences of all sectors of the French population during the Occupation, in that she noted that some police had wept at the tragic scenes they witnessed and others had the compassion to warn some of those Jews on the list the day before the round-up, although they were often picked up later before reaching the demarcation line. She was very aware of the fate of those who resisted the Vichy regime, and this should be interpreted as exploring her own ambivalences and fears about the penalties for resistance action: 'Of course, the police who had shown some evidence of humanity have been arrested.'⁵⁴ Finally, she commented that the newspapers and radio were silent about the round-up, because as she added dryly: 'such an event seems perhaps negligible to the Germans.'⁵⁵

Further instances of protest, refusal, and civil disobedience are evidenced in her articulation of her views about Pétain in August 1942. Clearly, these are not actions but should be considered as further steps on her path to resistance. On 15 August 1942 she commented that the French had lost their sense of the absurd as the latest news was that crusades were being organised with Vichy as the Holy Saint and Pétain as the god to be worshipped. After the Wheat Crusades, where some regions had wanted to give the Maréchal a presentation sample of their first harvest, there had then been the Rose Crusades and she speculated that they were looking forward to the Carrot, Onion and Egg Crusades and suggested:

⁵² For an important discussion of the complicity of the Vichy regime in the *Vel d'Hiv* round up, see: Serge Klarsfeld, 'La livraison par Vichy des Juifs de zone libre dans les plans SS de déportation des Juifs de France', in M.L. Cohen et E. Malo (eds.), *Les Camps de Sud-Ouest de la France* (Toulouse: Editions Privat, 1994), pp.144 ff.

⁵³ James Hinton, *Nine War Time Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.7; Auroy, *Jours de guerre*, p.253.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp.255, 256; see also, K. Taieb, *Je vous écris du Vel d'Hiv, Les lettres retrouvées* (Paris: Laffont, 2011).

⁵⁵ Auroy, *Jours de guerre*, p.253.

Who knows if I shouldn't find myself a place on one of these crusades, perhaps the Parsley Crusade? We have got some wonderful parsley in our garden. In that way, I would have a magnificent opportunity to go into the unoccupied zone and meet up with my friends in Arles, having first laid my parsley at the feet of the Head of State.⁵⁶

By Easter 1943, the narrative shape of the diary has shifted to reveal how she had made the transition from fear and ambivalence, and acts of disobedience, to clandestine resistance. She stayed for five weeks with her friends Hélène and Grégoire Isserlis who were living in the South, in Raphèle-les-Arles (Provence). Mania Isserlis (Helene's sister, Tamara's mother) was by then working with *L'Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants*, a Jewish children's charity which also operated a clandestine network to rescue children.⁵⁷ Mania had been able to obtain a false identity card for Hélène's sister, Mlle. Sacha Schwarz, nicknamed Titika, who had been a refugee in Cahors (Lot) for over a year and, not being naturalised, was considered as a foreign Jew, and at very real risk of being arrested as the Germans had occupied the southern Unoccupied Zone in November 1942.⁵⁸

The tone of Auroy's narrative changes here to a more self-assured account, dated Easter 1943, Provence, where she recounts how she had been offered the opportunity for what she considered quite a dangerous mission.⁵⁹ She was asked to take a false identity card to Titika in Cahors and then accompany her to Arles, from where Titika would travel to Nice.⁶⁰ Auroy records in detail how she concealed the false identity card inside a book about rearing rabbits, wrapped the book up in paper and tied it with string and put it in an old shopping bag. She planned how to avoid being caught with two identity cards, in case of police searches on the train; she would have casually left the shopping bag on or under the seat and would deny all knowledge of it, if asked. In the event, the journey passed off without incident, and she arrived at Cahors late at night, carrying her hidden identity card, and found a hotel room because, as she commented, it would not do to spend the night asleep on a bench. However, at this point, the narrative is fractured and her fears resurface. She describes sleeping badly, worrying about being subjected to one of the frequent police night time hotel searches, despite having hidden

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 256.

⁵⁷ Hélène Berr, *Journal 1942–1944*, English translation (London: Maclehose Press, London), p.289. The O.S.E. was incorporated as the "health" section of the Union General des Israelites de France and through its clandestine activity, only one Jewish child in ten died during the Occupation.

⁵⁸ Auroy, *Jours de guerre*, p.276.

⁵⁹ Dominique Veillon believes that Auroy did not belong to an organised resistance network. Meeting, Paris, 20 June, 2014.

⁶⁰ Auroy, *Jours de guerre*, p.276.

the book at the bottom of the wardrobe under a heap of pillows and blankets. She records that her plan, in the face of any police questioning, was the same: to simply say that she had no idea about an identity card.⁶¹

Her act of resistance, of being in possession of a false identity card on a journey facing severe penalties if caught, is not articulated as an act of heroism. She openly describes her fears and anxieties, and the details of clandestine action, careful planning, meticulous precautions and anticipation of every possible risk.

The following morning, she recounts how she went to meet Titika in her lodgings and when she told her that she had come to fetch her and had brought her a false identity card, Titika almost collapsed, and protested that she did not have the right to leave the local area.⁶² At this point, the narrative shifts back to the previous confident tone, and is articulated in Auroy's evident determination to convince Titika to leave. The text demonstrates that Auroy is single minded and creative, and invents a cover story for the landlady, that Titika was going away for a few days to see her sister who is ill in a local village (which she had identified on a map). The dialogue is forceful and is worth quoting in its entirety as it articulates her growing sense of certainty both in her wry humour and the extent of her progress from ambivalence to acts of protest to acts of resistance:

Once alone with Titika, with the door of her room locked, I got out the false identity card which Titika examined, trembling. "You see, I said to her, you are now called Henriette Vallauzette, you were born on... at ... Learn your new name by heart and practice your new signature". The poor girl, clearly overwhelmed, covered scraps of paper in shaking "Vallauzette" which I then burnt in the fireplace. She finally packed a few belongings and some clothes, abandoning the rest for fear of rousing the suspicions of her landlady. Then, the false identity card had to be taken to the Police Station to obtain the visa for travel. Titika, overcome with terror, objected; "But the Police Commissioner knows me, I have to take my foreigners' identity card in to the Police Station on regular times... He will recognise me".

"I will go there instead of you."

"He is bound to recognise my photo."

"Do you think that he spends his time memorising all the photos?"

I took the identity card in the next morning, and the desk clerk told me that I would not be able to pick it up until 7 pm. Poor Titika, she thought that all was lost and spent the day in anguish. Before 7 pm we were sitting in a café, in front of the Police Station. I left Titika nursing her drink and her terror, to go and collect the identity card, but when I reached the office inside, I realised to my horror that I simply could not remember the name on the identity card. I mumbled

⁶¹ Ibid., p.277.

