From urgent understanding to raw writing: the synergy of journalism and fiction in the novels of Sorj Chalandon

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From Urgent Understanding to Raw Writing: The Synergy of Journalism and Fiction in the Novels of Sorj Chalandon

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Declaration

I, Pauline Elizabeth Harris, declare that this thesis is all my own work.

Abstract

Sorj Chalandon (1952-) was previously an acclaimed foreign correspondent in Ireland, Lebanon, Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan for the French centre-left daily newspaper *Libération* between 1973 and 2007. He has been a journalist for the satirical weekly *Le Canard enchaîné* since 2009. He is also a prize-winning author of ten novels, published between 2005 and 2021, the most recent of which was nominated for the *Prix Goncourt*. Yet despite these achievements, there is no extended academic inquiry into his writing. My thesis addresses this deficiency by examining the transition and interplay between his journalism and his fiction. Chalandon's profound association with the visual emerges from his early cartoons in *Libération* and his productive collaborations with photographers. Although he emphasises the distinction between his reporting and his fiction –letting others speak and finding his own voice– I argue that his engagement with imagery constitutes a crucial bridge between them.

My approach has entailed the textual, historical and cultural reading of his work through diverse but interconnected prisms. Given the markedly autobiographical genesis of most of his fiction, my research proceeds from a scrutiny of the self-image he presents to colleagues, other writers and to me in two written interviews. I interrogate his journalism through his empathy with his reporting subjects and his imperative to hear and impart their stories. This instinct is palpable in his 'geopolitical' novels set in Ireland and Lebanon, where he suffered considerable psychological trauma. The source of his most enduring anguish is his relationship with his father, which I pursue across four 'paternal' novels, culminating in a shocking *dénouement*. Finally, my analysis of his female first-person novel, emanating from the cancer diagnoses of himself and his wife, illuminates the progressive emancipation of his women characters.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate my thesis to my late parents, Sheila and Eugene Donnelly, who would have deeply appreciated Sorj Chalandon's affection for Ireland and her people.

Introduction

'Ce que je mets à nu, ce n'est pas mon corps, c'est mon désarroi… J'ai le droit de pleurer, j'ai le droit de revendiquer la souffrance, la douleur, pas pour m'en plaindre, mais pour la partager.'[1]

In May 2011, a fifty-nine- year- old French author and journalist broke down during his keynote speech to the Annual Conference for Franco-Irish Studies in Lille. He was describing his anguish on discovering the shocking truth about his former friend, Belfast man Denis Donaldson.[2] Later that year, Sorj Chalandon would receive the Grand Prix du Roman de l'Académie Française for *Retour à Killybegs*, his second novel set in Ireland.[3] Paradoxically, such prestigious recognition had its roots in this doomed friendship which developed against the shadowy backdrop of Irish Republican paramilitarism. Although Donaldson possessed seemingly impeccable nationalist credentials, he was unmasked as a serial informer for the British secret intelligence services and was subsequently murdered.

I first encountered Chalandon in 2014 through his first 'Irish' novel *Mon Traître*.[4] The cover depicts a black-and-white photograph of a paint-bespattered Belfast wall, on which 'IRA' is messily daubed, with a British soldier crouching warily beside it, holding his rifle. This unexpected conjunction of a French novel with a familiar scene from my Belfast teenage years inspired my fascination with Chalandon's writing. That my initial interest was sparked by an image rather than language connects felicitously with Chalandon's own predilection for the visual, compellingly present in his depiction of the horrors of civil war and sectarian violence from his professional assignments in Lebanon and Ireland. My earliest contribution to the still slender body of scholarly commentary on his fiction was my 2015 study, *Le Kaléidoscope de la Trahison dans Trois Romans de Sorj*

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[1] Jean-Luc Hees, *Entretien avec Sorj Chalandon* (Collection L'Écrivain, audiolib), CD 5895505 (2016). Except for my direct discussion of the interview in Chapter One, other references to this source are prefixed Hees.

[2] Eamon Maher, 'An Irishman's Diary', Piece dealing with Sorj Chalandon's Award-Winning Novel about the Northern Ireland Conflict, *Irish Times* 26 March 2012, 15.

[3] Sorj Chalandon, *Retour à Killybegs* (Paris: Éditions Grasset et Fasquelle, 2011). Further references to this work are given by page number in the text and prefixed *RK*.

[4] Sorj Chalandon, *Mon Traître* (Paris: Éditions Grasset et Fasquelle, 2007). Further references to this work are given by page number in the text and prefixed *MT*.

Chalandon.[5] My problematisation of the forms of betrayal pervading *Mon Traître*, *Retour à Killybegs* and *La Légende de nos pères*, one of his 'father' novels, provided the major impetus for this more extensive interrogation of his journalism and fiction and the interplay between them.[6] This examination of Chalandon's articulated distinction between himself as journalist and author charts the narrative and stylistic evolution of his work, and tracks salient physical, psychological, familial and political manifestations of treachery, duplicity, self-reinvention and self-delusion across the spectrum of his novels.

Methodological Analysis

My research introduced me to Chalandon's 'voices': the news reporter; the foreign correspondent; the war reporter; the Hibernophile; the textual contributor to photojournalism; the award-winning journalist and novelist; the cancer sufferer; and the betrayed son earnestly seeking closure with his father. Their emergence through his highly diverse *œuvre* delineates the parameters of my thesis. Peter Clough's and Kathy Nutbrown's model reflects the orientation of my own pursuit of the aesthetic, journalistic, psychological and geopolitical elements imbuing his work. As professors of educational research, their paradigm presents methodology as a practical experience, underpinned by the constituents of 'radical enquiry': radical listening; radical looking; radical reading; and radical questioning as a foundation for sound and innovative scholarly research.[7] The first component connects with the overarching notion of voice, including my listening to Chalandon's listening, as in his exhortations to pay attention to Holocaust survivors' harrowing testimonies in his report of the Klaus Barbie trial.[8] By listening to his interview with Jean-Luc Hees, I noted facets of his psyche through his vocal modulations. Similarly, his fervid exposition and doleful introspection during his televised introduction of his most recent novel *Enfant de Salaud* on the

[5] Pauline Harris, *Le Kaléidoscope de la Trahison dans Trois Romans de Sorj Chalandon* (Birkbeck, University of London, 2015), unpublished dissertation.
[6] Sorj Chalandon, *La Légende de nos pères* (Paris: Éditions Grasset et Fasquelle, 2009). Further references to this work are given by page number in the text and prefixed *LLP*.
[7] Peter Clough and Kathy Nutbrown, *A Students' Guide to Methodology* (Sage Publications, 2012), p. 26.
[8] Sorj Chalandon and Pascale Nivelle, *Crimes contre l'Humanité : Barbie, Touvier, Bousquet, Papon* (Plon /Libération, 1998), pp. 11-149. Further references to this work are given by page number in the text and prefixed *PKB*.

literary programme 'La Grande Librairie' inform my research ambition: to propose a pioneering profile of Chalandon's evolution from the 'urgent understanding' of the reporter to the 'raw writing' of the author.[9]

My 'looking' incorporates the fluidity of the 'shifting Chalandons,' arising from my perception of the personal, professional and aesthetic entities he projects. Equally, 'looking' demands my critical verification of Chalandon's positioning within his journalistic and fictional work through my discovery of his earlier photojournalistic collaborations which arguably mould the fiction writer he becomes. Mining the visual also entails what Clough and Nutbrown consider an indispensable function of effective research decision-making: 'exploration which makes the familiar strange' (p. 26). My examination of Chalandon's textual accompaniment to Irish photojournalism compilations illustrates precisely this point. His commentaries on scenes that I have personally witnessed encouraged me to apply a more considered 'viewfinder' to my recollections. My 'radical looking' includes my scrutiny of photographs of him, infused with his consciousness of the power of the image. Perhaps their most salient unifying aspect is his seeming ordinariness and approachability, substantiated by his direct and unpretentious contact with me and the sparse candour of his written responses.

Janet Varner Gunn's conception of autobiography as an act of 'a self-reading,' entailing the construction of one's own life for the reader, has influenced my radical reading. Indeed, her formulation of the reader of autobiography as the '*displayed self, not the hidden self*' connects with the notion of radical looking.[10] My reading of Chalandon's professional network elicits relevant testimony from his *Libération* colleagues Jean Guisnel and Gérard Lefort, regarding not only his status as a journalist, but also narrative and stylistic antecedents of his fictional work. Moreover, my scrutiny of psychotherapist Jean-Paul Mari's characterisation of Chalandon the friend, the journalist and the patient through the lens of his own traumatic reporting career enabled me to apprehend an intricate intermeshing of

[9] Chalandon refers to his sense of urgency in his interview with Hees. Olivier Quelier describes Chalandon's writing as 'passée à la râpe' in 'Sorj Chalandon: « Je pense qu'on a toujours des mots de trop, » https://grandeurservitude.wordpress.com, [accessed 27 August 2020]. This phrase had previously appeared in a now inaccessible reference from 10 January 2008.

[10] Janet Varner Gunn, *Autobiography: Towards a Poetics of Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), p.9.

the personal and the professional. I also read Chalandon the journalist through Professor of Journalism Denis Ruellan's conceptualisation of 'en amont' and 'en aval', the journalist 'in the field' and 'in the office' respectively.[11] Contrary to Chalandon's declared inability to detect himself within his journalism, my reading of his colleagues' observations and his own written responses to me suggest a tangible identity. He is impelled by his commitment to social justice, evidenced by his earliest *Libération* series of drawings and by his advocacy of individuals' rights against corporate and political authority. His reading of images and relationships connects themes as diverse as his personalisation of photographic subjects; his characterisation of the traitor and the betrayed; and his spirited engagement with the physiological, psychological and social effects of cancer. Crucially, the latter signals Chalandon's first significant 'reading' of women, in their responses to the encroaching stigmata of cancer on their bodies and psyche.

Radical questioning drives the core meaning and structure of my thesis. My fundamental question: 'Why is this Frenchman so familiar with "my" Belfast?' engendered a profusion of other lines of inquiry which clarified my research intention and shaped my conceptualisation. What motivates him and why? How did the journalist become the novelist? What are the linkages, tensions and trade-offs between journalism and fiction-writing? How does Chalandon perceive and 'inhabit' this reporter-novelist duality? How effectively does my evidence confront his insistence on its dichotomous nature? What links and distinguishes the Chalandons of Belfast and Lebanon? And how accurately have I located the intersection between his subjective and his professional selves?

Although I pursued my mission to hear his voice directly through a personal interview in 2018, this did not materialise. However, having been contacted by him in Autumn 2021, I sent written questions to him in October and again in February 2022, to elucidate some outstanding issues. I received his permission to cite our exchanges on 19 October 2022. The satisfaction of securing this 'scoop' was tempered by the realisation that I could only ask my questions once: there was no possibility of a swift clarificatory follow-up, and he therefore had 'thinking time'

[11] Denis Ruellan, *Le Journalisme ou le Professionalisme du Flou* (Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 2007), pp.157-158.

to filter out any contradictory or incongruous statements before returning his replies. More subtly, I could not 'read' either his facial expressions or gestures. Nevertheless, my privileged possession of Chalandon's own reflections on his life and art transcended these constraints. I selected three broad headings: 'Autobiographie', 'Journalisme' and 'Fiction'.[12] I deliberately omitted his relationship with Denis Donaldson because I did not wish to cause him distress and in so doing, risk deflecting him from my other questions. Furthermore, Donaldson's killing remains the subject of judicial proceedings by his family. My enquiry concerning Chalandon's photographic collaborations constitutes *entirely new* research territory. His answer to my final question corroborates my overarching argument for the ontological and aesthetic interdependence of Chalandon, journalist and fiction writer.

The Architecture of my Thesis

My examination of personal, professional and artistic aspects of Chalandon's life and work is scaffolded upon four interrelated platforms. Chapters One and Two examine his *personae* and the spectrum of his journalism respectively. Chapter Three discusses his 'geopolitical' novels *Mon Traître, Retour à Killybegs* and *Le Quatrième Mur*, directly inspired by his experiences as foreign correspondent with *Libération*. Chapter Four interrogates his perspective on the father in *Le Petit Bonzi, La Légende de nos pères, Profession du père* and *Enfant de Salaud*; and Chapter Five scrutinises his interpretation of women's lives and experience in *Une joie féroce*. Chapters Three, Four and Five commence with synopses of the relevant novels. Given the structural parameters of my research, my consideration of his two other novels is necessarily limited, but my allusions to the position of the narrator and his authorial credibility respectively are supported by apposite references to *Une Promesse* and *Le Jour d'avant.* Regarding my referencing more generally, I have used in-text references for the rapid identification of sources when discussing more extensive critical contributions or a recently cited source.

I have blended the exposition of the framework for my chapters with my evaluation of critical commentary for thematic coherence and to articulate, and

[12] See Annexes 1 and 2 for my questions and Chalandon's responses.

compensate for, the considerable gaps in scholarship pertaining to Chalandon's work. As critics focus mainly on his fiction concerning Ireland and the father, I address their observations principally in the delineation of my Chapters Three and Four respectively. Their seeming lack of acknowledgement of the influence of Chalandon's journalism is puzzling, given that he has been a journalist for half a century and an author for only seventeen years. Equally, they do not engage with Chalandon the man 'behind' the fiction, which leads to an insufficient apprehension of the propitious and adverse factors shaping his psyche and his writing, such as the role of his artistic talent and his experience of personal betrayal.

Chapter One: Auto-Bio-Graphy and the Fabrication of Sorj Chalandon

This chapter presents pertinent concepts, themes and narratives underpinning Chalandon's quest for his 'Je', the self which he considers absent from his journalism. I have progressively refined my personal, professional and artistic profile of Chalandon, particularly after the publication in August 2021 of *Enfant de Salaud*, his most autobiographical work, and his responses to my written questions in October 2021 and February 2022.

Autobiography is examined through concepts adapted from the analyses of Christopher Cowley and others.[13] The 'auto' concerns Chalandon's self-representations in selected interviews; the 'bio' addresses the objective assessments of colleagues; and the 'graphy' interrogates examples of his reporting as the threshold to his fictional writing. However, I emphasise the fluidity and interstices of the 'selves' Chalandon projects, thus amplifying the concept of the autobiographical self, proposed by Philippe Lejeune.[14] The term 'fabrication', borrowed from the historian Peter Burke, does not imply any conscious duplicity but rather seeks to highlight the accretion of diverse personal and professional perspectives on him. [15] It is principally through Jacques Rancière's conceptualisation of the emancipated spectator who actively interprets and foregrounds his own story that Chalandon's instinct for self-expression is revealed.

