SPECTERS OF SARTRE

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Michel Contat describes *Morts sans sépulture* as the only play in Sartre's theatre he would not consider putting on the stage today. The reasons for Contat's reticence are undoubtedly of a practical nature – the play's themes are disturbing, its plot offers little suspense, and its dialogues are too artificial to be rescued by even a brilliant director or the technical wizardry of modern set-making. Yet the play holds questions that lead Sartre's phenomenology away from the stalemate that Marx, in Derrida's reading, denounced as the theological element in *all* phenomenology (*Specters of Marx*, 133). The problems of human suffering and historical meaning articulated in *Morts sans sépulture* are the essence of what, for Sartre, exceeds the boundaries of phenomenological description. The individual who fights for a lost cause confronts the prospect of becoming an inexplicable residue of history. The characters in *Morts sans sépulture* face suffering as history's losers in the absence of a transcendent guarantee – particularly of a religious sort – that meaning still exists when means fail to reach their intended ends.

Sartre's progressive-regressive method, with its attendant Marxism and rejection of all theology, was designed to remedy precisely this breakdown of phenomenologieal intentionality. In its rejection of Sartre's Marxism, Bernard-Henri Lévy's *Siècle de Sartre* thus advocates a different response to what "exeeeds" phenomenology. Lévy favorably compares the politically unengaged young Sartre of *La Nausée* with the benighted Marxist author of *Critique de la Raison dialectique*, before settling, in a twist redolent of what Dominique Janicaud dubbed "the theological turn in French phenomenology," on a Sartre who redisco-

vered Emmanuel Lévinas thanks to Pierre Victor, a.k.a. Benny Lévy, in the period that brought the latter "de Mao à Moïse" (634). BHL's attempt to import Lévinas into the inner sanctum of Sartrean thought (through Benny Lévy) was parried in *Les Temps modernes* by Vincent de Coorebyter.[1] Yet the specters that exceed phenomenology remain difficult to conjure away. In the movement that brought phenomenology to a consideration of ethics, the caricatural opposition between Mao and Moses could perhaps better rendered in terms of use and uselessness, in the sense that "useless suffering" is a common concern to which Sartre and Lévinas both offer responses. For Lévinas, the principal region that escapes phenomenology's grasp is suffering and the ethical imperative it entails; for Sartre, on the other hand, what exceeds phenomenology is the meaning of history for its losers. Lévinas discovers ethical responsibility in opposing the immorality of all theodicy, while Sartre arrives at the theory of contingency by unraveling false meanings attached to history (or biography) by retrospective illusion.

The retrospective moral judgments of *Le Siècle de Sartre* implicitly depend on a quite Lévinasian refusal to justify suffering. The same reading that would assimilate Lévinas with a certain Sartre thus also relies on Lévinas to reject the concerns that led Sartre's philosophy away from phenomenology into the domains of history and class struggle. *Le Siècle de Sartre* denounces the "Sartre stalinien" whose political engagement led him to justify, in the name of a certain humanism, the "barbarie à visage humain" of the Soviet state (304). Lévy also rejects Sartre's engagement because it subordinates literature to politics: "Aux sources du totalitarisme sartrien, ce dernier trait: la haine de soi et de la littérature" (628). Since, in Sartre's terms, political engagement is what lends meaning to literature's otherwise irremediable uselessness, it is hard not to be struck by the consonance of bringing an ethical concern for "useless suffering" to a consideration of Sartre's literary theory. Concerning some premonitory hints of intolerance in statements made by the young "anarchist" Sartre, Lévy writes that "un spectre hante Sartre... le spectre du futur Sartre" (541). The resonance of Lévy's interpolation of Marx's famous dictum extends beyond mere pastiche,

however, Sartre was haunted by the idea of future literary fame, and the long and carefully reasoned unraveling of this illusion lay at the heart of his rejection of literature in favor of political engagement. The politically committed writer is the outcome of the deflation of the idealized literary writer. As we shall see, Sartre's privileged metaphor for the opposition between these two figures is the situation of political prisoners condemned to torture and death. Sartre's analysis of the opposition between the despair of the committed ideologue and abstract moral victory on the mode of the *pour-autrui* should rule out the self-congratulatory moral retrospection of a certain post-Marxism, along with the theological ghost it entails: Lévy's critique at times bears a striking family resemblance to the retrospective illusions of what Sartre would call a bad-faith view of literature and history.