⁶² Ibid., p.277.

an excuse and returned to the café where Titika was very fortunately able to refresh my memory.⁶³

This lengthy citation demonstrates how Auroy's decision to undertake acts of resistance exists alongside her fears and ambivalence, and how her acts of protest have migrated into resistance. Once she is confronted with the fears and ambivalences of another, she becomes confident about her own choice of resistance action and is able to articulate this new-found confidence using wry wit and self-deprecation.

Auroy notes that the journey began very early the following morning and was the worst time, as it was absolutely critical that Titika was not recognised at the station or on the train. She recounts that despite her terrified companion looking like a hunted animal, she rallied when the German officer came through the train checking papers, and at Arles, the family was there to meet them at the station. Titika then left two hours later for Nice where Mania Isserlis was busy looking for lodgings for her.⁶⁴ Auroy's confidence in her resistance activity and her sense of her own contribution is revealed in her comment in summer 1943 that Mme. Vallauzette was now living without any problems in a quiet retirement home in the Puy de Dome, still using the name Vallauzette and waiting until normal life should resume.⁶⁵

This chapter on Berthe Auroy's published journal has again investigated the distinct but interconnected themes of exile, loss and waiting and the concepts of agency and initiative, and found parallels with the two previous texts, in the way in which subjectivity is articulated by means of the physicality of bodily sensation. Common treatment of the *exode* and the way in which each participant's experiences on the *exode* are conveyed, has been found in all three journal-writers, whether confident in their use of language (Haas and Auroy) or unused to writing (Surillet). The exploration of the published diary of Berthe Auroy, a retired law-abiding sixty-year-old teacher, has charted her fractured journey of ambivalence, doubt and fear in the development of her political understanding from that of an *attentiste* bystander to protest, revolt, and civil disobedience and the undertaking of acts of resistance. This narrative attempts to redress the gendered imbalance in the historiography of the period and while clearly limited to one journal, the gendered narrative of this source has demonstrated the potential for a further shift in our historical understanding of *attentisme*. This chapter has indicated that

⁶³ Ibid., p.279.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.279.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.280.

such a position need not remain fixed but over time could move from gestures of civil disobedience to acts of protest and engagement in resistance actions, if not to membership of a resistance network. The preceding chapters have explored journals in which each writer has a different stance: taking no action (Surillet), writing as an act of resilience and thus of resistance (Haas) and taking small steps of resistance action (Auroy). The study has thus considered three sites of formal historiographical enquiry: the *exode*, the Jewish survivor experience, and *attentisme*. In the final chapter, we turn to the question of fully-developed resistance engagement and explore the ramifications of a gendered approach to resistance narrative in the journal of Denise Domenach.

Chapter 4 — Student or *résistante*? Denise Domenach

We live constantly under the threat of death. If you take the first street on the right, you might be caught in a round-up. If you take the first street on the left, you might be hit by a bombing raid, without mentioning all the rest that is going on that won't be mentioned here.¹

As has been seen in earlier chapters, this study contends that women's voices have been under-represented in the historiography of the Occupation and, despite some notable exceptions such as Lucie Aubrac and Bertie Albrecht, this is especially true of women working as *agents de liaison*.² Wieworka stated as recently as 2015 that women's role in the resistance has been neglected for too long.³ Although this comment has been interpreted here as meaning women's role as *agents de liaison*, where given the clandestine nature of such work, the lack of formal archival records and perhaps most significantly, the self-deprecating decision, post Liberation, by many women to focus on family and home rather than talk or write about their experiences, it has inevitably resulted in the absence of a significant body of scholarly work on women as *agents de liaison*. Whilst Wieworka's statement clearly advocates further research on women's under-representation in the resistance and validates studies such as this one, it should be viewed in the more nuanced context of the existing significant French and British historiography which was discussed in detail in the Introduction to this thesis.⁴ By using journals as critical sources, this study offers a platform for shifting frames of reference and addressing the under-representation on women's narrative in British and French Occupation historiography. This study now moves from an exploration of those women who chose not to become involved in resistance activity (Surillet) or who used writing as a form of resilience which in turn became a form of resistance (Haas) or who took small steps along the path of resistance involvement (Auroy) to conclude with an exploration of *Une jeune fille libre*, a journal published in 2005, written by Denise Domenach who became an *agent de liaison* in Lyon. The study will consider the extent

¹ Denise Domenach-Lallich, *Une jeune fille libre. Journal 1939–1944* (Paris: Editions des Arènes, 2005), p.118 entry dated 22 February 1943. The edition used for this study has a useful introduction by Christine Mital.

² Lucie Aubrac, *Ils partiront dans l'ivresse* (Paris: Seuil 1984); Mireille Albrecht, *Berty* (Paris: Laffont, 1986). Other high profile women agents de liaison include: Madeleine Riffaud, Marie-Madeleine Fourcade, Geneviève de Gaulle-Anthonioz, Germaine Tillon, and Helene Berr who have all published in their own right.

³ Olivier Wieworka, *Histoire de la Résistance, 1940–1945* (Paris: Perrin, 2015); interview with author in la Croix, 20.05.15.

⁴ See p.16

of the discontinuities between what is known about the author's resistance activity and what she chose to articulate in the journal and will use close textual analysis and a thematic approach to examine the identities the author performs, firstly as a student and then as a *résistante*. The writer's voice will be privileged throughout in order to ensure clarity for her articulation of the different subjectivities of student and *résistante*. The detailed use of the text will also serve to address the under-reporting of this gendered narrative in Occupation historiography. Within this broad thematic analysis of identities, the study has deliberately adopted a chronological approach in an attempt to demonstrate how the journal reveals significant shifts in the author's gendered subjectivity from 1939 to 1944 and how the chronological development of the Occupation reflects such changing subjectivities. It must be emphasised that this chapter offers my own reading and qualitative interpretation of the text in order to provide an insight into the lived experience of a *résistante* and to reveal how a gendered identity is constructed. I argue that it is the specificities of the text which are of importance and which will be considered in this chapter, which begins by exploring Domenach's motivations for keeping a journal throughout the period 1939–1944 and places this act within its broader context.

Domenach's journal was written contemporaneously, beginning with an entry in November 1939, where she stated, at the age of 15, that this was her own true, personal and private notebook. She addressed a putative reader, requesting that if by chance this reader had already read some of the entries, that she trusted to their discretion not to judge her on the basis of what they had read. She then asks that the reader simply close the notebook and go on their way.⁵ The opening entry on 10 November 1939 is explicit that the reason for keeping a journal was that Domenach felt isolated because of the war and wanted to confide her woes.⁶ In 1943, she repeated the same reason for keeping the journal, adding that although she found it helpful to write down all her nonsense, she never re-read her entries.⁷ The journal ends on 7 September 1944, shortly before her 20th birthday, following the Liberation of Hauterives (Drome), where she was staying with her family.