[13] Christopher Cowley, 'Introduction', *The Philosophy of Autobiography* (The University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 1-21, (pp. 2-8).
[14] Philippe Lejeune, *Le Pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975).
[15] Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

Moreover, his early drawings in *Libération* underscore his solidarity with social activism and his challenge to what Jean-Philippe Déranty frames through Rancière's perspective as 'the ways in which the thoughts, voices and actions of the dominated are made invisible and inaudible'.[16] Equally, the desire of Chalandon's characters to experience 'the other side', particularly evident in his portrayals of the father, finds resonance in Rancière's notion of the process of subjectivisation: 'le désir de voir ce qui se passe de l'autre côté, d'être initié à une autre vie'.[17]

The largely chronological analysis of eleven interviews, including one extended written account, one documentary film and Chalandon's responses to my questions, contextualises his motives, while their sequencing highlights the evolution of his ideas. Although each interviewer's standpoint accentuates specific facets of Chalandon's life and work, intersections inevitably arise. The first interview in 2008 with an anonymous blogger M.N. on an international political website obliged me to reflect upon my earlier perception of his asymmetric treatment of Republican and Loyalist narratives in Chapter Two. The second discussion is with journalist and radio producer Rebecca Manzone in 2010. The third and most wide-ranging interview is with fellow journalist Jean-Luc Hees in 2016. The fourth interviewer is his close friend Jean-Paul Mari, journalist, writer and psychotherapist. Like Chalandon, Mari experienced trauma from his reporting assignments in the Middle East and featured him in his 2008 account of the devastating psychological impact on those working in military or press roles in conflict zones. In association with this written testimony, examined in Chapter Two, Mari's 2010 documentary presents interviews with sufferers of post-traumatic stress disorder, including Chalandon. Hees's 2016 interview precedes Mari's film and the 2015 discussion with Arnaud Viviant, the fifth interview, because it provides a panoramic context for later views on Chalandon. The sixth interview from 2017 is with *Les Échos* journalist, Thierry Gandillot, focused particularly on Chalandon's formative experiences as a young adult. The seventh interview is with psychoanalyst Françoise Laurent in February 2020. In the eighth

[16] Jean-Philippe Déranty, ed., 'Introduction: a journey in equality', in *Jacques Rancière:Key Concepts* (Abingdon: Routledge 2014), pp.1-14 (p.11).
[17] Jacques Rancière, *Et tant pis pour les gens fatigués: Entretiens* (Paris: Éditions Amsterdam, 2009), p.38.

interview of 30 August 2021, Chalandon discusses *Enfant de Salaud* with an unnamed presenter on the Belgian television channel RTL Info; and in the ninth on 1 September 2021, he is one of four guest authors on the programme, 'La Grande Librairie' on France 5, hosted by journalist François Busnel, formerly editor of *Lire* literary magazine. My questions and Chalandon's responses in October 2021 and February 2022 constitute the tenth interview. Finally, journalist Béatrice Kammer's discussion with him in April 2022 examines the interrelationship between his journalism and his fiction and his perspective on the enduring impact of his parents. I located further commentaries on his work within Chapter Two - those of Denis Ruellan and two of Chalandon's former *Libération* colleagues, Jean Guisnel and Gérard Lefort because of their common interest on matters influencing his journalistic technique.

Chapter Two: Declaim, Describe, Debride: The Evolution of Sorj Chalandon as Journalist-Author

Pursuing another entirely fresh line of inquiry, this chapter traces the development of these two *personae*. In Section One, the contributions from Chalandon's former *Libération* colleagues and two scholarly commentators amplify evidence relating to their personal and professional perceptions of him from Chapter One. Section Two probes the interrelationship between Chalandon's journalism and his fiction through a broader comparison of French and Anglo-American journalistic orientations. The supporting conceptual framework presents the dynamics of storytelling and truth telling, underpinned by the insidiously damaging impact on war reporters of continued exposure to conflict. Section Three discusses the nature and impact of Chalandon's journalism through a selection of his *Libération* articles on Ireland and his *Le Canard enchaîné* columns, including his early social and political drawings. The analysis of his award-winning account of the 1987 Klaus Barbie war crimes trial foregrounds his searing yet sensitive depiction of the dignified resilience of Holocaust survivors. Crucially, my identification of the acuity and empathy in his textual collaborations with photographers denotes a vital phase in his aesthetic progression.

Chapter Three: War Wounds: Space, Sight and Self-Sufficiency

My tripartite thematic configuration evaluates the intermeshing of friendship and betrayal in *Mon Traître, Retour à Killybegs* and *Le Quatrième Mur*.[18] The notion of urban space arises as an ambiguous and potentially treacherous arena, where the protagonists negotiate their needs and ambitions, reflecting the polarities of belonging and rootlessness, dislocation and re-location. The leitmotif of sight emerges through physical perception, moral consciousness, hindsight and what might be termed emotional literacy: the ability to 'read' relationships. Self-sufficiency may be bolstered or eroded by physical, psychological and political exigencies, yoked to the notion of sufficiency: being a 'good enough' friend or ally and by extension, being duly worthy of that friendship. My exposition of these three dimensions draws upon Jacques Rancière, Tahar Ben Jelloun and Hannah Arendt respectively in relation to the engagement and autonomy of the spectator; the corrosiveness of treachery on the dynamics of friendship; and the banality of evil.

The key differences between my multidimensional conceptualisation of Chalandon's geopolitical narratives and those advanced by commentators reside in my comprehensive investigation into, and my judicious synthesis of, diverse facets of his writing. American critic William Cloonan's review of *Mon Traître*, compressed within ten lines, lacks scope and coherence. His terse observation: 'Chalandon is a journalist who covered the fighting in Northern Ireland' requires precision and curiosity. Although he evokes the anguish of the betrayed young protagonist ('but the novel makes clear that the narrator has suffered the deeper wound') he does not elicit any connection between Antoine's trauma and Chalandon's personal experience.[19]

Dominique Thévenin's more detailed critique helpfully illuminates those aspects of the novel which confirm it as 'un roman d'apprentissage'. This epithet accords with my analysis that learning is a key element in Antoine's progressive induction into Belfast's parlance and politics. Thévenin cogently characterises Tyrone

[18] Sorj Chalandon, *Le Quatrième Mur* (Paris: Éditions Grasset et Fasquelle, 2013). Further references to this work are given by page number in the text and prefixed *LQM*.
[19] William Cloonan, 'Celebrations: The Novel in 2008', *The French Review* 83 1 (October 2009), (p. 41).

Meehan, the district's leader, as a 'figure de proue'. Although his statement: 'l'histoire d'Antoine n'est pas de la fiction' is corroborated by Chalandon himself in his interview with Hees, the spirit of his assertion that 'Chalandon a essayé de se remettre de la trahison de Donaldson qu'il accuse d'avoir abîmé la confiance offerte' is repudiated by the author, who resiles from any therapeutic implication. Thévenin's conclusion that 'le message de ce roman est la notion d'Amitié' *is* plausible, particularly as he locates it within his discussion of the impact of historical and socio-political pressures on this irrevocably broken friendship.[20]

The most comprehensive commentary of the Irish novels, underpinning a wider study of the culture of the Irish Republican movement, is that of Stephen Hopkins.[21] His assessment proceeds from his detailed knowledge of the political and military structure of the IRA and its punishment code, including the trial and execution of traitors to the movement. He highlights some correspondences between Chalandon's personal and professional life as a long-standing journalist and the sequencing of these novels. He also speculates on the motives for Donaldson's betrayal: 'Chalandon, in the afterword to *My Traitor*, seems to imply that Donaldson had betrayed the cause "for a few thousand pounds sterling", but the specific motivation…remains obscure' (p. 10). He references journalist David Mc Kittrick's suggestion that Donaldson's 'incorrigible womanising' may have caused him to be blackmailed into working as an informer (p. 30). Curiously, another source reveals that this same reporter had discounted this very possibility on the previous day, stating that 'Donaldson's frequent approaches to women were so well-known in republican circles that they were not regarded as rendering him open to recruitment as an agent'.[22]

Hopkins emphasises the strong affinity which Chalandon felt with the Republican cause, while conscious of his obligatory impartiality: 'The war was cruel and dirty, a war in the shadows, which had to be put into words. As a journalist with *Libération*, I gave a balanced account of each side's hopes. As a human, my heart

[20] Dominique Thévenin, 'Mon Traître by Sorj Chalandon', *The French Review*, 82 6 (May, 2009), (pp.1360-1361).
[21] Stephen Hopkins, 'The "informer" and the political and organisational culture of the Irish republican movement: old and new interpretations', *Irish Studies Review*, 25 1 (2017), pp.1-38.
[22] David McKittrick, 'The spy's tale: the life and death of Denis Donaldson', 5 April 2006 <www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/the-spys-tale-the-life-and-death-of-denis-donaldson> ,[accessed 23 March 2018].

went out to the Republicans' (p. 21). However, although he undoubtedly makes a strong contribution to an understanding of the socio-historical context, Hopkins cannot exploit the profound connection with Chalandon's original text which I possess, because he is working from the 2011 and 2013 English translations of *Mon Traître* and *Retour à Killybegs* respectively (p. 28). Being at a linguistic remove, he cannot engage authentically with Chalandon's 'voice', nor with the nuances of his style and visualisation across the two novels.

Cécile Barraud's article on *Le Quatrième Mur* intermeshes with my exploration of the visual, spatial and psycho-aesthetic dimensions of the novel.[23] Proceeding from the topic of 'dead cities', the thematic basis of her exploration - urban destruction on the context of the Lebanese civil war - she blends the devastation of Beirut with Georges the protagonist's psychological implosion. Her triangular configuration: 'la dramatisation de la destruction', 'Poétique de la dévastation' et 'Sacralisation des ruines' discloses the pivotal leitmotif of the ruined city, reinforced by her scrutiny of the etymology of the visual. For example, in her statement that 'la ville morte, à ce niveau du roman, n'est qu'une image (une *imago*, une imitation)', she underscores its immobility. Equally, she interrogates the roots of the word 'fiction': 'une fiction (au sens étymologique d'action de façonner, de feindre)' to foreground the sense of unreality experienced by protagonist Georges in his first encounter with his mentor-friend, Sam (p. 60). By defining the paradox at the heart of the novel -'Beyrouth ravagée apparaît bien comme un lieu de récréation'- Barraud exposes the irrepressible reflex of the natural world to flourish despite widespread annihilation. The poetic dimension emanates from what she perceives as the 'réinvention du paysage' and the transformative power of conflict (p. 63). In her discussion of the 'sacralisation des ruines', she evokes the city of Beirut suspended between life and death; the metamorphosis of the Chatila refugee camp into a tortured human body; and Georges's mind forever haunted by Beirut, reflecting the fusion that Barraud characterises as: 'la nécessaire cohésion de l'être intérieur à l'espace extérieur' (p.67). While acknowledging her subtle apprehension of the unanticipated aesthetics of war-ravaged Beirut, my scrutiny incorporates comparisons with Belfast and examines the resonances of

[23] Cécile Barraud, 'Villes mortes, villes à l'agonie. Écriture du ravage dans *Le Quatrième Mur* de Sorj Chalandon', *Cédille*, 12 (April, 2016), 59-69.

Chalandon's reporting experience in Lebanon in Georges's characterisation, particularly his physical and psychological transition from Paris to Beirut.

Chapter Four: Performative Paternity: Creativity, Curation and Missed Encounters in *Profession du père, Le Petit Bonzi, La Légende de nos pères* and *Enfant de Salaud*

My thematic appraisal of the evolution of Chalandon's notion of the father and his lingering transgenerational presence permits a more complete perspective than could be achieved by a strictly chronological approach. Although they are separated by twelve years, the juxtaposition of *La Légende de nos pères* and *Enfant de Salaud* is logical, given Chalandon's reference to the character Beuzaboc from the earlier work in his interview with François Busnel and his allusion to its title in the later novel.[24] The novels are discussed through three interconnected interpretations of self-invention: the establishment of identity; and belonging and purpose. Examined in Section Two, this dimension incorporates the fathers' management of their space, their capacity to curate their image and their engagement with reported fact. Memory disseminated through narrative and the deployment of opportunistic imposture are interrogated in Section Three. Section Four explores the confluence of the personal and historical in *Enfant de Salaud*, where the journalist son's avid quest for the truth about his father Jean's shocking past is enacted in parallel with his coverage of the Klaus Barbie trial in 1987. Regarding *Le Petit Bonzi*, its connection with paternity is not immediately apparent, but I demonstrate that, although depicting aggressive paternal dominance within a tense family unit, Chalandon's first novel explores the father's potential for more constructive self-fulfilment.

Unsurprisingly, Cloonan's analysis of this work focuses on protagonist Jacques and his relationship with the imaginary Bonzi, with a passing reference to 'the father's habitual silence, punctuated by occasional acts of physical and verbal violence'.[25] Inaccuracies arise from the abridged nature of Cloonan's article. For

[24] Sorj Chalandon, *Enfant de Salaud* (Paris: Éditions Grasset et Fasquelle, 2021), p. 114. Further references to this work are given by page number in the text and prefixed *ES*.
[25] W. Cloonan, 'Le Petit Bonzi by Sorj Chalandon', *The French Review*, 80, 4 (March 2007), 944-945, (p. 945). Further references to this work are given by page number in the text and prefixed *LPB*.

example, he provides no supporting evidence that Jacques's teacher is instrumental in his recovery from his stammer, instead unhelpfully compressing Jacques's gruelling, partial improvement. Equally, his declaration that: 'Bonzi is the perfect companion with whom he can share his daydreams and fantasies. Jacques is well equipped in both areas, but curiously enough, his musings have almost no erotic content' is both insightful and baffling. He rightly identifies Bonzi as a creative wellspring for Jacques, but his wonder at the absence of eroticism disregards Chalandon's casting of the protagonist as young for his age. Cloonan's intermittent tendency to overlay his twenty-first century perspective upon the novel's socio-historical setting leads him to compare the teacher-pupil interaction to slavery. Consequently, his remark: 'It never seems to occur to students in this environment that they are in school to learn anything' attests to his sporadically anachronistic appreciation of the novel's educational backdrop (p. 945). Didactic forms of teaching and learning predominated in the 1960s (and beyond), and particularly at Jacques's school. Conversely, Cloonan's exposition is more sure-footed in his salient reference to the primacy of syntax in Jacques's painstaking, almost military, organisation of the vocabulary he selects.