The distinction between the useful and the useless regulates the Sartrean conjugation of literature and political engagement, and in the case of the political prisoner condemned to death, it also regulates a literary-political theodicy of "useful" suffering. Sartre returned incessantly to the specter of the political or juridical use of torture against prisoners who die in captivity for a lost cause. The repetition of this theme throughout Sartre's work suggests one of the weaknesses of the critique in *Le Siècle de Sartre*. In BHL's account, Sartre's mistake was to prefer the group to the alienated individual, and he was led to this error by his experience as a prisoner in a German Stalag in Trier in 1940 (503-542). The hypothesis of Sartre's conversion in the Stalag is reiterated elsewhere, most recently by Alberto Gomez-Muller,[2] and originates with Sartre's own statements in 1975 to Michel Contat that his experience as a prisoner of war gave him a new awareness of social and political conditions, and led directly to his subsequent political engagement. Yet the main outcome of Sartre's engagement – and this is BHL's principal reproach – was tacit approval of a Soviet regime whose quintessential expression was gulags full of political prisoners. The unexamined premise of BHL's reading is that what led Sartre to side with a totalitarian regime that used mass imprisonment and execution as an ideological weapon was an intellectual posture Sartre developed

as a prisoner under just such a totalitarian regime. Presumably Sartre ignored suffering for the same reason he constantly returned to the figure of the political prisoner condemned to death in his fiction, philosophy, and essays. Yet the theme of the political prisoner and its attendant problem of useless suffering would seem "Levinasian" indeed.[3]

Sartre's 1946 play *Morts sans sépulture* portrays a group of Resistance members tortured and executed by Vichy militiamen near the end of the Occupation. The first line of the play, "Allez-vous parler, à la fin?" (147), announces the thematic stakes of a work designed, according to Sartre, to explore the question that obsessed his generation: whether they would have talked under torture.[4] The line signifies the nervous desire of the youngest prisoner, François, to hear the reassuring voice of a fellow prisoner. But the question's symbolic resonance displaces its literal sense as the prisoners discuss the prospect that they will be tortured uselessly for information that they do not have. The militia wants the location of the *résistants*' leader, Jean, who remains at large. At the prospect of this useless suffering, each of the five prisoners expresses a different attitude, ranging from the panic of François to the detached resolution of Canoris. Henri's case is particularly instructive in the paradoxical intertwining of incompatible motives typical of the Sartrian *tourniquet* – which is, incidentally, equally at issue in BHL's criticism of Sartre. Trapped between the self-consciousness of the political adventurer and the robotic resignation of the committed ideologue, Henri's sense of failure is simultaneously abstract and concretely oriented toward the suffering of others. Near the beginning of the play, he laments, "A présent, il y a ces maisons qui brûlent par ma faute, il y a ces morts innocents et je vais mourir coupable. Ma vie n'a été qu'une erreur" (156). Henri is also in love with Lucie, François's older sister, and so is the group's leader, Jean. When Lucie reacts with indifference to Henri's revelation of his long-hidden feelings, he expresses a subjective emotional despondency that closely parallels his torment over the group's military defeat: "C'était vraiment tout à fait inutile que je naisse" (158). Love and war share the same structural premise, as does literature: usefulness depends on connecting means with ends.

In the first act, we learn that the guards will periodically come to take the prisoners, one by one, to a room where they will be tortured. The uselessness of this impending atrocity is total, since the prisoners know nothing about their leader's whereabouts; the torture could only be endured as a particularly gratuitous manifestation of the type of sadism Sartre describes in *L'Etre et le néant*. However, when the militiamen place Jean in the jail cell without realizing he is the leader they are seeking, the previously useless torture each character faces now has an objective consequence. Each character must confront the choice of whether or not to reveal Jean's identity. The possibility that Jean will be allowed to go free if he is not identified, and thus warn other Resistance members to abort a doomed mission, means the lives of many other *résistants* depend on the refusal to talk. So with Jean's appearance, the question that opens the play comes to stand for an ethical decision facing each character. How much can one stand to suffer for the benefit of others?