It seems clear then that Domenach was using her diary as a space in which she could confide her emotions and experiences of that instant, and as a means to break with

⁵ Domenach-Lallich, *Une jeune fille libre*, p.7.

⁶ Ibid., p.8.

⁷ Ibid., p.118.

sensations of isolation.⁸ There is little sense that this will provide the writer with a later reflection on how she is changed by or grows through the experiences she shares, so in emphasising the text as a process of gendered identity construction, we are to some extent reading it against its grain. An understanding of the context, and especially the position of the writer within her family and the social context of Lyon in 1939, is therefore needed to further justify the focus, highlighting as it does the journal's place within Domenach's wider self-discovery through language and discourse.

Denise Domenach was born on 10 October 1924, the third of eight children and the eldest daughter of Louis and Germaine Domenach, who lived comfortably in Lyon. Her mother was from an affluent family and devoted herself to husband, family and home: by 1939, her children ranged in age from 18 months to 18 years. Domenach's father was an engineer and director of an electricity company in Lyon. Her maternal grandfather, Louis Mallez, who had made his fortune in electricity, had been a Captain in the artillery under Pétain at Verdun and remained a Pétainiste until the Liberation, writing to his son-in-law to express his disapproval of the activities of his grandchildren during the Occupation.⁹ He lived in Bourg-en-Bresse (Ain) 70 kilometres north east of Lyon together with his wife and also owned a large villa on the Cote d'Azur where Domenach and her family spent their summer holidays. Her paternal grandfather, in contrast, had been brought up on the railways and was very proud that his son was the first in his family to go on to higher education.¹⁰ Domenach attended a local Catholic school until she was excluded for drawing a cartoon of her Latin teacher who was a respected cleric. She was then sent to Cours Belmont in Lyon, which provided both an academic education and a respected Headmistress, and where she also discovered that life held other possibilities than becoming a wife and mother. It was here that she developed a love of words and of the French language which was to help her to establish the basis for future identity performance.¹¹

Further social context is needed as the journal is not explicit why Domenach's father, Louis, who was a staunch Catholic and sent all his sons to the local Jesuit College, chose not to support Pétain after the armistice, despite the advice of Cardinal

⁸ To avoid confusion with other members of the family, the author will be referred to as Denise throughout.

⁹ Domenach-Lallich, *Une jeune fille libre*, p.vi.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp.175, 176.

¹¹ Ibid., p.178.

Gerlier, the archbishop of Lyon.¹² Louis is described as a Dreyfusard and a Republican and a man of principle and freedom of thought.¹³ The family was unconventional in that on the wider political stage, they welcomed Léon Blum and the Popular Front government in 1936 and, in respect of personal politics, the Domenach children were allowed to talk at the dinner table, provided that they spoke one at a time and were able to argue their point of view. The main subjects of conversation were politics and, on Sunday after Mass, religion.¹⁴ Louis also had a policy in his family, that rather than each member being given their own individual ration of bread (as was common in many families), it was up to each one to share: that was how one learnt about fraternity. Domenach recorded that she agreed with his views and it is clear from the journal entries both that she absorbed his values and that he provided her with a powerful role model of ‘thinking against the current’.¹⁵ Before the declaration of war, Louis travelled several times a year to Germany for business and commented that he could not collaborate with people who burnt books by Voltaire and Victor Hugo.¹⁶ During the Occupation, Louis, although never active in the Resistance, was one of the anonymous French citizens who ensured its existence by covering its activities with his silence. He was aware but never asked questions of one of his employees, an engineer, André Bollier, who was frequently absent or had changed his appearance.¹⁷ He was also aware that Bollier was involved in the resistance group *Combat*, and until June 1944 succeeded in running a clandestine printing press which published both *Combat* and *Témoignage Chrétien*.¹⁸ Domenach most frequently mentioned her father and elder brother Jean-Marie — who were also *résistants* — in her journal.

The context highlights several features that are essential to an analysis of the text, including Domenach’s evident enjoyment of language and discourse, the value placed on education, the significance of her father and brother as role models and her emphasis on establishing an identity outside the home. The analysis will therefore focus on the ways the text coheres around the articulation of identity, and will examine the identities

¹² Ibid., p.166; W.D. Halls, ‘Catholics, the Vichy Interlude and After’, in Fishman et. al. (eds.), *France at War: Vichy and the Historians* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), p.231 notes that Gerlier showed little disaffection towards the Vichy regime until September 1942 when he spoke out against the persecution of the Jews.

¹³ Domenach-Lallich, *Une jeune fille libre*, p. ii.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.190.

¹⁵ Sybil Oldfield, *Thinking Against the Current*. (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013).

¹⁶ Domenach-Lallich, *Une jeune fille libre*, p.195.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.234.

¹⁸ Renée Bédarida, *Les Armes de l’Esprit, Témoignage Chrétien, 1941–1944* (Paris: Éditions Ouvrières, 1977), p.5 corroborates the role of Bollier and notes his death on 17 June 1944, killed by the Milice at his clandestine printing works.

the author performs firstly as a student and then secondly as a *résistante*, where the discontinuities between what is known about the author's resistance activity and what she chooses to express in the journal will be further explored.

Domenach's identity as a student provides a clear narrative arc in the journal from playful schoolgirl with an intellectual interest in resistance activity to studious undergraduate, physically engaged as an *agent de liaison*. It is evident that education was of primary importance for her, taking up much of her time and much of the text in the journal. Her education offered her a space where she could be in control, which became of growing importance as the Occupation increasingly restricted her liberty. It seems reasonable to say that by investing in her own education, she was buying into a deeper set of values, where education forms the basis of the Republican idea of self, resulting in a concept of equality based on education rather than on wealth or social status. It can also be seen as a brand of feminism, since women had no prospect of having the vote in 1940 and Domenach would have been keenly aware of her disenfranchisement. Education also offered women the discovery of agency and of equal citizenship with men, as evidenced in Domenach's friendship with Gilbert Dru and their joint involvement in the publication of the clandestine newspaper *Témoignage Chrétien* from November 1941. Such education-based agency was also reinforced by her discovery of resistance engagement, where the conventional roles for a young girl were superseded and she gained an outlet for her independence of thought and action: her agency was given a new terrain and her articulation of her student identity should be seen in this context. A chronological, close reading of the text is given in order to demonstrate how she articulates her sense of self and how the progression of the Occupation impacted on her education and her student identity.