Dominique Jeannerod frames his succinct twenty-word reference to *La Légende de nos Pères* as an example of family quests, some of which are linked to the Second World War, within the context of the trends of the novel during the early twenty-first century.[26] The laconic nature of his allusion contrasts markedly with my tracing of the psychological and at times symbiotic odyssey undertaken by the novel's protagonists and of their problematic re-imagination of their respective backstories.

Profession du père (2015) is the subject of four main critiques, the first appearing in the monthly literary magazine *Lire Magazine* and the others in academic journals. Christine Ferniot's analysis is incorporated into a publicity article for the Festival du Livre du Doubs 2015, to be chaired by Chalandon himself. She focuses on the chronology of the story: the presence of a father who is mendacious, brutal, but also strangely engaging, claiming to practise a bizarre range of occupations.

[26] Dominique Jeannerod, 'The Year's Work in Modern Language Studies', *French Studies: Literature 2000 to the Present Day*, 72 (2012 [Survey Year 2010])), 162-169 (p. 164).

Although at times emotive, she reveals two pertinent features. In her phrase 'enfance rugueuse', she cross-references the maelstrom of lies and ill-treatment visited on the vulnerable Jacques in *Le Petit Bonzi. S*he also discerns another narrative stratum: 'l'attachement pour un monstre', the heady attraction of evil and its potential to exploit vulnerability.[27]

Susan Petit's treatment of the novel is reasonably comprehensive. She contextualises the principal narrative strands, identifying Chalandon's personal circumstances as the inspiration 'in this deeply engaging novel'.[28] She dissects the volatile temperament of Monsieur Choulans, the father who exploits his naïve son Émile's admiration in order to impose his unpredictable and fantasising personality. She convincingly depicts the deceit and cruelty of this figure whom she asserts is based upon Chalandon *père,* but she neglects what I discern as the politicisation of paternity in Choulans's obsession with anti-Gaullist paramilitaries. Other problems emerge from her reading. She generalises towards the end of her article by attributing a characteristic valid for one novel to Chalandon's other works. She provides no evidence to substantiate her remark: 'Émile barely escapes from turning into his father'. Her view that 'The potentially disastrous power of a charming phony runs through nearly all of Chalandon's fiction' rests on an oversimplified and generalised interpretation (p. 232). Although well founded in the case of *Profession du Père,* her charge of charlatanism fails to grasp the subtleties of the multifaceted relationships which I identify in *Mon Traître, Retour à Killybegs* and *Le Quatrième Mur*. More fundamentally, she signally ignores the *evolution* of Chalandon's idea of the father, a primordial constituent of my own analysis.

My conception of the dynamics between Chalandon the reporter and the author deploying his *masques transparents* necessarily surpasses the purlieu of commentators who have not ventured beyond the parameters of the works they review. However, Soumaya Al Jarrah's more recent article on *Profession du Père*

[27] Christine Ferniot, '*Honneur* à Sorj Chalandon ! Il préside la quatorzième édition du festival. Focus sur Profession du Père, son nouveau roman', *Lire* 438, September 2015, p.111. Further references to this work are given by page number in the text and prefixed *PP*.
[28] Susan Petit, 'Profession du Père', *The French Review*, 90,1 (October 2016), 231-232 (p. 231).

exhibits some sensibility to the permeability between autobiography and autofiction.[29]

My interweaving of Chalandon's scrupulous reporting of the Klaus Barbie trial, examined in detail in Chapter Two, and the tortuous revelations of a father's wartime past constitutes an unprecedented 'macro' reading of *Enfant de Salaud*. Nevertheless, journalists Hubert Artus's and Laëtitia Favro's comparative reviews of four novels (by Amélie Nothomb, Jean-Baptiste Del Amo, Marc Dugain and Chalandon) in *Lire Magazine littéraire* provide a cogent introduction to the paternal dispositions at their heart: 'Aimant ou violent, solide ou dépassé par les événements, le père apparaît rarement comme une figure apaisée; fugace ou obsessionnnelle, sa présence peut traverser une œuvre entière ou se résumer à un livre unique'. They correctly state that, in *Enfant de Salaud*, Chalandon is sizing himself up for the third narrative concerning the *paterfamilias* (after *La Légende de nos pères* and *Profession du père*), although I consider *Le Petit Bonzi*, focusing primarily on Jacques's speech struggles, to be a penetrating early exposition of the youngster's father as a complex and conflicted man. Artus and Favro identify the figure of the traitor in all Chalandon's fiction as 'la cellule souche' (Artus and Favro, 58), but my study of the intricate interdependence between traitor and victim adds rigour to their undeveloped characterisation.[30]

Chapter Five: From Docility to Luminosity: The Psychological and Social Development of Chalandon's Female Characters

Reflecting the women's defiantly optimistic battle against cancer in *Une joie féroce*, the title originates from *Le Quatrième Mur* (p. 227), where it evokes a paradoxical euphoria amid destruction.[31] My analysis comprises a forensic scrutiny of Chalandon's principal female characters in these novels and in *Mon Traître*, *Retour à Killybegs*, *Le Petit Bonzi* and *Profession du père*. In Section One, I interrogate Chalandon's right as a male author to 'inhabit' a female cancer sufferer as narrator through the impact of body-altering illness on women's agency and

[29] Soumaya Al Jarrah, '*Profession du Père*, un réel déraisonnable', *BAU Journal-Society, Culture and Human Behaviour* 1, 11(2019) (pp.1-8).
[30] Hubert Artus and Laëtitia Favro, 'Mémoires de nos pères', *Lire Magazine littéraire* 499 (September, 2021), 56-60 (57) .
[31] Sorj Chalandon, *Une joie féroce* (Paris: Éditions Grasset et Fasquelle, 2019). Further references to this work are given by page number in the text and prefixed *JF*.

sense of identity. His prostate cancer diagnosis, shortly after his wife's diagnosis for breast cancer in January 2018, provided him with the endorsement to write Jeanne's story from her viewpoint. His unexpectedly affirming depiction, 'Ce n'est pas un livre à cause du cancer, c'est un livre grâce au cancer' is consonant with his attitude toward his own illness: that his struggle wasn't because of cancer but about surviving it.[32] Recalling his association of each of his novels with a wound, Chalandon explains: 'Dans plusieurs de mes romans, j'ai exploré d'autres guerres: la guerre d'Irlande, la guerre du Liban, et j'ai toujours trouvé important et nécessaire et légitime d'écrire sur ce que je connaissais. Cette fois c'est une guerre, le traître est en moi, en nous'.[33] The chapter argues that it is through the alternately stark and subtle mosaic of Chalandon's female characters that core meanings crystallise. This is foregrounded in Section Two through the opposition of female presence and male absence and the mining of women's roles across his fiction, disclosing the evolution of his female characters in tandem with his own artistic sensibility in Section Three.

At the time of writing, there are no extended studies of *Une joie féroce* (2019). Two opposing perspectives by male critics appeared in *Lire,* one month after its August 2019 publication. The first, by Hubert Artus, is entitled 'Entre Pudeur et Réalisme' and evokes not only Chalandon's unprecedented female narrative perspective, but also the realism and delicacy of his portrayal of the four main women characters, all cancer patients. Oddly, he attributes their need to raise money to the continuation of cancer treatment, although it is ostensibly required to pay a ransom. Artus concludes that Chalandon achieves a balance between 'lourd' and 'léger', despite what he regards as exaggerated pathos. In contrast, Louis-Henri de la Rochefoucauld, in his adjacent column 'Une Démagogie tire-larmes', perceives no such equilibrium, characterising it as a tearjerker. In a more personal vein, he derides Chalandon's 'tireless' promotion of his books in salons; and he declares that this 'turnip' of a book tells the reader less about his heroines' health than his own, because he is a sick man. De la Rochefoucauld's acerbic conclusion is that, by focusing too much on making readers weep, he only succeeds in making

[32] 'Sorj Chalandon-Une joie féroce', Librairie Mollat, 11 October 2019 <www.youtube.com>, [accessed 18 June 2020].
[33] Sorj Chalandon, 'Chacun de mes livres correspond à une blessure', France 24, 17 September 2019 <www.youtube.com>, [accessed 18 June 2020].

them giggle.[34] It is unfortunate that his somewhat *ad hominem* conclusions prevent him from engaging with the nuances of characterisation discerned by Artus. One female critic, editor Héloïse Lhérété, cited by author Régine Detambel, observes: 'pour parler de la maladie, il faut inventer une nouvelle langue, capable de dire la souffrance'. She declares *Une joie féroce* to be one of the great novels of the twentieth (*sic*) century on the trials of illness, following Virginia Woolf. However, her lapsus regarding its publication and her fulsome but unsubstantiated portrayal of Chalandon as a successor to Woolf somewhat diminish the force of her observation.[35]

By unflinchingly embracing his *désarroi*, Chalandon channels his instinct for resilience-powered recovery through the aesthetically oriented vocations of his male characters - musician, biographer, art restorer, theatrical director - and the irrepressible *élan* of his female protagonists. My interpretation of Chalandon the fiction writer demonstrably augments previous deficient commentary, but its hallmark is the connectivity I establish between his fictional work and his journalism, including his photojournalism. Crucially, it is through my pursuit of these textual and visual interrelationships that I have acquired a credible and coherent insight into his 'Je' and his unremitting quest for it.

[34] Hubert Artus and Louis-Henri de la Rochefoucauld,'Le Casse du Siècle', *Lire*, No 478 (September, 2019), 65.
[35] Héloïse Lhérété, 'La Maladie, Un Thème romanesque' in Régine Detambel, 'La Littérature, remède à nos douleurs', *Sciences humaines* 2020/2021, 84-88 (p. 86).

Chapter One: Auto-Bio-Graphy and the Fabrication of Sorj Chalandon

'Derrière le « Je », une multitude d'êtres se dissimulent. Une foule bigarrée nous habite, nous agite'.[36]

Section One: Perspectives on the Philosophy and Practice of Autobiography

Most of Chalandon's fictional writing is indirectly autobiographical, informed by family dynamics, particularly his relationship with his father, and by his experience as a foreign correspondent in Ireland and the Middle East. Until his latest novel, the ontological membrane between his personal circumstances and those of his characters had been most transparent in *Mon Traître, Retour à Killybegs* , *Le Quatrième Mur* and *Profession du père*. More subtly, Chalandon tells his interviewer Jean-Luc Hees that *Mon Traître* is not a story *about* the activist Denis Donaldson; rather it has been written *because of* him. Carolyn Barros's analysis is germane to the impulse for autobiographical writing. She considers that autobiography is transformational in its deployment of discourse 'to tell how something happened to a *me*'.[37] In the same paragraph, she cites Gunn's assertion: 'The taking up of one's life in language that adumbrates the autobiographical perspective testifies to the autobiographer's particular involvement in the world, a landing rather than a hovering'.[38]It could be argued that Chalandon *had* already landed in relation to Denis Donaldson. His professional mission permitted him the space and opportunity to 'hover' around the Irish Republican as a spectator/ reporter. The subsequent close personal relationship with Donaldson ended the 'hovering', because Chalandon had decided to 'land', transforming the basis of their connection from professional to personal. Henceforth, shaped by Donaldson's influence or inspiration, and ending in his treachery, Chalandon's narrative, as a means of questioning *why* he had betrayed, represents something beyond that elusive truth, involving a journey to the root of the actor by the route of fiction. Further aspects of Gunn's conceptualisation

[36] Nicole Prieur, *Nous nous sommes tant trahis* (Paris: Éditions Denoël, 2004), p. 184.

[37] Carolyn Barros, *Autobiography: Narrative of Transformation* (University of Michigan, 1998), p. 208.

[38] Janet Varner Gunn, Autobiography: *Towards a Poetics of Experience*, p.38 in C. Barros, p. 208.

support a view of Chalandon's semi-autobiographical writing as a process of demonstrative self-interpretation: a concatenation of performance and self-reflection. Connecting with Gunn's characterisation of the autobiographer as 'the displayed self', autobiography is a temporally oriented activity in which Chalandon is not escaping time but plunging into it.[39] The stages of Gunn's tripartite 'autobiographical situation', or levels of autobiographical exposition, usefully elicit the nuances of Chalandon's position. The first stage or 'impulse' represents the autobiographer's 'pre-textual' phase, disclosing 'the ideas we are, not the ideas we have', grounding her second and third levels of perspective and response respectively (p. 13). The most salient part of Gunn's 'perspective level' for Chalandon's work, building on her notion of autobiography as a self-orienting activity, is her allusion to the writer's 'self-placing' in relation to his past, proceeding from a specific vantage point in his present. The fluidity of this 'presencing' can be discerned in the contrast between Chalandon's 2005-2006 'presence' in his *Mon Traître* phase, immediately after Donaldson's unmasking and assassination, and his 2008-2011 'presence' during his *Retour à Killybegs* period, when the full implications of Donaldson's betrayal became known. Moreover, the critical action for Gunn in 'presencing' is the bringing of self to language (p. 17), observed in the contrasting but interrelated stances of his protagonists in these novels. Equally, her focus on self-grounding 'fromness' (p. 18) is particularly germane to Chalandon's sense of his personal and professional journey. As a journalist and author, he possesses several 'fromnesses': the bullied son of a violent father, posthumously revealed as a collaborator; an acclaimed journalist reporting conflicts from Belfast to Baghdad; and, critically, in recovery from the effects of a profession which had moulded and marked him. Crucially, Gunn's observation: 'the real question of the autobiographical self…becomes *where do I belong*, not who am I?' (p. 23), constitutes the prime challenge in discerning the role and impact of the autobiographical in Chalandon's fiction and in locating his position on the journalism-fiction spectrum, discussed in Chapter Two.

[39] Janet Varner Gunn, p.9.