Here, then, is the dialectic at work within the play's development: the passage out of meaninglessness is conditioned on establishing a link between present and future, interior and exterior, the self and the group, and the privileged form of this link is physical suffering. The type of meaninglessness – or uselessness – I want to address is expressed in the first act by Canoris with superb clarity: "Rien de ce qui se passe entre ces quatre murs n'a d'importance. Espère ou désespère: *il* n'en sortira rien" (157). This initial condition is altered by Jean's arrival. Suffering that previously stood in relation only to the subjective struggle of isolated individuals against their tormentors has now become a factor in an agonistic moral economy – a literary-political theodicy – that links actions with consequences. The association of means with ends also injects transpersonal significance into the individual situation. In Scene V of the first act, when Canoris is carted off by the militiamen, Jean observes, "C'est pour moi qu'il va souffrir," and Henri replies, "Autant que ce soit pour toi. Sinon ce serait pour rien" (163). Or again, as Henri tells Jean at the end of the first act: "Ecoute! si tu n'étais pas venu, nous aurions souffert comme des bêtes, sans savoir pourquoi. Mais tu es là,

et tout ce qui va se passer à présent aura un sens" (164).

The next step in the play's dialcetie is the oscillation between winning and losing set in motion by Jean's presencc; thus, when Sorbier kills himself by jumping out thc window at the end of Act II, he is not merely escaping his tormentors, he is also preventing himself from giving up Jean. As he leaps to his death, Sorbier yells to his captors, and to the audicnce, that he has won. Winning corresponds now to refusing to talk under torturc, and losing to revealing Jean's identity. Yet ironically, Jean is horrified by this responsibility; convinced he would break under torture, Jean cannot stand the thought that others are suffering for his sake. A Lévinasian might perceive a dissonant echo of *souffrir-pour-l'autre* in this Sartrean *être-pour-autrui*. Jean's physical presence gives suffering mcaning by linking it to the transcendence of a supra-personal causc – and thus, historical meaning itself – but Jean is appallcd by thc thcodicy this arrangement entails. To mitigate suffcring by lending it meaning would be properly unconscionable, and thus wc arrivc at an impasse between Lévinasian ethics and Sartrean bad faith.

Curiously, however, Jean's guilty conscience is not the product of empathy; instead he seems to envy what hc refers to as the "beau rôle" (176) played by the other prisoncrs, who can enjoy the clear conscience that comes with suffering for the good of the cause.[5] As if in parody of Lévinas, Jean flatly refuses consider Lucie's suffering, when she is taken away and tortured, as cndowed with meaning by the needs of the cause. But Jean's refusal of political theodicy is a ruse of false consciousness, or perhaps of thc uneonscious: Jean imagines Lucie enduring torture by thinking of how much shc loves *him*, rather than of the Resistance members she is saving. It is worth recalling that love, according to *L'Etre et le néant*, haunts the *être-pour-autrui* in the form of a value. Lived as anything other than contingency, love means an attempt to control the invisible and elusive awareness of your own image in the conseiousness of another, which in its extreme form is sadism. Sartre's analysis of scxual dcsire as sadism is literally contiguous with his eonsiderations on thc political use of torture in *L'Etre*

et le néant. Yet in *Morts sans sépulture* this pairing takes the form of a debate between Jean and Henri, who are rivals for Lucie's affection. Henri insists that Lucie is thinking only of the good of the cause when she is tortured. In the second scene of Act II, Lucie returns and says her suffering will be in vain if the others talk under torture. Jean is devastated: the cause, not love, provides the theodicy that gives meaning to Lucie's suffering. Jean, in effect, is indirectly attempting to occupy the role of a sadistic lover, but this function is usurped by the drastically more violent sadism of the Vichy militia.

Lucie's devotion to the supra-personal cause of the group thus manifests itself as a form of detachment from Jean and François. The link between interior and exterior, present and future, and subject and group is severed by Jean just as it is by François, though for diametrically opposed reasons. Neither Jean, who is motivated by guilt, nor François, who is motivated by fear, can tolerate the position of moral superiority suffering confers on their comrades; they can neither assume such a position themselves nor simply accept their own isolation and accompanying loss of purpose. Jean's presence lends a meaning to torture he cannot abide, while François finds the torture he would suffer utterly meaningless.

The final twist in the play's dialectic comes when François is strangled by his fellows, to keep him quiet, and Jean is set free by the militia. The prisoners now face torture and execution without purpose, as at the play's outset. Lucie convinces Canoris not to offer false information, in order to deny their captors the sadistic pleasure of winning; she argues for a type of subjective victory that has no relation to the question of meaning at the heart of the play, in which victory, history, and sense are closely aligned. We have returned to the bare bones of Sartre's "hauntology," that effort of the *pour-autrui* to grasp an unrealizable ideal value in the other's consciousness. But as the final act progresses, Lucie weakens, and she accepts the proposal made by Canoris to give the militiamen false information in the hope that by escaping torture and execution, they will be able to continue resisting.