Domenach's schooling featured in the very earliest of journal entries on 15 November 1939 when she and her family had left Lyon and she is in Bourg-en-Bresse. She recorded that she had to learn both history and geography as it was time to show that she could do well.¹⁹ This is the first instance of a trope which echoes throughout the journal expressing her performance of strength: presenting a public persona that reveals her inner strength, whether moral, physical, or in this instance, intellectual. In January 1940 the family returned to Lyon and her only comment about her education until October of that year was that she enjoyed a good laugh during religious instruction back

¹⁹ Domenach-Lallich, *Une jeune fille libre*, p.11.

at Cours Belmont. On 12 November 1940, she noted that she had got 14 out of 20 for maths after a previous zero mark and added that it was now 10.15 p.m. and that she had just started an essay on Voltaire (a subject that was neither difficult nor disagreeable) which she must hand in the following day.²⁰ In contrast, on 10 January 1941, she emphasised that she was very scared that she might fail her baccalaureate as she needed 17 points to pass.²¹ By 3 February 1941, now aged 16, she recorded:

I wonder what I will do when I have passed my baccalaureate (always assuming that I pass one of these days) I should like to do a humanities degree but I have not done Greek and I have been told that it would be impossible without Greek. I should also like to go to the school of Fine Arts but my parents categorically refuse, saying that it is the downfall of young girls. And yet, I really want to continue my studies, provided that my parents don't stop me. I don't really like working hard but I really enjoy learning... What I should really like to do, would be to teach literature. I am sure that one could make pupils happy by sharing with them what one enjoyed oneself. As for me, I like literature and poetry. As soon as I get my French text book at the start of the year, I read it from start to finish and I learn by heart the poems I like best.²²

It would be inaccurate to portray the author as a consistently conscientious student, since there are several entries which focus on her enjoyment of disrupting class, as on 6 May 1941 when she disagreed with the Abbott Ignonin, the rector of Fourvière in Lyon who taught catechism, providing what she described as a *Pétainiste* morality where he emphasised that France had not worked hard enough and thus had been punished by God. In an early act of disobedience, Domenach ensured that he could see her exercise book which had in capital letters on the cover: *Vive de Gaulle*. She was sent to the Headmistress whom she respected and whom she recorded as telling her that she had the right to think her own thoughts and that she understood her feelings but that she advised her to keep her own counsel or else it might cost her dearly.²³ In that respect, an entry of note is that of 4 April 1941 which demonstrates the growing discontinuities between her role as student, which she articulates clearly, and her role as *résistante* to which she alludes obliquely by commenting that not everything should be written down:

My old notebook, I have so much to say to you but I won't just now, firstly because I still have a lot of work this evening, (Latin translation and French,) and because I am very wound up about the news, (Germans have invaded Yugoslavia and Greece) and then because not everything should be written down as Jean has reminded me and he knows what he is talking about. And so, until next time.²⁴

²⁰ Ibid., p.40.

²¹ Ibid., p.48.

²² Ibid., p.54 and note from author to say that she taught literature for 30 years and never regretted her choice of career.

²³ Ibid., pp.72, 73.

²⁴ Ibid., p.68.

Evidently, she was beginning to learn the value of discretion in the construction of a clandestine identity, one that may be in contrast with that of a Republican student built on the value of public discourse and plain speaking. By 16 June 1941, she was in the midst of exams and noted that French had gone very well, but that she had not been able to finish Latin, while the following day would be maths which would be the decisive factor. Overall, she was very worried about the result and doubted she would pass.²⁵ The next few entries indicate her levels of anxiety about when she would receive the result and on 2 July she recorded that she had failed and her mother had decided to send her to the local Convent as a boarder over the summer to prepare for re-sits.²⁶ She wrote on 29 September: 'I will give you a little summary of recent events, my dearest notebook,' and recounted that she had never worked as hard as she did at the Convent because there was nothing else to do.²⁷ Significantly, she likened it to living under a dictatorship, where the Sisters gave instructions and she had to obey without questioning. This sense of intellectual and moral constraint is matched by an emphasis on physical constraint caused by the winter:

It is hard to be retaking the year. I have been 17 since October 10 but it hasn't brought me happiness. I am trying to work but the cold gets into my brain and into my fingers. There is a shortage of coal and *Maman* cannot light the fire for the heating.²⁸

By 19 June the following year (1942), she recorded that she had sat the baccalaureate exams again, and was hoping that she would make up her Maths marks with those in French and Latin, and that she had been more focussed than last year. She added that Jean-Marie and Gilbert Dru had taken her under their wing and wanted her to become more serious because they needed her for a different sort of work.²⁹ This entry is of significance because it provides evidence that women as young as 17 were acting as *agents de liaison*, which is confirmed by the author's note stating that she was doing a considerable amount of work in this role during this period.³⁰ The entry also demonstrates that at the same time as acting as an *agent de liaison* about which she could only write obliquely, Domenach was a 17-year-old school-student struggling with exams. It is this dissonance which ensures that the journal is an invaluable primary source, providing an original insight into how women working as *agents de liaison*

²⁵ Ibid., p.78.

²⁶ Ibid., p.79.

²⁷ Ibid., p.83.

²⁸ Ibid., p.88.

²⁹ Ibid., p.95.

³⁰ Ibid., p.217.

articulated their roles. By 11 July 1942, she recorded that she was overjoyed that she had passed both written and oral exams. She wrote that her success was well deserved because she revised for the oral for ten days and that she passed Latin and English, did well in History and Geography, scraped through in Physics and Chemistry and in French she got a distinction in her Victor Hugo paper. She added that the examiner had asked what her favourite poems were and that she had then recited two poems by Verlaine, and would have continued but that he interrupted to congratulate her and ask what she planned to do afterwards. She told him that she hoped to do a Humanities degree but that she was not sure if she would get in, because of her low Science marks. She noted that he told her with a smile not to worry and she recorded that she was unbelievably happy.³¹ This is a further example of the trope of her performance of strength.

In October 1942, Domenach returned to Cours Belmont, taking a course in Philosophy together with the Greek she needed for her degree and by 7 December, she was back in the midst of exams:

I love Philosophy. I have the impression of discovering the world in a different way, but I prefer doing a literature dissertation where I feel more comfortable. Essentially, I have always done philosophy without realising. When I first discovered Pascal's "Thoughts", when I was much younger, that was another insight into the world and I became wholly absorbed in it and the edition that I found had lots of notes in it which I found very helpful.³²

This entry is cited at length because it provides clear examples of how she uses her diary playfully, as a written performance space, and how she articulates her identity as a student. It contrasts with the entry the following year in August 1943, where she commented more prosaically that she had been awarded a merit for her baccalaureate pass in Philosophy, as she had worked harder this year despite not being short of occupations or preoccupations, another allusion to her identity as *agent de liaison*. By 5 October 1943 she recorded that she was finally going to start at university in the arts faculty and described herself as feeling like a boat that has been buffeted by the waves and has finally made it into port.³³ On 21 February 1944, she commented that she had grown up over the last few months and that her intellectual intelligence had developed, or rather increased, and that truth was no longer an abstraction of pure intelligence but something she felt and assimilated with all her senses, and which she felt physically as well as intellectually. To have understood this made her stronger, and

³¹ Ibid., pp.96, 97.