Gunn's 'autobiographical situation' finds resonance in other perspectives on autobiography. A conceptual triad frames the elements of Chalandon's artistic 'trinity' of the thinker, the speaker and the writer, in Philippe Lejeune's reference to Paul Valéry: 'il y a trois personnes en moi: La Trinité'.[40] Although Chalandon does not appear to draw such fine distinctions, the extent to which he consciously projects a specific persona invites scrutiny. His diverse interviews enable him to (re-)construct his own presence, which can then be interrogated through his novels. A synthesis of Gunn's conceptualisation with Roland Barthes's autobiographical signs, concerning the diverse *personae* of the autobiographical author writing both *for* and *against* himself or herself highlighted by Linda Anderson, reveals the delicate interplay of function and effect in Chalandon's writing.[41] Especially relevant is Barthes's assertion that '*qui parle* (dans le récit) n'est pas *qui* écrit (dans la vie) et *qui écrit* n'est pas *qui est'*.[42] Mikhail Bakhtin also cautions against confusing the 'author-creator' with the human author.[43] Indeed, he foreshadows Gunn's notion of the 'autobiographical situation', in emphasising the status of the author in his or her own right. His perception of the writer's 'own unresolved and still evolving contemporaneity, in all its complexity and fullness' (p. 255), is particularly apposite to Chalandon's professional and personal vicissitudes in Ireland and Lebanon. This sense of flux and fluidity recalls Pierre Bourdieu's critique of the concept of a coherent life and a 'constant' subject as illusory and 'à peu près aussi absurde que d'essayer de rendre raison d'un trajet dans le métro sans prendre en compte la structure du réseau'.[44] Discussing Barthes, Anderson highlights the inability of the autobiographical subject to 'authenticate his reality but only go on adding indefinitely to his many different spectral forms of identity'.[45]

[40] Philippe Lejeune, *Je est un autre : L'autobiographie de la littérature aux médias* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1980), p. 32.
[41] Linda Anderson, *Autobiography: The New Critical Idiom* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 66.
[42] Roland Barthes, 'Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits', *Communications*, 8 (1966) pp.1-27 (p. 20).
[43] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 253.
[44] Pierre Bourdieu 'L'Illusion biographique', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales,* Vol. 62-63 (June 1986), 69-72 (p. 71).
[45]Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (Éditions du Seuil, 1975), p. 145 in L. Anderson, *Autobiography: The New Critical Idiom*, p. 67.

It could be posited that there may be no distinctly 'writerly' identity to reveal. Yet, there is some evidence, presented below, that, like the actor removing elements of her eighteenth-century character to emerge as her twenty-first century self in the televised French media satire, *Dix Pour Cent*, Chalandon discards portions of his persona, only to don other layers.[46] Paradoxically, this reinforces the impression he seeks to repudiate at the beginning of the Hees interview: that he is a little mysterious to his readers. The entities of the speaker, the writer and the person *are* distinctly dynamic. The only 'permanent' element is the text itself, but its fixity may also be deceptive, because its reading will inevitably be imbued with the nuances Chalandon attributes to his life and experience *at that time*. Equally, his discussion with Hees suggests that Chalandon does not entertain the idea of a 'target' readership for his work.

Framing the autobiographer's approach to his or her art, Lejeune's comment 'Je m'écris en me faisant taire' (Lejeune 1980, p. 34), writing as though he were someone else, is particularly apposite to Chalandon's 'Irish' novels in his reference to his own self-imposed silence after Donaldson's unmasking. In her recent study to ascertain the balance between the real and the fictional in *Profession du père*, Al Jarrah amplifies Lejeune's concept. She suggests that it is through the 'pacte autobiographique' and 'pacte romanesque', constituents of the notion of autofiction or the fictional aspect of narrated events, that novelists in general, and Chalandon in particular, embed their narrative structure. She cogently observes that this novel lends a sense of modernity to the genre through the permeability of fiction and reality, allowing the author to distance himself or herself from 'le pacte autobiographique' (Al Jarrah, p. 8). This reading resonates in Chalandon's comment to Hees that he wanted to write 'a book that would become a novel'.

The idea of silence noted above is problematised in the reflective processes discerned by Lejeune and Cowley. Lejeune cites Paul Valéry's concept of the individual as a dialogue (Lejeune, p. 36). Cowley presents the creation of the autobiographical self as 'protracted, tentative, back-and-forth dialogical' (Cowley, p. 4). Both commentators speak to the authenticity of the turmoil engendered by self-questioning to which Chalandon subjected himself in the development of his

[46] Fanny Herrero, *Dix Pour Cent/ Call My Agent*, France 2 (October 2015).

'Irish' novels, written 'because of' Donaldson. However, the fact that Chalandon states that he does not judge his former friend may imply that he needed to re-channel the anguish of Donaldson's betrayal by reconfiguring their relationship. Despite Chalandon's repudiation of judgement, it may be posited that his autobiographical novels do convey a judgement on the author's life, an element deemed by D. K. Levy to be integral to the autobiographical act.[47] Chalandon distances himself from directly condemning Donaldson through his creation of Tyrone Meehan, imbuing his character with sufficient similitude to ensure authenticity. He delegates his judgement to Meehan's interrogators, and devastatingly, to his son Jack, for whom Tyrone has ceased to be a father.

A compelling feature of Chalandon's characterisation in *Mon Traître* and *Retour à Killybegs* is the paradox which Cowley discerns at the heart of autobiographical writing: what he terms 'a unique life' must still find meaningful resonance in the reader's experience (Cowley, p. 5). Although this interpretation appears incompatible with Chalandon's denial of a specific audience, the lives he depicts can still be represented as echoes of those of his readers. Regarding the Irish and Lebanese novels, it is feasible to conceive of a readership for whom localised internecine violence speaks to a broader geopolitical understanding. Chalandon sculpts what might be termed an 'archetypal uniqueness' in Antoine the violin maker. He explains his choice of artistic vocation to Hees as one which would secure Antoine a welcome anywhere, a social passport for the plausibility of a young Frenchman ensconced in a Belfast Republican drinking club. Furthermore, his portrayal of Antoine as a musician, and deliberately *not* as a journalist, may reflect his escape from the carapace of 'hard facts' to embrace the freedom of his 'writerly' self and what he later described to me as 'la fiction pure' which erases the journalist. Equally, Chalandon's reconstruction of Tyrone Meehan's motivation, ambitions, and vulnerability is strongly assisted by the dearth of firm evidence for Donaldson's decision to become a British informer. Despite anecdotes attributing his 'Judas moment' to saving a relative from imprisonment or to blackmail for sexual transgression, as reported by Hopkins above and author Marie Mulholland, Chalandon eschews all purported explanations in the Hees

[47] D. K. Levy, 'Autobiographical Acts' in *The Philosophy of Autobiography*, ed. by C. Cowley, pp. 156-177 (p. 156).

interview.[48] It could therefore be argued that the ambiguity surrounding Donaldson's betrayal, referred to by journalist Ed Moloney in his 'Afterword: 'A Wilderness of Mirrors', lent Chalandon sufficient scope to re-imagine *his* character, Tyrone.[49]

Some of Rancière's theories can be applied to Chalandon's autobiographical situation. Particularly pertinent is his foregrounding of 'L'individu engagé dans la réalité globale d'une histoire en pleine évolution et l'individu quelconque capable des sentiments les plus intenses et les plus complexes'.[50] It could be argued that this process occurs in the blurred boundary between Chalandon the journalist, immediately recording incidents in conflict zones, and Chalandon the man, subsequently attempting to digest scenes of carnage, as in the aftermath of the Chatila massacre. Moreover, the paradoxically humanising effect of his experience of war on his journalistic profiles of paramilitary figures and on his fictional confrontations with death and destruction in Ireland and Lebanon epitomises Rancière's connection between 'les fictions inavouées de la politique, de la science sociale ou du journalisme' and 'les fictions avouées de la littérature' (p. 13). Equally, his reference to Charles Baudelaire's poem 'Les Foules', with the poet's focus on « l'imprévu qui se montre » (p. 28), illuminates the unanticipated undercurrents which Chalandon elicits beneath the 'visible' story, such as his evocation of the latent threat of violence or his reconstitution of the lives of unknown individuals in his reflective photojournalism contributions.

Intersections between Rancière's concept of emancipation and Gunn's dissection of the autobiographical process are discernible if her notion of the writer's 'presencing' is framed as an emancipatory act, enabling him or her to place himself or herself anywhere on the timeline between past and present. Gunn's configuration of the writer's 'displayed self' is also congruent with the 'power of monstrance', in political and cultural theorist Davide Panagia's interpretation of Rancière's characterisation of the visual dimension of politics, and pertinent to the

[48] Marie Mulholland, 'Denis Donaldson: "he had charm, buckets of it"', 5 April 2006 <https://magill.ie/archive/denis-donaldson-he-had-charm-buckets-of-it/>, [accessed 1 August 2019].
[49] Ed Moloney, 'A View of the World from New York and Belfast', 15 October 2016 <*https://thebrokenelbow.com/2016/10/15/how-was-denis-donaldson-recruited-as-a-spy/*>, [accessed 12 March 2018].
[50] Jacques Rancière, *Les Bords de la Fiction* (Éditions du Seuil, 2017), p. 13.

notion of public self-curation.[51] Chalandon's occasionally histrionic demeanour in his interview with Jean-Paul Mari, and his broader emphasis on the significance of imagery in his journalism and in his fictional writing, suggest his keen appreciation of this power.

Section Two: Chalandon's Self-Presentation and Objective Evaluation

2.1 Blogger M.N. (2008)

This discussion is valuable for its focus upon the imperative of journalistic honesty, enabling Chalandon not only to cite inconsistently applied professional expectations regarding subjectivity, but also to corroborate his impartiality. To the opening question asking him how he reconciled his closeness to Irish Republicanism and the journalist's duty of honesty, he responds: 'Si je me suis senti proche de l'idée du républicanisme irlandais, et le soir venu, à Belfast, mes pubs étaient républicains, je me suis interdit les éditoriaux et les commentaires. J'ai cherché à raconter le conflit, ce que je voyais en étant sur place.'[52] Two instincts emerge: Chalandon draws a clear line between his philosophical and social affinities and his professional responsibilities; and he places primacy on his position *on the ground* to tell the story of the conflict, a critical dimension developed in Chapter Two. He continues by pointing out the largely satirical reaction of the French press to the Republicans: 'Entre la fin des années 60 et la fin des années 90, il n'y a eu que de brefs répits dans un traitement très caricatural du movement républicain', and he cites these exceptions as the violence and oppression of the authorities against Northern Irish Catholics; and the 1981 Republican hunger strikes. He argues that, as soon as the victims began to assert themselves, the entire Republican movement was equated with terrorism: 'C'est ce traitement qui doit être questionné'. He refers to other geopolitical crises- Algeria and Cuba- where he alleges that journalists' more subjective commentary had not been challenged in the same way. He states his position unambiguously: 'Je n'ai pas franchi cette limite-là'. He declares that the media backed 'la politique

[51] Davide Panagia, '" Partage du sensible", the distribution of the sensible' in *Jacques Rancière: Key Concepts* ed. by Jean-Philippe Déranty (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 95-103 (p. 103).
[52] *Le Blog XXI*, Chalandon, Sorj, 'L'honnêté du récit', 4 March 2008. <www.jcdurbant.wordpress.com/page/185> [accessed 22 May 2022].

répressive du Royaume-Uni' and that he had constantly to justify what was perceived as his support for the IRA. However, in his observation: 'Pour autant, je n'ai pas pris ce contre-pied par attirance pour le "politiquement correct", mais plutôt du fait d'un soutien sincère et une vision du métier de journaliste. Ce suivi a payé, puisque c'est *Libération* qui publie l'interview du Conseil de l'Armée de l'IRA annonçant le cessez-le-feu en 1994', he vindicates his professional vision and his actions as a scrupulous *Libération* journalist. He also defends the paper's reputation as 'un journal exigeant. La volonté d'équilibre était extrêmement forte,' and consequently he ensured that he also addressed the unionist side: 'J'ai consacré un temps important à aller à la rencontre des unionistes'. This assertion is corroborated by a recently published selected compilation of his *Libération* articles on Ireland, examined in Chapter Two. He summarises the essence of his Northern Ireland reporting as: 'Mon projet a été de comprendre les peurs des deux camps et deux trajectoires parallèles: chez les républicains, celle du "fusil et du bulletin de vote"; chez les unionistes, celle de l'acception du partage du pouvoir et des droits d'une part et de leur identité irlandaise d'autre part. Ce suivi s'est accompagné d'un devoir d'explication: être précis sur la guerre, sur les mots employés'.

M.N.'s question regarding whether he felt he had been used by the IRA elicits a detailed response. Commencing with: 'Si par là, on entend communiquer des informations fausses, jamais. En donnant à comprendre le conflit, je travaillais pour l'établissement des faits'. Chalandon's portrayal of his assignment is entirely consistent with his journalistic mission to question and report with care and precision. He cites two examples of his objectivity regarding Republicanism. In his reporting of the 1983 Harrod's bombing, he learned from a member of the IRA chief-of-staff that a sleeper cell had acted without authority and would be 'punished'. His informant subsequently denied this, but the IRA eventually acknowledged the accuracy of Chalandon's report. The second example concerned the embarrassment he caused the IRA in the mid-1990s by reporting that members of their anti-drugs 'punishment squad' who had claimed the executions of eight dealers were themselves drug users. Concluding with: 'Je n'ai jamais eu l'impression d'être inféodé. Je veux pouvoir paraître devant les Protestants les mains et la tête propres. Le meilleur signe en est la crédibilité que j'ai acquise', he reasserts his personal and professional autonomy and proven credibility.

Perhaps his most poignant response is to M.N.'s query about whether he had felt alone all these years, leading me to review aspects of his collegial relationships at *Libération*: 'Pendant trente ans, j'ai été extrêmement seul, y compris au sein de mon propre journal, où mon intérêt pour l'Irlande était vu comme un hobby, ou une lubie. À *Libération*, j'ai heureusement bénéficié de la confiance de Serge July, que j'ai amené à Belfast, à sa demande, en 1979.' Although evidence from *Libération* colleagues in Chapter Two reveals the high esteem in which he was held, it may be that he did not internalise or recognise it, although he stresses the mutual respect between him and co-founder Serge July. The idea that his interest in Ireland was considered by other *Libération* journalists as a whimsical hobby might be explained by the physically discernible affinity he brought to his Irish assignments, such as wearing his Irish cap, drinking Guinness, emulating the Belfast dialect and befriending a local man and his family.