The ending of *Morts sans sépulture* is, of course, just the opposite of

that of the short story "Le Mur," published in 1939, in which the hero, Pablo Ibbieta, similarly decides to give his Spanish fascist captors false information about the location of his Republican leader. Pablo gives a false location only to discover, to his utter surprise, that the leader was indeed where Pablo said he would be; an uncanny coineidence trumps the meaning of Pablo's ehoice between talking to stay alive or resisting to the death. Having renounced the desire to save himself from execution, Pablo is unexpectedly set free. For Canoris and Lucie, on the other hand, the offer of false information leads to no uneanny coincidence and no escape from captivity: the leader of the militia cynically ignores his promisc of clemency and has them shot anyway.

The subject of *Morts sans sépulture*, the uselcss suffering of political prisoncrs, constitutes what Sartre termed a limit situation. The critical dossier that accompanies the play in the recent *Théâtre complet* edited for Plćiade by Contat and Rybalka repeatedly returns to the criticism that the half-dozen prisoners facing torture in *Morts sans sépulture* talk too much. This is no small irony considering that this esthetic critique of the play echoes the play's dramatic stakes word for word. On the contrary, the achievement of *Morts sans sépulture*, and of similar presentations of the theme of the political prisoner condemned to death in Sartre's fictional and philosophical work, consists in lending words to a properly unspeakable borderline of human experience. Sartre's well-known opposition to torture during the Algerian war even raises the possibility of reading the play, retrospectively, as a manifesto against torture. However, the problem this immediately raiscs is why it is necessary for a moral argument against the use of torture to proceed through the detour of a theatrical work. It seems that political engagement can do without literature. If what is at stakc is how best to condemn the use of torture, why write *Morts sans sépulture*? Michcl Contat argues the play was meant to remind audienccs in 1946 of the real nature of the collaboration. It is not the Nazis, but rather French militiamen who employ torture against the members of the resistance in the play. But this returns us to the same closed circuit as before, since the insistencc on the responsibility of collaborators was a strategy within the literary

politics of postwar France, as Gisèle Sapiro shows in *La Guerre des écrivains*. Sartre's conception of engagement emerged in a specific historical and political context, that of the *épuration*, when the thesis of the writer's irresponsibility was being used (principally by Jean Paulhan) to spare collaborationist authors from execution. This situated reading of the play's significance, then, would merely lead to the conclusion that *Les Morts sans sépulture* promotes a certain argument about the responsibility of collaborators in order to advance the theory of engaged literature. Engaged literature would thus serve above all to advance the *theory* of engagement.

One might cite the importance of instrumentality (*ustensilité*) in *L'Etre et le néant* to note that the collaborationist's torture methods and Sartre's committed stance are both instrumentalizations in the service of political aims. In this reading, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* becomes a political-literary theodicy: to argue that literature is useful dovetails with the thesis that suffering is useful, with the caveat that the usefulness of literature would, for Sartre, stand in explicit relation to an understanding of how to react *against* oppression, and thus suffering, in its broadest form. This hypothetical reading would align *L'Etre et le néant*'s agonistic intersubjective dynamic of *pour-autrui* – which in its extreme form is sadomasochistic – with the theorization of the literary object and its reception in *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* The question then becomes how to instrumentalize the smaller suffering, say, of the prisoner who dies in captivity for the cause of the greater good. These are the real stakes not only of *Les Morts sans sépulture*, but of any retrospective judgment of Sartre's political engagement as a whole.

The theme of the political prisoner is thus a privileged model for how responsibility for human suffering is adjudicated in Sartre's work. In *La Nausée*, the subject of Roquentin's historical biography, the Marquis de Rollebon, dies in prison; in *L'Etre et le néant*, the image of the prison ship ("la galère") appears repeatedly as the figuration of collective subjectivity (285, 455), while torture is the limit-case that demonstrates the limitless quality of freedom ("la torture même ne nous dépossède pas de notre liberté: c'est *librement* que nous y cédons"

(569)); in *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*, Frantz is haunted by the thought of the Russian partisans tortured and executed on his orders; in *Saint Genet* and *Critique de la Raison dialectique*, long passages are devoted to the loser of history condemned to die alone and forgotten in prison. The passages on the loser of history in *Saint Genet* recapitulate these remarks in Sartre's essay on Mallarmé:

> Pour celui qui est engagé sans réserve dans l'Histoire, perdre est atroce: ce sont les puissances du Mal qui triomphent. En vain lui dira-t-on que la postérité, deux siècles plus tard, admirera ses vertus. Il s'en moque; il sait bien que ses petits-neveux ne seront plus dans le coup et qu'ils pourront se permettre cette appréciation quasi esthétique de son courage ou de son abnégation parce que, justement, ils seront tout à fait indifférents à sa cause. Ainsi devient-elle pour eux le moyen; et les vertus sont la fin. Mais pour le vaincu, justement, c'est la cause qui est la fin et qui dicte ses moyens. Consolerez-vous Saint-Just qui, de l'échafaud où il attend son tour de mourir, voit la ruine de son oeuvre, en lui délivrant un certificat de bonne conduite? (*Mallarmé* 63)

The problem of ends and means regulates Sartre's interpretation of the meaning of history: the political prisoner who fought for a lost cause would ordinarily see all meaning evaporate when facing execution. In *Mallarmé*, however, the case of Saint-Just is the negative double of the historical loser who believes in God; for the latter, the defeat of a political cause is only relative, because abstract justice is restituted by a divine observer. In Sartre's estimation, the French poets of the late nineteenth century were engaged in an analogous process of losing in order to win in the eyes of a transcendent literary public. The political prisoner is thus a metaphor for the very Sartrean theory of literature BHL admires. The engaged writer is trapped in a double bind in which to continue writing is to fail at writing's essential task. The writer conscious of this paradox is faced with certain knowledge of defeat; thus if Mallarmé refused to accept the theological ghosts of

transeendence through Poetry, he would be literature's Saint-Just: "il faut se sacrifier pour une cause qu'on sait perdue" (145). The death of literature's transccndent meaning, whose emblematie figure is Sartre's Mallarmé, is reiterated in the double bind of committed literature.

The collaborator is the diametrical opposite of the committed ideologue condemned to death. In the portrait of how the collaborator sees the *résistant* in Sartre's August 1944 essay, "Qu'est-ee qu'un collaborateur?" the eollaborator enjoys delusions of victory in which history will ultimately prove the Resistance to have been a lost cause.

> Ceux qui se sont dévoués à une eause perdue, pensaient les collaborateurs, peuvent bien apparaître comme de belles âmes: ils n'en sont pas moins des égarés et des attardés dans leur siècle. Ils meurent deux fois puisqu'on cnterre avec eux les principes au nom desquels ils ont vécu. Les promoteurs de l'événemcnt historique, au contraire, qu'il s'agisse de César ou de Napoléon ou de Ford, seront peut-être blamcs de leur temps au nom d'une certaine éthique; mais cinquante ans, cent ans plus tard on ne se souviendra que de leur effieacité et on les jugera au nom des principes qu'ils ont eux-mêmcs forgés" (*Situations III*, 52)

In *Morts sans sépulture*, however, it is the membcrs of the Vichy militia who know that thcir cause is lost. The play is set in July 1944, and Landrieu, the militia commander, expects defeat and death to arrive shortly (190). The collaborator plays the role of history's loser; Landrieu is perfectly aware that defeat is imminent. The Resistance members who die in the play are aware that their cause will ultimately triumph, and in Sartre's reasoning they will find apotheosis as representatives of virtue within the cycle of retrospcctive illusion. Victory will define the meaning of the sacrifice of lifc, and suffering will be recuperated as an expression of virtue. It is ultimately Landrieu who suffers the political version of the crushing loss of meaning Sartre diagnoses in the Mallarmcan crisis of poetry.

Sartre's justification of suffering is eontingent on the difference

between victory and defeat. Historical defeat negates the content of a cause, and the ability to assign meaning is concomitant with winning. The Sartrean political-literary theodicy would rescue victory at all costs in order to preserve what is perhaps nothing more than a myth of usefulness. The suffering thus justified loses its absolute quality, so to speak, as suffering; instead, it becomes a version of the perversity that serves, in Sartre's biography of Baudelaire, to remedy a shameful feeling of uselessness. The dialectic Sartre diagnoses in Baudelaire's *Heautontimoroumenos* is one in which the desire to be judged and punished represents a flight from the pure (and perfectly useless) freedom of contingency: "il a pris le parti de ses bourreaux… il a réclamé leur fouet, il a demandé qu'on le contraignît par la terreur à pratiquer les vertus qu'ils prônent" (*Baudelaire*, 55). In *Baudelaire*, the opposition between the political prisoner condemned to death and the "promoteur de l'événement historique" takes the form of the dualism of atheist and Satanist. In Sartre's analysis, desiring evil means desiring it as a positive good:

> …le Bien se définit toujours comme l'objet et la fin de la volonté profonde. Telle est justement l'attitude de Baudelaire. Il y a entre ses actes et ceux du coupable vulgaire la différence qui sépare les messes noires de l'athéisme. L'athée ne se soucie pas de Dieu, parce qu'il a une fois pour toutes décidé qu'il n'existait pas. Mais le prêtre des messes noires hait Dieu parce qu'Il est aimable… il met sa volonté à nier l'ordre établi, mais, en même temps, il conserve cet ordre et l'affirme plus que jamais (81)

Thus Baudelaire's masochism is aligned with a certain (inverted) theology. Both involve the rejection of usefulness on the mode of sexual perversity: "dans le plaisir normal, on jouit de l'objet et l'on s'oublie, au lieu que dans cette titillation énervante, c'est du désir qu'on jouit, c'est-à-dire de soi. Et, derechef… à cet énervement sans repos, il confère un autre sens: elle représente l'insatisfaction radicale du Dieu déchu" (218-219). It also means the perverse choice to make literature useless:

Baudelaire "méprise l'*utile* et l'action... ses poèmes sont totalement inutiles" (79). As a remedy to Baudelaire's willful simulation of useless suffering, as an alternative to the conception of literature in which the writer deliberately chooses the role of the loser, committed literature would impose a justification on suffering. And in its fixation on heading straight for this goal, the voluntaristic commitment on behalf of freedom would eschew uselessness altogether.

For the political prisoner who dies in captivity, means and ends are reversed; what once was a political goal is now only the forgotten pretext for the incarnation of an abstract virtue. Similarly, without engagement (construed in the sense evoked by Jacques Derrida in his posthumously published letter on Sartre[6]), literature would collapse into a vehicle for its author's posthumous fame. Sartre's meditation on literature and defeat represents an admirable attempt to mitigate irremediable suffering by preserving the relationship between means and ends. Yet by diagnosing "useless" suffering as a form of perversity, Sartre also presents a dilemma in which to eliminate suffering is to eliminate literature. To this dilemma, neither Lévinas nor BHL offer a solution.

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NOTES

[1] Vincent de Coorebyter, "*L'Espoir maintenant*, ou le mythe d'une rupture." *Les Temps modernes* 627 (2004): 205-227.

[2] Alberto Gomez-Muller, *Sartre: de la nausée à l'engagement* (Paris: Editions du Félin, 2004).

[3] Emmanuel Lévinas, "La Souffrance inutile," *Entre nous: essais sur le penser-à-l'autre* (Paris: Grasset, 1991).

[4] Sartre expressed this idea repeatedly in 1945 and 1946. In *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), Sartre writes that during the Occupation, "il ne se passait pas de semaine que nous ne nous demandions: 'Si l'on me torturait, que ferais-je?'" (220). See also "New Writing in France," *Vogue* (July 1945) 84-5, cited in Sartre, *Oeuvres romanesques*, eds. Michel Contat et Michel Rybalka (Paris: Gallimard, 2001). "'Parlerais-je si j'étais torturé?' Une telle question, pour nos

pères et nos grands-pères, était complètement abstraite...Pour Camus et tous les autres, au contraire, cette question était concrète" (1919). See also the interview in *Combat* (30 octobre 1946) on *Morts sans sépulture*, cited in Sartre, *Théâtre complet*, ed. Michel Contat (Paris: Gallimard, 2005). "Mes personnages se posent cette question qui a tourmenté tant d'hommes de notre génération dans le monde entier: 'Comment tiendrais-je devant la torture?' Question que leurs pères n'ont pas eu à se poser" (203).

[5] Gisèle Sapiro applies the term *capital moral* to the non-fictional counterpart of this phenomenon in her sociological study of French postwar literature; see Gisèle Sapiro, *La Guerre des écrivains* (Paris: Fayard, 1999) 561.

[6] Jacques Derrida, "'Il courait mort': salut, salut," *Les Temps modernes* 629 (2004-2005): 181-223. See in particular "Note 5," pp. 211-214: "Néeessité impérative de garder le mot "engagement," un beau mot encore tout neuf (gage, gageure et langage, "situation," responsabilité infinie, liberté critique au regard de tous les appareils, etc.)..."

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