³² Ibid., pp.99, 108, 109.

³³ Ibid., p.119.

she had a sense of equilibrium in her life, while the previous year, it was as if she was standing in front of a closed door. She attributed this to her lectures, and her tutors and the group of friends she had made at university.³⁴ However, it would seem logical to link this sense of having crossed a threshold to the wider set of experiences that being part of the resistance has brought with it. It is striking, for example, that this entry marking a unity of the body and mind comes at a point in the narrative arc whereby a focus on development of the intellect (student identity) gives way to a record of more physical engagement as a *résistante* (resistant identity), whereby the articulation of the subjectivity of resistance involvement is made through an emphasis on bodily sensation involving all the senses and in particular through the repeated trope of the performance of resilience and strength. The entry also confirms the journal as an act of physical embodiment and vindicates the wider importance of using the journal as a primary source to consider the gendered impact of the Occupation: in this instance, it testifies to the emergence of a particular kind of resistance, and supports the findings of earlier chapters where “occupied” subjectivities are frequently articulated in terms of physicality and the body.

The tutors and friends referred to in the entry above were those involved in resistance activity. They included her tutor, André Mandouze, who was the deputy to Père Chaillet in *Témoignage Chrétien*. Bédarida’s seminal work on *Témoignage Chrétien* (1977) corroborates that Mandouze came to the arts faculty in Lyon as a young Latin lecturer in autumn 1942 and would often arrive early and leave copies of the clandestine newspaper in the lecture theatre.³⁵ In that sense, they were clearly providing Domenach with a wider education than that strictly provided by the university curriculum. Increasingly, her entries about her education draw on the physical language of resilience derived from her identity as a *résistante*: on 21 May 1944 she wrote her last entry about her education to record that she has passed her certificate of French Literature at degree level, having written a four hour essay on Baudelaire, *Les Petits Poèmes en Prose*, with such a difficult subject that she would have given up but for her fighting spirit to keep going.³⁶ This entry is again explicit about her performance of physical and intellectual strength and, while similar to the earlier entry of November 1939 where she was equally explicit about her determination and desire to succeed academically, it demonstrates the

³⁴ Ibid., p.123.

³⁵ Bédarida, *Armes de l’Esprit*, p.162.

³⁶ Domenach-Lallich, *Une jeune fille libre*, p.133.

journal's clear narrative arc, culminating in her articulation of her identities as committed student, and as a *résistante*.³⁷ To successfully obtain her qualification in French Literature at the end of her first year at university in 1944 while simultaneously working as *agent de liaison* was an undoubted performance of strength. There are no further mentions of her education other than on 18 August 1944, noting that she could, of course, no longer set foot in the university, as she was wanted by the Gestapo and needed to work clandestinely.³⁸

Domenach uses her journal to articulate the subjectivity of her student identity with clarity, immediacy and commitment. While this provides discontinuities with her identity as an *agent de liaison*, I argue that by privileging the voice of the young woman student, the articulation of such dissonance offers a contribution to the historiography of the Occupation by revealing the different identities performed by women *agent de liaisons*. The study also demonstrates that in this journal there are further echoes of the findings of earlier chapters that the body is a site to express the wider constraints of Occupation.

However, returning to the opening citation of this chapter, the entry of 22 February 1943 which is a beautiful encapsulation both of the choices faced by *résistants* and of the way in which Domenach chooses identities as a student and a *résistante*, it becomes clear that what has been analysed thus far is only part of the full narrative of the journal. This chapter now re-examines the journal to demonstrate that 'All the rest that is going on which won't be mentioned here' emerges obliquely through the text in hints and allusions, revealing how Domenach articulated the subjectivities of her emerging resistance identity.

In order to understand the choices which Domenach made in developing a resistance identity, and how involvement in resistance activity is embedded in contemporary historical realities, brief contextual details are needed, firstly, about her brother Jean-Marie, her friend Gilbert Dru and her university tutor Mandouze, who all belonged to resistance organisations, and secondly, about her own actions in the resistance.

Jean-Marie Domenach, two years older than his sister, Denise, together with his contemporary Gilbert Dru, wrote tracts and articles in October 1940 calling on students to denounce Pétain's National Revolution. Denise helped both to hand-copy such tracts

³⁷ Ibid., p.11.

³⁸ Ibid., p.139.

and to distribute them throughout the University.³⁹ It seems fair to see this as her initial act of resistance engagement which set her on the path to later become the *agent de liaison* for her brother Jean-Marie, taking “Duplessys” as her code name which enabled her to retain the same initials as those sewn into her clothes.⁴⁰ By the end of 1941, her brother was working for the resistance movement *Combat*. With the introduction of the *Service du Travail Obligatoire* (STO) in 1943, he established the “*Comité Inter Fac*” which met in the Domenach family home with the aim of recruiting university students into resistance movements by assisting them to join the *maquis* and obtaining false identity cards or finding a safe house where they could avoid being sent to work in Germany. In August 1943, Jean-Marie joined the *maquis du Vercors* and in 1944, joined the *maquis du Tarn*.⁴¹ The success of his work overall can be seen in the fact that very few students from Lyon left to work in Germany under the STO.⁴²

By spring 1943 in the campaign against the STO, Denise was involved in procuring official papers from town halls and forging signatures for false identity papers, and taking them by bicycle to the *maquis de l'Ain*. In May 1944, she was nominated as regional director of *Jeunes des Mouvements Unis de la Résistance*, a movement which represented the merger of the youth groups of *Combat*, *Libération* and *Franc-Tireur*.⁴³ By June 1944, the Gestapo were searching for her and she worked clandestinely until August 1944 when she joined her family in Hauterives (Drome). When Domenach was subsequently awarded the *Médaille de la Résistance*, she learnt with surprise that she had belonged to the Navarre network.⁴⁴

It could be argued that her journal is of little interest because it only contains oblique references to clandestine activity and therefore no explicit information about her work as an *agent de liaison* described above. On the contrary, the study argues that the journal is a significant primary source, providing a gendered narrative where the author is able to articulate her subjectivities as a young woman, sister, daughter, student, friend and colleague, demonstrating the discontinuities between what she can safely record in the journal and her resistance engagement. This in turn offers an insight into her lived experience as an *agent de liaison*.