2.2 Journalist Rebecca Manzoni (2010)

Their informal conversation develops as Chalandon walks around his *Le Canard enchaîné* office with Manzoni. She characterises the décor, with its many drawings and photos, as 'très artisanal'. Chalandon comments on the display, which includes Bobby Sands, 'un patriote irlandais'; the 'Affiche rouge', an anti-Resistance poster commemorating Missak Manouchian, a Franco-Armenian poet executed by the Nazis; and a copy of the proclamation of Irish independence. Chalandon explains that he needs to have his 'petit Panthéon personnel': 'Ça peut paraître passéiste, désuet, ça peut paraître idiot même, c'est mon socle'. His affinity with what he calls 'un moment d'identité nationale' and his assertion: 'Je sais d'où je viens moi' recall Gunn's notion of belonging. Acknowledging his debt to those who died for freedom, he strikes a simultaneously nostalgic and defiant tone: 'Je peux pas oublier…plein de gens disent qu'il faut tourner les pages, mais il faut les lire d'abord'. This affirming iconography of liberation and resistance clearly reflects his respect for principled personal sacrifice. His regard for the French *Résistant* Manouchian accords with his view that his death contributed to the free French society in which Chalandon lives.[53] However, the image of Sands and the

[53] Rebecca Manzoni, 'Sorj Chalandon dans les locaux du *Canard enchaîné,*' 14 February 2010 <www.ina.fr/audio/P14225357/sorj-chalandon-dans-les-locaux-du-canard-enchaine>audio, [accessed 3 October 2020].

reproduction of the Irish independence proclamation seem of a different order. They impart an ostentatious and almost exotic nostalgia as a shrine to Irish resistance, transmuted to a Paris newspaper office. In reconnecting him with the passions of the '*Libération* Chalandon', the quasi-beatific status and dramatic iconography of the most famous modern Irish Republican martyr and the venerated proclamation of independence serve as visual palliatives for the trauma of Denis Donaldson's betrayal.

As a chronological bridge between this and the Hees interview, this evidence has shown itself to be pertinent to Chalandon's conception and accommodation of his journalistic and authorial selves. At the conference 'Étonnants Voyageurs' in St Malo in May 2013, he made the following declaration in English, which merits full citation because of its relevance to key aspects of his life and work:

> I am a journalist…and journalists are not supposed to be the subject of what they write, they are not supposed to show their emotions...Self-censorship for me means not writing about my own fears and sorrows. I have seen wars and written about them, but never allowed myself to bring in my own emotions. I write in pads- on the right-hand page I put the material that is going into the article, and on the left I write about myself, my feelings, the stuff that is not going to go into the article. I found a way round this self-censorship by killing the journalist in me and becoming a novelist. Whenever I write a novel, I wonder if they are really all about everything that is written on the left-hand page.[54]

Chalandon's statement foregrounds his stance on the distinct separation of his reporting from his fictional writing. Although he expresses his fascination for nuance and shadow in his discussion with Hees below, this subtlety does not extend to his perspective of his journalism and his fiction. Moreover, he employs the uniquely violent metaphor of 'killing' the journalist in him to articulate this conscious and definitive severance of the professional and the personal. This raises an issue regarding his psychological wellbeing at this point and aesthetically, the extent to which his language was influenced by his creation of *Le Quatrième Mur*, published six months later. His use of the right- and left-hand pages seems logical until his final ambiguous reflection, which appears to challenge the possibility of preventing the diffusion of the factual into the fictional, and whether he has really

[54] Jonathan Bastable, 'Everything is permitted' in *The 21-st Century Novel: Notes from The Edinburgh World Writers' Conference*, ed. by Jonathan Bastable and Hannah McGill (Edinburgh University Press, 2014), pp.183-186 (p. 186).

succeeded in expunging his 'internal journalist'. It is also a note-taking strategy deployed by his journalist/ biographer protagonist Marcel Frémaux (*LLP*, p. 33).

2.3 Journalist Jean-Luc Hees (2016)

Hees's lengthy interview provides a particularly rich portrait of Chalandon. He presents variously as measured, engaging, genial, expository, lugubrious and earnest in revealing his artistic motivation and his critique of salient stylistic markers of his writing. In articulating his psychological debridement, he tells Hees: 'Je me mets à nu. Ce que je mets à nu, ce n'est pas mon corps, c'est mon désarroi; j'ai le droit de pleurer…de revendiquer la souffrance, la douleur, pas pour me plaindre, mais pour la partager'. He depicts an anguished yet resolute extirpation of raw pain. Moreover, his resolve to move beyond mere lamentation indicates an instinct to free himself. He is no longer the observer-spectator-journalist but, through an attritional process of emotional denudation, he transforms himself into the actor-as-*spectacle*. Although important to him, the visual alone cannot suffice because all other senses converge to imbue his writing, stimulating the synaesthesia pervading his descriptions of Belfast in his photo-journalism collaborations, discussed in Chapter Two. This point is corroborated by Chalandon's unambiguous self-placement: 'Ce qui m'intéresse, c'est toutes les nuances entre le blanc et le noir'. Chalandon's journalistic- fictional evolution may be framed within Rancière's paradigm of emancipation which relates knowledge to a coherent position: 'C'est que le savoir n'est pas un ensemble de connaissances, il est une position'.[55] Chalandon's quest for the 'Je', expressed in his discussion with Hees, constitutes *his* position.

Chalandon the Journalist and Novelist

His dovetailing of several aspects of himself recalls Gunn's notion of self-display. He qualifies his reflection, 'Je pense que je suis un écrivain à part,' by explaining that he is not languishing in a garret. Yet, although he appears to mean 'apart' in the sense of 'different', it foreshadows his later comments regarding the physical distance he maintains from other writers. This detachment may be understood as a preference for intimacy rather than gregariousness; and a sense that he does not

[55] Jacques Rancière, *Le Spectateur emancipé* (Paris: La fabrique éditions, 2008), p.15.

depend upon intellectual socialising because his writing affords him aesthetic self-sufficiency. Moreover, he declares: 'J'ai un métier. Je suis journaliste… J'ai eu besoin à un moment d'écrire différemment et d'écrire autrement, de me séparer, de me débarrasser de la chose la plus encombrante et la plus fondamentale pour un journaliste, ce sont les faits et l'actualité'. This statement is the most direct evidence of his perspective on his professional identity as the catalyst for a different kind of writing. Furthermore, his desire to expunge these journalistic constituents suggests a concerted effort to cleanse himself. It is a metaphor he had deployed three years earlier in discussion with Lebanese writer, Georgia Makhlouf*:* 'Mes romans me lavent, me réconcilent avec moi-même, même si le processus d'écriture est parfois très douloureux'.[56] He reprises it in his 2020 interview with Françoise Laurent, discussed below.

Reflecting the complex movement from journalist to fiction writer, there is a paradox inherent in Chalandon's continued financial dependence on a professional activity from which he needed to remove himself in order to write differently, yet which garnered him the material security to realise his artistic 'freedom'. Chalandon's contention that he didn't want to write novels but a book that would become a novel, illustrates the juxtaposition of the writer's individuality and the notion of an established mode. It also recalls the perceived book-to-novel transition from reality to storytelling, identified by Al Jarrah above. What is significant is his insistence on his painfully acquired *personal* narrative over its pre-determined categorisation. In response to Hees's question about his authorial responsibilities, he states: 'J'ai conscience du fait que j'écris pour être lu…je ne dis pas que c'est quelque chose qui rentre à chaque mot, mais je sais que ce que j'écris, ça peut heurter, choquer, ça peut blesser.' Discussing the reception of *Profession du père* in *salons* and bookshops, it is evident that readers' identification with his protagonist Émile Choulans encourages them to approach Chalandon directly about their own lives. A more intimate illustration of his understanding of the power of his words is his consultation with his mother and

[56] Georgia Makhlouf, 'Sorj Chalandon dans le vertige de la guerre', 13 October 2013 <www.inventoire.com/sorj-chalandon-dans-le-vertige-de-la-guerre> , [accessed 30 January 2022].

brother before the publication of this novel, after his father's death in March 2014. His consideration of them reflects not only his awareness of potential family sensitivities but also Gunn's idea of the power of belonging. It must also be presumed that he consulted his wife before the publication of *Une joie féroce.*

In his discussion of the genesis and impact of the Lebanon-inspired *Le Quatrième Mur*, Chalandon draws thoughtful correspondences between his professional fieldwork and his fictional writing, affording useful insights into his psychological wellbeing and his stylistic 'markers'. He perceives an important forensic connection between reportage and fictional writing: 'Je trouve que l'émotion peut passer par la sécheresse, l'émotion peut passer par les mots au scalpel'. He deconstructs the 'surgical' factual description, which enabled him to report on the atrocities of the Sabra and Chatila massacres, as the stylistic backbone of his novel. Referring to the image of a dead child, he warns counterintuitively against those who counsel 'moving on'. On the contrary, he urges, one must not turn the page: the images, the noise of the flies, must be retained and recounted in plain language. This imperative expands Gunn's 'fromness': the necessity of conserving the original image or emotion. It also counterpoints Jean-Paul Mari's psychotherapeutic view that gorging on a traumatic image signals a doomed attempt to return to a vanished innocence.[57] However, the fact that the image cannot be 'un-seen' empowers the journalist Chalandon to re-create the moment with raw honesty, and to retain something of his initial shock. Although it is not possible to confirm a definitive connection between Chalandon's approach and his association with Mari, it is reasonable to assume that his engagement with psychotherapy renewed his confidence in his fictional writing.

His professional approach of letting others speak without interruption and prioritising their truths and stories, causes him to reflect further on the locus of his 'Je'. It is apposite here to suggest the origin for his empathy with those perceived as marginalised. His *Libération* colleague Jean Guisnel states that Chalandon's initial contribution to the newspaper was a series of sketches entitled 'Derrière les murs de l'asile', discussed in Chapter Two with reference to individual drawings.

[57] Jean-Paul Mari, *Sans Blessures apparentes: Enquête sur les damnés de la guerre* (Paris : Éditions Robert Laffont, 2008), p.178.

Guisnel states that this was a world that Chalandon knew well, having been a psychiatric nurse.[58] This detail was corrected by Chalandon in his response to me, stating that he had been 'un "aide-soignant" occasionnel dans les structures qui militaient pour l'antipsychiatrie, à une époque où la psychiatrie traditionnelle – isolement, médication lourde, chocs électriques- étaient contestée' (Annex 1). His engagement with the anti-psychiatric movement is congruent with his instinct to give others their voice and subverts what Lydia Sapouna, expresses as the orthodoxy of 'silencing the mad' and sanctioning the exclusion of the 'non-being'.[59] Her analysis draws upon Michel Foucault's discussion of confinement.[60]

Chalandon declares unambiguously to Hees that his decision to write 'books' was not because he could not write the 'truth' in *Libération*. He reiterates that the 'moi' had no place in 'official' news. Discussing *Le Quatrième Mur*, he describes Georges (his original forename, officially changed to his childhood pronunciation Sorj) as a reconstituted 'Je', created as a former political activist and deliberately not as a journalist. He details the effects of 'sending' Georges to Lebanon, enabling him to reclaim his sorrow and anger. However, the 'Je' of the foreign correspondent and that of Chalandon the author are more tightly bound during his Northern Ireland assignments. The nexus between his 'Irish' and 'Lebanese' work derives from his view that 'les massacres sont faits par des hommes ordinaires', re-casting Hannah Arendt's notion of the banality of evil.

It is through the notion that ordinary people commit massacres, an exemplification of Philip Zimbardo's formulation of 'knowing better but doing worse', that Chalandon broaches his relationship with Denis Donaldson.[61] Chalandon elucidates the dilemma posed by his erstwhile friendship with Donaldson which prevents him from approaching the unmasked British informer in his professional capacity. That route being closed, he gains access through fictional re-construction, which entails his transformation from spectator to actor, from reporter to explicatory performer. His inability to communicate directly with Donaldson's

[58] Jean Guisnel, *Libération : la biographie* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1999), p. 100.

[59] Lydia Sapouna, 'Foucault, Michel, Madness and Civilisation: A history of Insanity in the Age of Reason', *Community Development Journal*, 47, 4 (October 2012), 612-617 (pp. 612, 613).

[60] Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Éditions Gallimard, 1972), p. 110, in which he refers to 'l'élimination spontanée « des asociaux »' in his description of confinement.

[61] Philip Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: How Good People turn Evil* (Rider, 2007), p. 5.

family precipitates other consequences. Jane Donaldson, Denis Donaldson's daughter, delivers a highly censorious view of *Retour à Killybegs* in her letter to *The Irish Times*. She states: 'Since his murder six years ago this month, my family have had to tolerate many untrue, misleading and stressing publications about my late father, Denis Donaldson. However, French journalist Sorj Chalandon is the first novelist to commercially exploit his acquaintance with my late father…as a marketing ploy for a book of fiction'.[62] In the light of Chalandon's portrayal of his close relationship with Donaldson, it is notable that Ms Donaldson describes it as 'acquaintance', possibly to distance the family from the author and the publicity surrounding his award of the Grand Prix du Roman de l'Académie française for the novel. No evidence has yet emerged of Chalandon's reaction to Ms Donaldson's comments.

Barthes's observation: 'Il y a dans l'amour d'un pays étranger une sorte de racisme à l'envers: on s'enchante de la différence, on s'ennuie du Même, on exalte l'Autre' cogently expresses Chalandon's intense passion for Ireland, its people and their struggle.[63]His characterisation of his attraction to Donaldson as falling in love is discernible in Antoine's uncritical admiration for Tyrone. It also recalls Eamon Maher's depiction of Antoine 'embarking on a blind love affair with the Republican cause' in his article cited above. Equally, Chalandon's reference to pride suggests feelings of affirmation engendered by his association with this man at the heart of the tightly knit Republican community. It may be posited that Chalandon's reconstruction of his relationship with Donaldson - what might be termed its 'théâtricalisation'- marks his repudiation of the journalist's 'encumbering' factual criteria in favour of a psychological reconfiguration. His need to distance himself from this former friendship becomes the positive force which propels him to create Tyrone Meehan as a crafted 'surrogate' for Donaldson: a way of 'living with ghosts', as eponymously expressed by veteran

[62] *The Irish Times*, 'Delay in Donaldson Murder Probe', letter from Jane Donaldson, (23 April 2012), 15.
[63] Roland Barthes, *Le Bruissement de la Langue, Essais critiques IV* (Éditions du Seuil, 1984), p. 354.