³⁹ Ibid., p.224.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.240.

⁴¹ Bruno Permezel, *Résistants à Lyon* (Editions BGA Permezel, 2003), p.214 ; see also H.R.Kedward, *In Search of the Maquis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

⁴² Domenach-Lallich, *Une jeune fille libre*, p.241.

⁴³ Permezel, *Résistants*, p.213.

⁴⁴ Domenach-Lallich, *Une jeune fille libre*, p.245, undated.

This second reading of the journal will therefore pick up the oblique references to resistance activity and trace Domenach's choices to become an *agent de liaison* with a chronological exploration of how she uses her journal to articulate the development of her political awareness from intellectual interest into physically engaged action. This reading will also indicate the emergence of her identity as a *résistante* where mind and body are no longer disconnected but are brought together.

On 10 May 1940, she recorded what I consider to be her first instance of political awareness, noting that there were 17 fatalities and many wounded on a bombing raid on Bron airfield near the family home in Lyon. She added that the *Boches* had now invaded Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg and that she hopes the USA will finally make the decision to enter the war.⁴⁵ Two days later, on 12 May 1940, the reader sees how her political awareness developed as she read in the newspaper of an atrocity, which resonated for her as a member of the Scouting movement. She described how the Germans massacred 150 Boy Scouts in Poland and shot Polish air crew beside their planes at Bron airfield.⁴⁶ As has been demonstrated in an earlier chapter, the impact of the arrival of refugees in the writer's home town resulted in the journal writer's increased political understanding and provided an insight into the war's impact on the civilian population. As a 15-year-old Girl Scout, Domenach recorded on 24 May 1940 how she worked at the *Palais de la Foire* in Lyon, temporarily established as a Reception Centre, mopping and polishing the floor, laying tables for 200 refugees, serving them in two sittings and then washing up afterwards. She commented that the refugees had fled from Belgium and Northern France and that many of the children had become separated from their parents and had no idea where they were. She expressed her sympathy for the refugees and pledged to help most days.⁴⁷ Her next entry on 1 June 1940 recorded local bombing raids with many fatalities. She wondered if it would be her turn next:

It would annoy me all the same, to die stupidly in a bombing raid like that at 15. As for dying, I would rather die bravely as a soldier and for a noble cause for which I had willingly chosen to sacrifice my life.⁴⁸

The reading of this entry, which is before the fall of France, anticipates the subsequent entry of 9 February 1943 where she is explicit about her choice to become engaged in

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.23.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.25.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.28.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.29.

resistance activity. These entries are a clear example of the juxtaposition of seemingly prosaic details (helping refugees) with the subjective articulation of thoughts on death and demonstrate that mind and body are no longer separate but interconnected.⁴⁹ As such, they offer insight into the gendered narrative of Occupation, by young French *agents de liaison*, which this study contends is under-reported in the historiography of the Occupation.

The entry on 30 June 1940 noted: ‘It is done. The armistice has been signed. France has surrendered. When we had realised this, there were two or three days when we felt crushed. We simply could not believe it.’⁵⁰ By 4 October 1940 she recorded that it seemed that there was a French general who thought the same way as they did and by 12 November 1940 she wrote: ‘I am going to buy a cross of Lorraine, which is the insignia of the partisans supporting De Gaulle [*sic*]’.⁵¹ By January 1941, she commented that she and her family were listening to de Gaulle on the radio.⁵² Six months later, on 5 June 1941, she wrote that she had an enjoyable evening and that Jean-Marie had invited some friends round to the house, including Gilbert Dru, and her mother had made them afternoon tea and they had discussed and agreed about current events before playing music. She also recorded that she knew of an established route which crossed the Spanish border into Portugal and thence to Egypt for those who wanted to join de Gaulle’s army.⁵³

By 1941, she was involved in resistance activity, hand-copying tracts for her brother, but what she described in her journal was simply socialising with her brother and his friends. This is an example of the discontinuities and fractures between her resistance engagement and what she recorded in the journal. However, by 19 June 1942, the reader can see a trace of her emerging resistance identity:

Jean-Marie and Gilbert Dru have taken me under their wing and want me to become more sensible because they need me for a different kind of work. I am no longer writing poems now... I do not have the time. My muse is now is the goddess Liberty, which both inspires me and keeps me busy.⁵⁴

This allusion to a different kind of work refers to her role as *agent de liaison* for Jean-Marie, and since to document this activity in her journal would risk arrest,

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.114.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.36.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp.39, 40.

⁵² Ibid., p.47.

⁵³ Ibid., p.73.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.95.

imprisonment, torture, deportation and the discovery of the network, she does not elaborate but returns to articulating her role as a student. She also distributed clandestine publications herself, for example *Témoignage Chretien* which was specific to the liberal, young, educated Christian elite, with male students such as Jean-Marie and Gilbert Dru writing articles and women students like Denise distributing the paper unnoticed as they went about their daily activities, their gender instrumental to their successful resistance activities.⁵⁵ The thesis argues that the nature of the distribution network has also been under-reported in the historiography of the period and seeks to redress this gendered imbalance with this analysis of a journal by a member of the distribution network.

On 11 November 1942 she described hearing the sound of marching boots of the German occupation of Lyon and that seeing German trucks in the main square had left her feeling suffocated. Despite German road blocks, she and a friend managed to walk past the German sentries and she commented that they were aware that they risked being shot for their disobedience.⁵⁶ The reading of this entry suggests ‘disobedience’ is an oblique reference to her resistance activity while ‘feeling suffocated’ evidences Domenach’s emphasis on the subjectivity of physicality and demonstrates that the gendered experience of Occupation has a bodily connection. This is a further example of the dissonance between her recorded journal and her resistance activity. On 9 February 1943 she provides the most explicit articulation of her choice to become a *résistante* and demonstrates that this is a journal of moral presence:

I have thought long and hard about the right path for the recovery for France. I have tried to free myself of all prejudices and sentimentality. And since I have found what I consider to be the only way in which France can act without losing its pride, without betraying itself, that is to say with the hope of victory at the end of this difficult path, I have tried carefully of course to convince others to understand their duty. It is difficult and of course it is dangerous... I hope I will have the courage and the necessary determination to confront the dangers I will face on the way. I will try to show loyalty and the necessary intellectual understanding to judge clearly where my duty lies. I should like so much to be involved in the resurgence of my country.⁵⁷

The entries, whilst not indicating the tasks she undertook, are also increasingly clear about the dangers she risked, as the Gestapo in Lyon, under Klaus Barbie by 1943, were relentless in their pursuit, arrest and torture of resistance activists.⁵⁸ By summer 1944,

⁵⁵ Bédarida, *Armes de l’Esprit*, pp.71, 72 cites Jeanne and Marthe Siron and Simone Froment but not Denise Domenach; Karen Adler, *Jews and Gender in the Liberation of France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.66.

⁵⁶ Domenach-Lallich, *Une jeune fille libre*, p.104.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.115.

⁵⁸ Musée de la Résistance et de la Déportation, Lyon holds information on Klaus Barbie.

the Gestapo were actively looking for her and an unusually explicit entry on 18 August 1944 recorded that in early June, a French woman working for the Gestapo warned a Jesuit priest that she, Domenach, would be in danger if she continued living in the family home.⁵⁹ The priest warned her father who gave Domnach money and a safe-house address, which she commented with a touch of irony that she dare not reveal in her journal, although that if the Germans arrived in Hauterives it would be to kill everyone, not to search for papers or to read her journal.⁶⁰ She did not record in her journal any details whatsoever of her clandestine life over the next three months, other than a comment that she had been frightened when Germans searched her grandparents' house in Bourg-en-Bresse because she had hidden forged identity papers there: 'Thank heavens and especially thanks to my good hiding place, they did not find them... Realistically, I think they were searching for weapons.'⁶¹ On 19 August she wrote that she had returned to Lyon only to find that several of her close friends had been shot, including Gilbert Dru:

All the deaths overwhelm me and at times I feel that part of me had died a little too. One ages quickly at the moment, that is, if one isn't dead. The bodies and the destruction have increased since the Normandy landings. On August 15th, the Allies landed in the south of France but one cannot even celebrate because the number of deaths make one despair. How will one live after this?⁶²

Here she clearly articulates her feelings of despair, emphasising the physicality of her bodily engagement with resistance echoed by the physicality of 'bodies', 'destruction' and death.

On 20 August, she recorded that she had returned to her family in Hauterives, no longer being able to do much in Lyon where the majority of her friends had been arrested, deported or shot. She added that the countryside was occupied by the *maquis* with three camps nearby, the most important being that of *l'Armée Secrete* and another camp, that of the *Franco-Tireurs-Partisans* who pillaged from time to time and did a good deal of brandishing their fists, while the third was a group of lads from the village who were committed to defending Hauterives. Her commentary about *maquis* activity is a useful primary source in an area of historiographical enquiry without extensive

⁵⁹ W.D. Halls, 'Catholics, the Vichy Interlude', in S. Fishman et. al. (eds.), *France at War* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), p.232 confirms that spiritual Catholics such as those who produced *Témoignage Chrétien*, endangered their lives.

⁶⁰ Domenach-Lallich, *Une jeune fille libre*, pp.137, 138.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.141.

⁶² Ibid., p.143.

contemporaneous archival documentation and of additional interest in that she wrote from the perspective of a *résistante*:

Cars festooned with the French flag and trucks bristling with machine guns go down the road constantly and eight days ago, there was fighting in the countryside when the *maquis* ambushed a German convoy, and the Huns took hostages as reprisals and burnt down two houses and all the villagers ran to hide in the woods. The lads in the *maquis* dream of going to fight it out with the enemy and I understand that, but sometimes the risk is too high, as the Germans are becoming increasingly punitive because they are now realising that they will never be victorious, they are about to receive a well-deserved good hiding on all fronts and they are only thinking about revenge. As long as they don't burn down the village as they have done elsewhere.⁶³

By August 23, she recorded that Paris had been liberated by the FFI and that her father fetched a bottle of good wine from the cellar but that they did not have the heart to celebrate because they were still waiting for news of Jean-Marie. She observed that people began to fly the French flag without any awareness that the danger was exactly the same as it had been the day before:

Alas, it seems that they are fighting in the suburbs of Lyon, and they say that the Germans burned alive one hundred and fifty people in St-Genis-Laval. What will we hear next? The horror and terror go hand in hand and will engender hatred. That is already happening as we are happy to hear when a bombing raid on Germany has left many dead. How will we be able to leave this violence behind us? Violence and suffering remain our daily bread.⁶⁴

In the same entry, she continued that her brother was fighting near Toulouse and that she wished fervently that she was with him rather than being stuck at home like an idiot. She added that the previous day, a young lad in the *maquis* had killed himself with his machine gun and that she had been talking with him three minutes before he died. She had thought of all those whom she loved now and those she had loved in the past and would never see again and saw them lying there at her feet in the place of the young lad. This entry was written prior to the arrival of the Allies in Lyon and illustrates the critical importance of the specificity of time (23 August 1944, Domenach was still only aged 19), and of place (engagement in resistance activity in pre-Liberation Lyon), in the analysis of her articulation of loss and despair.

Such journal entries of August 1944 offer a resistance identity with a counter-narrative of loss, despair and suffering which is markedly different from the articulation of heroism and willing self-sacrifice expressed in entries in June 1940. They also contrast with the expressions of commitment to duty and the decision to follow the right path for the recovery of France expressed in February 1943. This narrative arc is of

⁶³ Ibid., p.144.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.148.

interest because it so clearly demonstrates the development of subjectivity articulated over the period of the Occupation and in particular the level of doubt and anguish expressed, despite the Liberation of Paris.

On August 31, she recorded that the Americans arrived to liberate Hauterives and that everyone ran to meet them. The journal's concluding entries are more optimistic in tone, describing her overwhelming relief, her friendships with the American soldiers and the offer of marriage she receives and declines.⁶⁵ However, the final entry in the journal on 7 September 1944, written shortly before her 20th birthday, returns to the narrative of loss:

At times, the joy of the Liberation overwhelms me, and then suddenly, I have the feeling that I am walking over the bodies of those who have died. I hope, in the future, I will know how to be happy but I will never again be innocent.⁶⁶

These entries articulate the response to the risks and impact of involvement in clandestinity, and offer a specific and original insight into the choices and constraints of young women involved in resistance activity.

It is clear then that the journal kept by Denise Domenach is an important source, evidencing specificities of time (1940–1944) and place (Lyon), and offering a vivid articulation of the subjectivities of performing identities as student and as *agent de liaison*. The journal demonstrates a narrative arc from intellectual interest to physical engagement in the resistance: the impact of her involvement as a *résistante* is articulated by an increasing emphasis on bodily physicality. Her emerging *résistante* identity indicates that mind and body are no longer disconnected but are brought together with the body as a site for expressing the wider constraints of the Occupation. The journal itself can be seen as an act of embodiment, and the act of writing becomes that of building identities through language and discourse, revealing discontinuities between her identities as *agent de liaison* and student. The study argues that it is this dissonance which offers a greater understanding of her lived experience as an *agent de liaison*. The expression of self is built around a series of dualities: those of student and *résistante*, intellectual interest and physical engagement and the dualities of her performance of strength; as a student, intellectually at school and university, and morally and physically within the resistance movement. This is contrasted with the counter-narrative of loss, suffering and despair experienced in summer 1944.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp.153, 154.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.155.