Northern Ireland journalist Brian Rowan about his own coming to terms with the pain of the past.[64]

Chalandon's refusal to judge Donaldson could be problematised thus: he 'outsources' or delegates the attendant psychological complexity and turmoil to his protagonist Antoine as a proxy for his own bewildered victimhood. This interpretation of vicarious transference is consistent with Chalandon's characterisation of 'sending' Georges to Lebanon in *Le Quatrième Mur* as his double, because 'il n'y a pas de place pour deux ici.' Chalandon asserts that Tyrone's story is not Donaldson's: it is a story told *because of* Donaldson. It may be argued that his creation of Antoine, Tyrone and their ultimately colliding worlds constitutes a 'supra-emancipation'. He extends Rancière's notion of the liberating but indistinct passage from spectator to actor in moving from Chalandon the self-muting journalist-observer-actor to Chalandon the empowerer of his characters: 'C'est que je faisais partie de l'histoire; quand on fait partie de l'histoire, il faut se taire'. By transiting from a 'real' to a 're-imagined' arena, Chalandon can endow his characters with stronger social, cultural and psychological capital.

Under Hees's empathetic but meticulous probing, Chalandon discloses that *Le Quatrième Mur* derived directly from very precise memories he had carried over two decades: from 1982 until its publication in 2013. Offering a stark example of the embedded instincts of his journalistic experience, he describes needing the reassurance that his daughters were still breathing, so ingrained was his anxiety about sudden child death witnessed in Lebanon. He recounts his meeting with Jean-Paul Mari, fellow journalist and psychotherapist, whose own conclusions on Chalandon's psyche are detailed below. Although he initially refused to be interviewed by Mari for his film, he agreed to share his experience of the Sabra and Chatila camps, before breaking down in distress.[65] Reviewing the film, he realised that the pain he had so long retained had to be expunged. He reveals to Hees that he subsequently immersed himself into the work of the novel, creating Georges, a young left-wing radical like himself. He consciously evokes his power

[64] Brian Rowan, *Living with Ghosts: The Inside Story from a 'Troubles' Mind* (Newbridge: Merrion Press, 2022), p. 3.
[65] Jean-Paul Mari / Franck Dehlens, 2010 <*Sans Blessures Apparentes: Enquête chez les Damnés de la Guerre*, www.dailymotion-com.video>, [accessed 4 December 2017].

over, and his connection with, his character. Chalandon's assertion that he was going to kill Georges, because there was no space for both of them, prefaces his most clearly articulated motives for writing *Le Quatrième Mur:* to rid himself of his portion of barbarity, to cleanse himself of the images he endured in the course of his Middle Eastern reporting and to achieve a kind of redemption.

Chalandon the Critic

In his discussion of *Le Quatrième Mur*, Chalandon declares that 'les mots au scalpel' constitute the spine of his novel. When he and a colleague entered the Sabra and Chatila Palestinian refugee camps in September 1982 as the first Western journalists, he had to report clinically on the horrors he witnessed, although he emphasises that 'clinical' does not mean cold. He depicts the sight of flies buzzing on a girl's corpse as something he had to hold within himself, within which he needed to conserve his primary revulsion. He wanted his account to transmit those unmediated sights and sounds to customers in a Parisian café. His insistence on the journalist's duty to candid reporting arises towards the end of the interview. He describes a training session with young journalists, when he had asked them to write a report on a rape. He recalls: 'Il n'y en avait pas un qui avait pris le mot 'viol' simple. C'est le viol abominable, le viol épouvantable, viol atroce, viol barbare et je leur demande: « est-ce qu'il y des viols sympas…des viols humains? »'. He entreats the students to respect words and to avoid unnecessary detail which could divert the reader from the subject back to the journalist.

Two other works constitute a chronological parenthesis around the three already discussed. *Le Petit Bonzi* and *Profession du Père,* his first and seventh novels, exhibit a thinner membrane between reality and fiction, perhaps an early index of what he described to me as 'des masques transparents'. *Le Petit Bonzi* originates from his childhood stammering, which he describes as haunting not only his speech but also his writing. Perhaps the surprising aspect of his account is that the stammerer is not frustrated by a paucity of words, but by their profusion. Moreover, he observes: 'Mon style vient de mon incapacité, mon style est né de mon bégaiement…J'ai l'urgence des choses, l'urgence de la phrase, l'urgence du mot'. He attributes his style unequivocally to his stammer, speaking swiftly to avoid mistakes.

His evaluation of *Profession du père,* his most recent work at the time of this interview, is naturally closely aligned with his perception of the evolution of relationships within his own family. To Hees's question regarding his awareness of his responsibilities as a writer, Chalandon responds that he is conscious of the fact that he writes in order to be read, although he refrains from defining a target readership. However, he explains that he knows that his writing could shock and hurt, perhaps an oblique allusion to Jane Donaldson's reaction and potentially that of his own family. He maintains that with each of his books, particularly *Profession du père,* most people whom he meets at *salons* and in bookshops speak to him about their own difficult early lives. He states unambiguously that his fiction is not to seek to overturn injustices: that is the aim of his journalism. My earlier speculation that he deploys his fictional work to extirpate past anguish is re-examined in the light of later comments to Hees and of his 2020 interview with Françoise Laurent. Additionally, he asserts: 'Je ne me sens pas journaliste de roman'. Responding to my request for clarification of this phrase in my follow-up questions in February 2022, he explained that he never again wished to incorporate a journalist character into his fiction (Annex 2).

Just as his previous novels grew from his turmoil at witnessing civil war in Ireland or Lebanon, the tragic catalyst for *Profession du père* was his father's death in March 2014. For him, this novel closed what he terms 'le cycle du père', although it does not conclude 'le cycle familial,' which is strongly present in his next work, *Le jour d'avant*. Before *Profession du père,* he observes that he felt as though all his novels have been written by the youngster in him, 'un presqu'adolescent'. Unable to locate his father *within* his work, he orientates it *towards* him. He characterises the novel with protagonist Émile as the adventures of his brother and himself. The reactions of his brother and his mother were generally supportive, even though his mother stipulated that they should never speak again about it. He intended to write the novel, not about *his* father, but about *a* father, recalling his distancing formulation of 'not about, but because of' regarding Denis Donaldson. His brother reportedly found the novel unexpectedly amusing, considering his depiction of the father as an authentic reconstruction of paternal absurdity.

He tells Hees that *he* is the protagonist Émile. The story recounts his adventures with his brother Yves, to whom he refers only on the first page. He states that the

prevalence of mendacity in the novel reflects his own childhood. There were no books, music, newspapers or paintings, so he read secretly in the library. His father dubbed everything which was anathema to him 'communist'. 'Intellectualism' frightened him, and he forced his son to perform gymnastics to give him a muscular 'bull's neck'. Chalandon asserts that this child was in a labyrinth guarded by a Minotaur- his father- who could wield life and death over his sons. He states that he, Chalandon, only found light and beauty when he left home. Significantly, he asserts that he gives his characters the task of repairing beauty: in *Profession du père*, Émile is a restorer of paintings. Chalandon's instinct to embellish, remedy or mitigate is certainly discernible in almost all his novels up to that point. He explicitly states that writing novels enables him to avenge himself for what he has not had and the absence of literature, culture and beauty from his life. One conclusion he draws, which undermines a purely cathartic interpretation of his fiction, is that he reconstituted something which was the inverse of the world he experienced, rather than a means of escaping personal trauma.

A binary reflex emerges through his public self-curation. This occurs not only in the evocation of journalist and fiction writer, of reality and imagination, but also through the trope of the 'daytime' journalist and the 'nocturnal' fiction author. Henri Béraud, the first reporter to receive the Prix Goncourt in 1921, spoke of dividing his time as 'journaliste pendant le jour, écrivain pendant la nuit'.[66] Chalandon's observation: 'Je trouve que les mots sont différents, je trouve que les mots chuchotent', carries a subtler implication, beyond the facilitation of concentration. He empowers his journalistic subjects through his resolute principle of 'laisser parler les autres', requiring *his* silence, and the conscious erasure of his presence from his journalism.

2.4 Psychotherapist Jean-Paul Mari's Written Account (2008)

Cited above, Mari's portrayal of the traumatic climax of Chalandon's reporting career in Lebanon in 1982 highlights his status as writer, journalist and Chalandon's psychotherapist. Like Chalandon, he received the prestigious Albert-Londres prize for his journalism. His exposition *Sans Blessures Apparentes:*

[66] Alain Cresciucci and Jean Touzot, *L'Écrivain journaliste* (Éditions Klincksieck, 1998), pp. 14-15.

Enquête sur les damnés de la guerre discloses his blend of solemn reflection, wry commentary and lugubrious humour about those (including himself) who, as soldiers or reporters, were deployed to geopolitically unstable regions. The dangerous circumstances he confronted as a foreign correspondent, and his attempts to surmount his subsequent trauma, are detailed in the section examining journalists' experiences of reporting from conflict zones in Chapter Two. Here, in his *personal* capacity as Chalandon's friend, his evidence interweaves the 'auto', the private and distinctive facets of Chalandon's experience and the 'bio', the more objectively framed aspects of his work.

Mari's exploration of Chalandon's experience reflects his affection and respect: 'Je pense à Sorj, ancient grand reporter, sensible et plein d'humour' (p. 180). That pithy allusion establishes the leitmotifs which permeate Mari's encounter: Chalandon's excellent professional reputation: his emotional intelligence; and his sense of humour. He blends Chalandon's vulnerability -'Le grand reporter s'était fait hara-kiri'- with his likeable eccentricity: 'toujours la même casquette irlandaise sur la tête.' 'Hara-kiri' refers to Chalandon's abrupt curtailment of his Lebanese assignment after his reporting of the Sabra and Chatila massacres. The sartorial detail, raised in his interview with M.N. above, echoes Chalandon's enduring connection with Ireland.

Mari's observation about the nature of Chalandon's fiction : 'Sorj ne livre plus de chroniques de télévision, il écrit. Des livres profonds, enfin à son image,' intermingles his friend's demeanour with his vocation as a writer (p. 227). His reference to 'chroniques de télévison' is unclear, because there is currently no evidence that Chalandon presented, devised or appeared on television programmes, apart from those in which he discussed his most recent novels. It is possible that Mari intended the phrase figuratively to refer to Chalandon's news-based work, as opposed to his fictional writing. His measured empathy emerges through his recollection of Chalandon's idiosyncracies, such as his talent for mimicry. Recounting the shocking impact of the Chatila massacre on him, he reports the subsequent conversation between Chalandon and his editor in Paris, who asks why he has not used the term 'massacre' in his reports. In Chalandon's response that he did not know why, Mari discerns the numbness of the reporter who has witnessed too many killings and walked in a pool of human blood. No independent evidence

has yet emerged that Chalandon ever received a formal diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but Mari includes him in his film documentary on PTSD victims, detailed below.

Mari starkly details the horrific incident which ultimately forced Chalandon to relinquish his fieldwork in the Middle East. Outside Tripoli in northern Lebanon, he was surrounded by a crowd of women who thrust him down an alley into a small, refrigerated lorry, where he discovered the shocking reason for their rage and distress. He was pushed against a plastic cover containing the corpses of about thirty children. The cumulatively grotesque catalogue of horrors confronting Chalandon combines with his terror in foreseeing his own death in the bathroom of Hôtel Le Cavalier, the central Beirut foreign reporters' base. Mari details the catalyst for his friend's psychological collapse:

> Il se précipite dans sa chambre, ouvre sa fenêtre en grand, se débarrasse de tous ses vêtements et se rue sous la douche. Il se savonne, frotte, se rince, recommence…rien à faire. Il pue. Cette odeur ne s'en ira donc jamais ! Aveuglé par le jet d'eau chaude, il se retourne au moment où un léger courant d'air fait voler le rideau de douche. Soudain, le tissue plastifié se colle à lui, hermétique et poisseux, lui enveloppe bouche, visage, ventre, bras et jambes. Comme si une main invisible plaquait le plastique sur sa peau. (pp. 230-231)

This traumatic episode, which was to redefine Chalandon's subsequent professional choices, may be framed as the intolerable pressure on the spectator trapped between seeing and acting, with no capacity to free himself to carve out his own narrative position. Perhaps the most excruciating but inevitable aspect of Chalandon's situation is that, although he is at the heart of his reporting scenario, he is not *in* the story: he cannot intervene to divert events from their deadly *dénouement*.

Jean-Paul Mari's documentary film featuring Chalandon (2018 version of the 2010 original)

Mari draws upon his written account of the effect of PTSD on those working in conflict zones.[67] He introduces Chalandon after a brief snapshot in an Irish bar:

[67] France 2 Infrarouge (4 et fin), 'Sans blessures apparentes', Vidéo Dailymotion, 2018 <www.dailymotion.com/video/xdtfiy>, [accessed 23 March 2021].

‘L’émigrant reporter, talentueux, drôle et chaleureux…Un jour, il a disparu du terrain, sans un mot. Personne n’avait compris. Aujourd’hui il écrit des livres sensibles’. Mari explains that at first, Chalandon didn’t want to speak to him about these matters: ‘C’est dur de parler de sa fragilité’. The opening scene shows Chalandon welcoming Mari into his home. The room where the interview takes place is homely and cluttered. On his crowded bookshelves are mementoes from his assignments in Ireland and the Middle East. There are two illustrations of Gerry Adams, the then Sinn Féin President, one a photograph, the other a cartoon. It is not possible to determine whether the latter was created commercially or by Chalandon himself. A photograph of Yasser Arafat, former Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, is also displayed. More intriguingly, there is a small-scale model of the iconic gable wall mural ‘You are now entering Free Derry’, commemorating the six-day confrontation in August 1969 at the start of the Troubles between the residents of the Derry Catholic working- class district of Bogside and armed police. Chalandon’s laptop is emblazoned with a heraldic Irish sticker. The presence of these ‘artefacts’, recalling his expression ‘petit panthéon personnel’ to denote those in his *Le Canard enchaîné* office, transcends the purely commemorative. Their exposition evokes defiant resilience, while also reinforcing his Irish credentials. They proclaim and sustain his sense of ‘belonging’, concretising that part of him which feels 'Irish'. He plays a recording of *The Wild Rover* to Mari, before making coffee. His choice of music, a widely performed Irish drinking song, could be considered pertinent to his status as a well-travelled reporter who, like the eponymous ‘Rover’, has returned ‘home’ after many years.