The study builds on the earlier chapters which used women's journals as primary source texts to interrogate existing historiographical enquiry into the *exode*, the Jewish survivor experience and *attentisme* in order to map out, in this chapter, the potential for a specific gendered understanding of the role of the *agent de liaison*. Its use of a gendered narrative of resistance allows us to broaden our understanding of the Occupation, and begins to address the under-representation of such gendered narrative in the wider historiography of the period.

Conclusion

This concluding section firstly sets out the key objectives and findings from the research; secondly, it discusses the implications and consequences of the findings; and thirdly, it considers the limitations of the study. Finally, directions for future research are suggested.

The key objective of this research has been to contribute new evidence of the articulation of women's subjectivities between 1940–1944 by using women's contemporaneous journals as traces of lived experience during the Occupation of France. A further objective has been to address the omission of the extent and richness of such primary source material in both French and British historiography of the period.

The methodological approach employed was to explore four journals as primary sources, in order to investigate their value with respect to four distinct but overlapping areas of historiographical enquiry relating to the Occupation of France. While the use of women's journals as primary sources is not new, the study is original in its systematic analysis of such journals in order to investigate the impact of the Occupation on women's subjectivities. The use of two unpublished journals from different archives also offers an original contribution to our understanding of the period.

The findings of the research come from the analysis of the texts centred on the way in which women's subjectivities are articulated and conveyed to the reader. Although, by definition, each journal has an individual specificity of place and time, the key findings are that women's experiences of the wider constraints of the Occupation are frequently articulated through an emphasis on the physicality of bodily sensations such as hunger, thirst, discomfort, and fear. Feelings of loss, exile and waiting predominate in all the journals. This was equally true for those journal writers who were confident, assured writers as well as for those who were unused to writing. Another key finding has been the extent of historiographical under-reporting of women's narratives during the Occupation, with little use having been made of the wealth of source material available by women. There are positive indications that this is now being addressed by some recently-published research.

The implications of these findings are that they shift the perceptions and frames of reference of the period, not only adding to our knowledge of the Occupation but increasing our understanding of the identities women chose to express through their

written testimony. The research implications are that the use of contemporaneous women's journals offers a complementary approach and provides the immediacy of Occupation testimony and the qualitative detail which is now beyond the reach of time-limited oral history investigation. Additional implications are that four specific topics of enquiry arising from the general history of the Occupation in France — the *exode*; the Jewish survivor experience; *attentisme*; and the role of women in the resistance — have been identified as areas where women's narrative has been under-represented. This is especially true of the *exode*, despite the fact that comprehensive archival documentation is unavailable and furthermore that the majority of those involved were women, children and the elderly. The study, whilst clearly unable, on its own, to redress the gender imbalance of the historiographical areas considered, nonetheless argues that women's journals provide detailed primary source material and that the trend to use them as such in recent work on the Occupation is positive. The implications of the research are that women's narrative may also be under-represented in other areas of research relating to the French experience of the Second World War. Further implications of the research are that women's journals are excellent source material for the study of subjectivities, feelings and emotion in other periods than that of the Occupation, in that they provide access to the analysis of lived experience and may be available and under-used in other archives.

As with any research, this study has a number of shortcomings, which I have chosen to explore in detail in order to contextualise the findings. The most significant limitation is the size of the sample: only four journals are analysed in detail, and it would be unwise to claim that these are in any way representative. Nonetheless, the limitation of small-scale sources is countered by the insight and raw immediacy of the source and the in-depth qualitative analysis of each. The focus on four specific topics relating to the Occupation in France is a further potential limitation, and again the research does not aim to offer a comprehensive overview of women's experiences of the Occupation, and of its impact on shaping women's identities and subjectivities. These limitations have been addressed by ensuring that the journal material has always been corroborated in evidence from other sources to demonstrate the veracity of the text. While not representative of all women, comparisons between the journals have indicated considerable divergences but also significant similarities in the ways in which female subjectivities are articulated, especially in expressions of bodily sensations. Aware of such limitations, an earlier research proposal had included the use of oral history to look

at the female experiences in both text and memory. However, it did not prove possible to identify French women who followed through on their original agreement to be interviewed. The Occupation of France took place 75 years ago and female survivors are now in their late eighties and beyond, facing their own mortality. Reasons for not wishing to be interviewed included: thinking about the period being painful; no longer having any living relatives from that era; or no longer having links with France. Interestingly, one woman who did agree to be interviewed had had a long and happy marriage with the RAF pilot she had helped to rescue. I considered writing a chapter on the ‘silence’ of those who chose not to be interviewed, what Summerfield calls the ‘muting’ of women’s wartime narratives.¹ This limitation of the small-scale sample could be addressed in future research by using oral testimony previously undertaken and held in archives, in order to complement the use of journals.

Despite these limitations, this research has demonstrated the depth and extent of material available from using women’s journals as primary sources to explore the expression of subjectivities. Future research to extend this study could investigate whether the findings are replicated in other sites of historiographical enquiry, where women’s narratives may be under-represented. Examples might include the impact of the Occupation on youth, using journals by Benoit and Flora Groult and Micheline Bood, or humanitarian rescue networks using the journal by Hélène Berr and that by Lesley Maber, a British teacher at Le Chambon sur Lignon, or further investigation into the *exode*, looking at journals of those women working in a professional capacity such as Gritou and Annie Vallotton and Anne Jacques.²

This research has indicated the rich material available using women’s journals as primary sources. The originality lies in the interdisciplinary approach, archival research, genre distinction, close textual analysis and the conceptual approach of considering the journal as the embodiment of gender in textual form. Through analysis of the texts, corroborated with other sources for veracity but essentially by allowing the texts to ‘breathe’, the study provides an emphasis on qualitative specificity of detail and offers

¹ Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women’s Wartime Lives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

² Benoite et Flora Groult, *Journal a quatre mains* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 2008); Micheline Bood, *Les années doubles* (Paris: Laffont, 1976); Hélène Berr, *Journal, 1942–1944* (Paris: Tallandier, 2008); Sybil Oldfield, *Women Humanitarians* (London: Continuum, 2001), p.142; Maber’s journal deposited with archival papers, University of Durham; Gritou et Annie Vallotton, *C’était au Jour, le Jour, Carnets 1939–1944* (Paris: Payot, 1995); Anne Jacques, *Journal d’une Française* (Paris: Seuil, 1946).

an intricate and nuanced insight into the ambivalences and ambiguities of women's articulation of subjectivities during the Occupation.

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