The term ‘conversation’ is inexact, because the meeting between the two men more closely resembles a Chalandon monologue. He alludes to the ‘lourd tribut’ paid by journalists who were wounded or killed on assignment. His account is infused with his emphasis on the visual, which he identifies as their fundamental ‘disorder’: ‘Ils sont des voyeurs. Ils ont la maladie d’aller voir le plus près possible.’ He adroitly summarises the evolution of the observer’s reaction to death, from stupor on seeing one’s first corpse to increasing resignation. It is possible that he had not yet undergone psychotherapy in 2010, particularly in the light of his public emotional breakdown in 2011, referenced in the Introduction. In Mari’s film, Chalandon’s reflections on Lebanon are accompanied by intermittent

montage of him in protective headgear, of his multi-stamped passports and of him standing with a group of armed Lebanese civilians, possibly his local contacts, guides or both. Describing Sabra and Chatila as the 'worst', the description of his entry into the refugee camps at dawn is permeated by his memory of silence and especially of the smell: 'Un silence d'après-mort. Un mélange de métal et de brasier…de métal et de sang'. It is perhaps an index of the psychological indelibility of the stench of weaponry and burned flesh that he embeds it within protagonist Georges's experience when he is wounded in the eye by shrapnel (*LQM*, p.235). Chalandon declares that he has never 'digested' Sabra; yet his observation: 'C'est l'âme de mes cauchemars, mais je continue' juxtaposes its centrality with his resolve to progress from it. However, this flash of resilience dissipates before his distressing testimony of the children's bodies piled up in the refrigerated lorry, followed by the frightening incident with the hotel shower curtain in Beirut. In evoking his distress, he uses hand gestures to re-enact the curtain clinging to his face, while envisaging how his facial contours sealed in plastic would have appeared to an onlooker.

It is particularly his diction which marks his mutation from the retrospective spectator into 'immediate' actor. His faltering articulation suggests that he may be verbalising this tragedy for the first time. This hypothesis is supported by his statement that 'j'ai oublié peut-être de soigner où il fallait…j'aurais pu aller voir quelqu'un, un docteur de la tête, mais je ne l'ai pas fait, j'ai mal soigné, j'ai cicatrisé mal'. However, his determination resurfaces in his concluding assertion that everything he does in his life is to distance himself from that smell in the camps and the little feet and heads of the children in the lorry. For him, they are now alive, on his shoulders, implying that it is through his fiction, specifically *Le Quatrième Mur*, that he has been able to memorialise and dignify these young victims' lives.

2.5. Journalist Arnaud Viviant (2015)

Viviant contributes to an understanding of the importance of gesture to Chalandon through biographical detail and the significance of *Profession du père*.[68] He writes

[68]Arnaud Viviant, 'Sorj Chalandon, "L'émancipé": *Profession du père* ou la confession d'un fils. Portrait de Sorj Chalandon', *Transfuge*, 90 (September 2015), 74-75.

that as a lowly 'drudge' on the Culture pages, he had known and admired Chalandon in the 1990s at *Libération* as one of a great team of journalists. His article, entitled 'Sorj Chalandon, l'émancipé' (an unwittingly Rancièresque allusion) features a large photograph of Chalandon. He gazes at the reader through his fingers on which a gold Claddagh ring is visible, also worn by his protagonist Antoine (*MT,* p. 59). His lachrymose demeanour dissolves into a muffled sob at the beginning of the interview. He discloses three hitherto unknown facts. He explains to Viviant that the idea for *Profession du père* was suggested by his younger brother Yves at their father's funeral in December 2014 (although, curiously, their father had died in a psychiatric hospital in March that year). He observes: 'Je n'ai pas mis mon frère dans l'histoire, car je voulais resserrer sur un seul enfant pour la rendre plus étouffante' (Viviant, p. 74). He then mentions that he ran away from home several times when he was fifteen. Viviant remarks: 'En lisant *Profession du père*, on comprend aisément pourquoi' (p. 75). Chalandon states that, when he left *Libération* after thirty-three years, following the dismissal of its co-founder and his mentor Serge July, he was unemployed for twenty months: 'En dépit de mon prix Albert Londres, j'étais à cinquante-cinq ans comme un sidérurgiste de la presse', possibly referring to unemployment in the steel industry. Yet, as Viviant notes, he was writing award-winning novels before being recruited by *Le Canard enchaîné*. Finally, the irony of Chalandon's perspective on what he then regarded as the closure of his work on his father appears in the final paragraph: 'J'ai fini mon métier de fils...Mon père, c'était ma dernière blessure. J'ai mis soixante-trois ans à écrire ce livre. Je ne sais pas si j'en écrirai d'autres'. He would publish his next novel about his father six years later, after a seismic discovery.

2.6 Journalist Thierry Gandillot (2017)

Gandillot frames his article in *Les Échos* on the publication of Chalandon's eighth novel, *Le Jour d'avant*, 'Rentrée littéraire: Sorj Chalandon, un homme en colère', to present a comprehensive portrait of the award-winning journalist and writer

whose work is cut through by a menacing father figure.[69] The strength of Gandillot's contribution resides in his description of Chalandon's youthful 'emancipation'. He left home at seventeen, finding 'des parents de substitution' in the cultural life of Lyon. Here he sang with Pulsar, a rock group from Lyon inspired by Pink Floyd but left, 'pour cause de déception amoureuse.' He subsequently took the train to Paris without buying a ticket and became homeless for several months. He tells Gandillot: 'On était nombreux à dormir dans nos sacs de couchage…Parfois on était plus de 100, des hippies, des beatniks'. He undertook casual work, loading fruit at Les Halles, and filing at the university centre.

His life took a decisive turn when he met a group of young people selling *La Cause du peuple*, a Maoist publication supported by Jean-Paul Sartre. He began to frequent them, at a time when he felt angry. He explains: 'Je portais la violence de mon père en moi. J'ai mis longtemps à m'en débarrasser', before detailing a particularly violent incident in 1971 when, with 5,000 other armed protesters, he attacked a meeting of Ordre nouveau, an extreme right- wing organisation and charged at the police. He asserts that he has always been revolted by injustice; since his childhood he had felt alone, oppressed and fragile, lacking any adult support or guidance. His observation 'L'extrême gauche m'a donné une morale, un cadre de réflexion. C'est par là que je suis arrive à *Libé*' concisely locates both the emergence of his social conscience through his cathartic engagement with the values of left-wing, anti-establishment activism, and his orientation towards a more 'official' resource afforded by journalism. Gandillot also refers to Chalandon's first drawing with which he entered the newspaper on 15 September 1973, discussed in Chapter Two.

2.7 Psychiatrist Françoise Laurent (2020)

A sense of Chalandon's personal, professional and artistic growth between the interviews by Jean-Luc Hees and Françoise Laurent emerges in his responses which corroborate, amplify and challenge those of his previous discussion.

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[69] Thierry Gandillot, 'Rentrée littéraire: Sorj Chalandon, un homme en colère' 5 September 2017 <www.lesechos.fr/amp/1211285>, [accessed 18 July 2022].

Intermingled facets of the Hees interview are discernible, most evidently in Chalandon's perception of the diverse functions of journalism and fiction. Chalandon knows his earlier interviewers personally: Hees and Viviant were fellow journalists, and Mari was his friend and therapist. There is no evidence of prior acquaintance between him and Laurent and perhaps the more distant formality of Laurent's interview may partly account for the steelier timbre of Chalandon's replies. He discusses his conception of belief; his perspective on the relationship between the journalist and the novelist; the essence of a 'textual self'; and the instincts which motivate and imbue his writing, including his personal and artistic self-legitimation. These developments from the Hees interview arguably stem from the maturation of his authorial perspective over time. Laurent's first philosophically oriented question: 'Vous croyez?', proceeds from her identification of a specific unifying strand in his novels, that of his negative experience of belief, manifest in treachery, disillusionment, mendacity and denial.[70] Launching his vigorous response: 'Croire? La foi? Non! Moi, c'est plutôt espérer,' he states that he trusted his father, who became his first betrayer. He acknowledges his disenchantment with the notion of 'belief', pithily characterising it thus: 'Pour moi, croire, c'est accepter par avance'. He reiterates his phrase 'orphelin d'idéologie' from the Hees discussion, declaring that his belief in people was swept away by facts. Juxtaposed with his persistent refusal to judge is his assertion: 'Ce qui guide ce que je suis et ce que j'écris, c'est la volonté de comprendre', denoting an active response rather than a fatalistic acceptance (p. 174). It also recalls Gunn's allusion to 'the ideas that I am, not the ideas that I have' (Gunn, p. 13). He refines his fascination with nuances as 'toutes nos zones d'ombres', in his focus on the transgressive mechanisms of treachery and deceit. He problematises the idea of believing, distinguishing between believing one's parents, friends and teachers and 'making someone believe', thereby framing his relationship with his reader. In response to Laurent's question about believing newspapers, Chalandon reveals his own extensive knowledge of the workings of the press. He has known journalists who lie, but also others who died in their quest for truth. He considers that most

[70] Françoise Laurent, 'Entretien avec Sorj Chalandon', *Le présent de la psychanalyse*, 4 (Presses Universitaires de France, 2020), 173-189 (p. 173).

reporters try to understand the 'how', rather than deliberately deceiving the public. Unsurprisingly, his journalistic instinct and his familiarity with personal betrayal have reinforced his scepticism: 'C'est ce que la trahison a fait de moi: je suis devenu Thomas'. His allusion to his youthful 'violent belief' may also refer to his early adherence to Maoism, preceding his entry to *Libération* (Laurent, p. 177). He now believes in that which vindicates his hopes, rather than trusting in people or events.

There is a strong congruence between his perception of his progression from journalist to novelist as recounted to Hees in 2016, and that imparted to Laurent in 2020. He reprises his ablutionary motif in his response to Laurent's query about the correspondence between the collective stance of the journalist and the individual view of the novelist:

> Je me salis avec l'information. Elle me salit, les hommes politiques qui piquent dans la caisse, les violeurs…On travaille sur quelque chose qui est salissant. Et le roman me lave de ça. Il me nettoie, j'ai besoin de la pureté de la fiction, même si elle est violente, même si elle peut être dure, pour me nettoyer de tout ce que je traite en journalisme depuis plus de quarante ans maintenant. (p. 179)

His experience of journalism as a sullying enterprise signals a reflexive duality. It connects not only with his trauma in witnessing atrocities in war zones as a foreign correspondent for *Libération*, and his attempt, literally, to scour himself of their odour, but also with his repudiation of political corruption, an important dimension in his *Le Canard* reporting, examined in Chapter Two. However, there is a marked difference from the cleansing effect of fiction-writing which he represented to Hees. He problematises its purificatory power to Laurent, regarding it as a positive necessity rather than a catharsis *per se*, despite, or perhaps because of, its attendant anguish. Indeed, in response to her question about *Profession du père*: 'L'écriture n'efface pas les blessures?' he vigorously rejects any cathartic interpretation (p. 186). He declares that, contrary to popular advice, he does not want to 'turn the pages', but to read them exhaustively and to preserve them, a sentiment reiterated in his response to me (Annex 1). The implications of his assertion are explored in the scrutiny of his artistic motivation below, but it becomes evident that his previous communication to Hees of the expiatory effect of fiction-writing has now transmuted into a quasi- masochistic engagement with his pain. However, it could

be posited that the two instincts are in any case sequential: confronting trauma is surely a prerequisite to its extirpation. Chalandon's rejection of catharsis in 2020 could also be construed as an index of his psychological and artistic progress during the past decade, and the savage impact of his cancer diagnosis. It is notable that, on receipt of his prize for *Retour à Killybegs* in 2011, he had declared that he wrote the novel because he wished to close 'the tomb of a friendship, an illusion, a sense of anger'. Stating that he would never write another word about Ireland, he had described his two 'Irish' novels as 'accidental books', he explains: 'Now it's finished. The tomb is closed. I've thrown some flowers over it. It's done'.[71] This implies that these novels *did* perform some form of therapeutic function for him in the past. Moreover, it is possible to attribute to his writing what clinical psychologist Jason Thompson, referring to the skilled therapist's role, has termed 'a form of emotionally attuned, mirroring engagement which can catalyse psychological healing and growth.'[72] In contrast, pre-empting any assumption about the exorcising potential of his writing, he tells Laurent: 'Chacun de mes romans est un fardeau…c'est comme si je portais un sac de pierres. À chaque roman, chaque lecteur prend une pierre, mais le sac est toujours plein' (p. 185). He depicts himself in thrall to a quasi-Sisyphean imperative through this lapidary reference. He had deployed the same metaphor in his insistence on the artistic autonomy of cartoonist Pierre Alary, in the foreword to his graphic novel interpretation of *Mon Traître*: '…il pouvait faire de mon roman ce qu'il en ressentait…Il était libre. J'ai plongé la main dans ce sac de pierres qu'est la trahison et je lui ai offerte une. Bien grosse, lourde, acérée. Cadeau empoisonné'.[73] Chalandon's equation of his 'bag of stones' with betrayal, thirteen years after Donaldson's unmasking, demonstrates its enduring psychological imprint.

Laurent probes Chalandon's transition from journalism to fiction: 'Quand j'ai appris que vous aviez écrit un nouveau livre [*Une joie féroce*], j'ai pensé: C'est peut-être sur les gilets jaunes' (p. 178). Amplifying his previous reasoning to Hees, Chalandon's robust response is that, as he writes about current affairs every

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[71] Ruadhan MacCormac, 'Novel about betraying republican wins award', *Irish Times* (2 November 2011), 6.
[72] Jason Thompson, 'Writing about trauma: Catharsis or Rumination', *Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology*, 17 3 (2010), 275-277 (p. 276).
[73] Pierre Alary, *Mon Traître, d'après le roman de Sorj Chalandon* (Paris: Rue de Sèvres, 2018), p.7.

Wednesday in *Le Canard enchaîné*, he does not need to use fiction for this purpose. His unambiguous retort: 'En revanche, la trahison, la guerre, mon père, le cancer ne trouvent pas de place dans un journal', restates his position on appropriate subjects for journalism and novels, while simultaneously condensing the themes of his fiction (pp. 178- 179). He therefore establishes a clear demarcation, substantiated in my first interview, between the subject-matter which he treats in his reporting, and that with which he engages in his fictional narratives.

The boundary between Chalandon's personal and 'writerly' selves appears clearer in this interview, possibly because Laurent's close scrutiny requires more forensic reflection. A useful example is her question: '*Le Jour d'avant* est exemplaire de cette complexité, le procès en particulier?' where she interrogates Chalandon's characterisation of the nuances of the story, responding to his assertion that he likes to set traps in his novels (p. 175). He pursues the complexity of his relationship with his writing in a particularly insightful exposition of two principal constituents. The first: 'Chacun de mes romans, ou presque, est né d'une blessure: l'Irlande, la maladie, mon père', receives comprehensive attention in the Hees interview, but illness here refers to his cancer diagnosis in early 2019. A notable new aspect is his need for credibility: 'J'ai besoin de légitimité'. Conscious of his distance from the inspiration for *Le Jour d'avant,* the 1974 mining disaster in Liévin, Northern France, he acknowledges that his association with the tragedy is not personal but emotional: 'Il [the novel] est né le 27 décembre 1974 d'une colère qui ne m'a pas quitté. C'est mon socle de colère' (p. 175). It is Chalandon's protagonist Michel Flament (the brother of a miner whose death was unconnected with the tragedy) who inscribes what he frames as a personal mourning within a collective memory. Moreover, *Le Jour d'avant* appears to signal his preoccupation with the acceptability of his intervention as a writer into the lives of others, perceptible in his sensitivity towards his family before the publication of *Profession du père*. Equally, this quest for legitimation proceeds from his sense of his authorial responsibility in the inherent tension between 'real people and images' in fiction, identified by Iris Murdoch.[74] His decision to read extracts of the

[74] Iris Murdoch, 'Against Dryness', *Encounter*, January 1961 in Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending* (Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 130.

novel to the widows and orphans of the victims of the disaster highlights two interlocking reflexes: a journalistic duty to the authenticity of his subject matter; and an equally fastidious moral stricture not to profit from their loss by creating a fictional character as a dead miner. Given his principled stance, Jane Donaldson's accusation that he was profiting from her father's killing by writing *Retour à Killybegs* must have been particularly wounding. He articulates to Laurent what might be termed his psycho-narrative strategy in explaining the genesis of *Une joie féroce,* explored in Chapter Five. He declares that he derives his right to create a narrative about cancer from his own experience of the disease. His comment: 'Ce que je veux, c'est que d'autres Jeanne [the protagonist] viennent me parler. Je suis nu dans mes sentiments, mais pas dans les faits' underscores the primacy he places on emotional authenticity and transparency (p. 182). Moreover, his endowment of his characters with his own personality traits anticipates his metaphor of 'masques transparents' in my interview.

Another significant aspect of this interview is Chalandon's extended perspective on imagery in his work. He had already mentioned his initial position as a sketch-artist with *Libération* to Hees, his childhood love of art and his attraction to the visual as a catalyst for, and accompaniment to, his writing. He locates the importance of vision in his journalistic instinct: 'Donner non pas à comprendre, mais donner à voir…Ne m'expliquez pas, montrez-moi, donnez-moi à voir', athough he does not distinguish this reflex from the voyeurism he repudiates in other journalists. Laurent's observation: 'Dans vos romans on sent cette ferveur du regard, dans les détails concrets du décor, des scènes d'action' (p. 184, 185) recalls Chalandon's own comment to Hees on his urgency to articulate, created by his speech impairment. He summarises the impetus for his 'style':

> Je ne peux écrire que comme si j'étais en train de filmer ou de photographier. Constamment je fais, comme dans ma vie, des arrêts sur une image…donc oui, pour moi, l'image est fondamentale: dans un reportage, commencez par une image et terminez par une image. (p. 185)

Equally significantly, Chalandon articulates his evolving stylistic consciousness:

> Mais mon style change. Entre *Le Petit Bonzi,* mon premier livre, et le dernier, il a beaucoup changé. Mais ce n'est pas fait exprès. On n'écrit pas pareil quelqu'un qui est couché et qui réfléchit et quelqu'un qui court à perdre haleine. Ce n'est pas le même rythme, ce n'est pas les mêmes mots. (p. 183)

There is no expectation that a writer should cleave to an immutable aesthetic, impervious to the vicissitudes he encounters. Indeed, Chalandon's refreshed perspective accords with Frank Kermode's observation that 'It is ourselves we encounter whenever we invent fictions' (Kermode, pp. 38-39). Moreover, it is reasonable to hypothesise that this more contemplative evaluation of his style responds to the tenor of Laurent's questioning as a psychiatrist-interlocutor. What emerges strongly from this interview is his consciousness of his stylistic fluidity across his novels and its complementarity with his protagonists' individuality.

2.8 Interview with RTL Info (30 August 2021)

The two televised interviews in which Chalandon introduces his latest novel *Enfant de Salaud* share commonalities. He foregrounds his lifelong fear of his father in both; he acknowledges that he consequently lacked the courage to confront him about the truth. Crucially, he clarifies the genesis of the novel's title as his grandfather's exasperated expletive on hearing his grandson recount his father's apparently epic exploits. He also defines 'salaud': it is not because his father was a collaborator, but rather because he had lied to his son all his life. Chalandon draws explicit parallels between his father and the character Beuzaboc in *La Légende de nos pères*. He states unambiguously that he does not judge his father and his actions during the Occupation but seeks rather to understand. In both interviews, he explains why he acceded to his father's wish to attend the Klaus Barbie trial. He believed that, by hearing the stories of the forty-four Izieu children deported to Auschwitz and survivors' and witnesses' testimonies, his father might be moved to admit what he had really done during the War. He acknowledges that it was a vain hope, because his father maintained that the victims were lying.

Two details from this RTL interview recall Chalandon's discussion with Françoise Laurent.[75] His reiterates his refusal to 'turn the page' in his assertion that: 'Jamais je ne tourne les pages d'un livre. J'ai lu la page, je l'ai écrite…et je ne la tourne pas. Je suis la somme de toutes les pages. Je veux vivre avec. Je ne veux pas oublier ça'. More resolutely than with Laurent, he implicitly rejects any notion of

[75] 'L'auteur Sorj Chalandon révèle la terrible histoire que lui cachait son père: 'La vérité sur lui est au-delà de ce que j'imaginais', 30 August 2021 vidéo,< www.rtl.be> , [accessed 31 August 2021].

writing as catharsis by asserting that he finds it annoying when [unspecified] people ask him if he has turned the page.

2.9 Interview with 'La Grande Librairie' (1 September 2021)

His appearance two days later on 'La Grande Librairie' requires some contextualisation.[76] This weekly literary programme is hosted by journalist François Busnel, formerly editor and critic of *Lire magazine littéraire*, with which it is associated. Busnel's guests are established and newer Francophone authors who discuss their latest work related to a particular theme. This 'Rentrée' episode, 'Enfant de héros, enfant de salaud,' with three of Busnel's guest writers, including Chalandon had been preceded by the article in *Lire magazine littéraire*, cited above. What lends Chalandon's presentation and discussion of *Enfant de Salaud* depth and resonance on the programme is the incisive probing by Busnel and another guest, Amélie Nothomb. This enabled Chalandon to develop his position on the impact of his fear of his father. Responding to Nothomb's question about the challenge of building his life in those circumstances, he states: 'On ne se construit pas, on fonctionne'. Regarding her novel *Premier Sang* in which she recounts her father's heroism, he declares: 'Qu'est-ce que j'aurais aimé? Cette fierté, d'avoir un père comme le vôtre; un père que l'on retrouve, un père que l'on aime…la vérité sur mon père, j'ai jamais osé'. He frames his profound reticence: 'J'avais peur de briser ses rêves.' He observes that he hid his father from everyone, and although he does not expand on this, it is reasonable to interpret it as a metaphor for not mentioning him to others, possibly out of shame. More decisively, he declares: 'Tuer le père, pour que moi, je vive': eliminating him from his daily life and interactions, although he translates him to his fictional worlds. However, he acknowledges an asset which he acquired from his father: 'Il m'a transmis le goût de l'histoire', referring to his father's obsession with storytelling. Unfortunately, paternal self-absorption prevents his father from recognising himself in Beuzaboc in *La Légende de nos pères*: 'Il a l'âge de mon père dans le roman. Je lui donne ses vêtements, je lui donne ses cheveux'. His father's verdict

[76] 'Enfant d'héros, enfant de salaud'<www.france.tv/france-5/la-grande-librairie>, [accessed 1 September 2021].

on the character was ‘quel con’, an expression frequently employed by the father André in *Profession du père*.

Discussing the structure of his novel, Chalandon states unambiguously that ‘la fiction de ce roman, c’est la temporalité’. He transposed his discovery of his father’s wartime collaboration from the actual period January -May 2020 (six years after his father’s death), when it first emerged in records kept by his brother and was officially validated, back to the Spring of 1987, concurrent with his reporting of the Klaus Barbie trial. Busnel displays one document from the file which Chalandon has brought with him, containing a message in mitigation from his father: ‘Excusez, M. le Juge, mon pauvre style, mais je suis un soldat, non un romancier’. Chalandon remarks wryly that, on seeing this evidence, he thought: ‘Papa, tu viens de me donner une idée quand même, l’idée du roman’. Moreover, the ironic force of misplaced paternal modesty (given that his father was an accomplished ‘romancier’) permeates the narrative. However, perhaps the most significant detail of Chalandon’s exposition for his entire fictional *œuvre* is his assertion to Nothomb that he had tirelessly tried to reach his father: ‘J’ai tout essayé: dix romans dans lesquels j’espérais qu’il lise des petits morceaux de lui. Il n’ a jamais rien vu’. This observation provides a powerful and unexpected insight into the core meaning and purpose of his novels, as a complex route to his father by seeking to affect him vicariously through his stories, Equally, his admission reinforces Gunn’s allusion to the aspect of belonging in autobiographical writing, in that Chalandon attempts to recover or reset the relationship with his father through the creation of embedded and recognisable traits in his characterisation.

2.10 Chalandon’s Responses to my Questions on his Life, Journalism and Fiction (Annex 1, 11 October 2021), and to my Supplementary Questions (Annex 2, 8 February 2022)

While acknowledging that his written responses cannot convey the nuances of a personal interview, Chalandon’s answers are thoughtful and stimulating. Equally, his willingness and promptness in responding to my supplementary questions four months later enabled me to corroborate my position on the relationship between his journalism and his fiction. He states that his father had to leave France after his imprisonment for collaboration with the enemy, going to Tunisia (then a French protectorate) ‘pour “refaire sa vie.”’ His positioning of quotation marks could

indicate that rebuilding one's life there was the customary consequence of this kind of felony. His mother was living in Tunisia with her parents when they met. He was born there but only stayed a few months before going back to France. He does not mention his brother, nor his father's occupation in Tunisia.

He explains that his first contribution to *Libération* was not a cartoon, as stated by Jean Guisnel, 'mais un strip de quatre dessins quotidiens, pendant plusieurs mois'. I have since located three examples of these drawings, two from his 'Derrière Les Murs de l'Asile' series and two straightforwardly political cartoons which I discuss in Chapter Two.[77] As I noted above, he was an occasional auxiliary carer and actively espoused 'l'antipsychiatrie'. The broader issue arising from this response is the caution required when engaging with the memories of third parties and alertness to unintentionally inaccurate précis. Clearly Chalandon is a committed and compassionate champion for the rights of those suffering mental illness. Concerning his journalism, he explains his departure from *Libération* by the fact that it had been sold to Baron Rothschild and was henceforth in the hands of private investors, followed by the dismissal of Serge July, its founder and Chalandon's mentor. His observation: 'Après 34 ans, mon journal ne me ressemblait plus' is cogent in capturing the widening gulf between the values of the incoming proprietor and his own. It is also poignant in his use of the possessive, recalling the deep affection he had expressed in a 1984 documentary about the newspaper: 'À *Libé*, je me sens bien…J'aime *Libération*…*Libé* combat…un vrai combat'.[78]

Relating to the modification of his professional approach from *Libération* to *Le Canard enchaîné*, he reiterates that he has no specific style and that *Le Canard* does not impose one. He adapted by instilling humour, satire and commentary into his 'territoire journalistique', phrasing which evokes ownership and autonomy. He describes the impact of having to adapt to *Le Canard*'s non-reporting mission: 'Alors, il m'a fallu repenser ma façon d'aborder les sujets'. Yet, to achieve this transition, he must originally have had some sense of a style, even if he does not

[77] *Libération*, No. 109 (3 December 1973), 6, 7 and *Libération*, No. 116 (12 December 1973), 7, 11.
[78] <www.ina-fr/ina-eclaire-actu/video/cpc84054400/libe-allume-la-tele>1984,[accessed 27 January 2022].

articulate this. Moreover, it is reasonable to consider whether he could have achieved this shift from war reporting to satirical exposition without having already written three novels, a question I pose in my second interview. Their creation entailed the mining of a broad emotional spectrum, imparted through the *image*, as previously emphasised to Laurent.

His characterisation of the relationship of his work to photography as an act of friendship discloses two pertinent aspects of his character and his writing. He displays an openness to, and an empathy with, photographers, contrasting with his reluctance to socialise with other authors, noted above. He also exhibits an uncomplicated humility in remarking that Marie Dorigny's and Daniel Hérard's photos are the sole purpose of the books. However, his modest disclaimer: 'Mon texte n'est qu'un mince apport' does not accord with Dorigny's view that he had brought shape and soul to her work and may therefore be an example of his self-presentation.[79]

It may be posited that, rather than my inaccurate attribution of 'réalisme magique' to *Une Promesse* in my follow-up inquiry (Annexe 2), this novel embodies 'la fiction pure', in that Chalandon has removed himself entirely from the narrative. His comment: 'Écrivant *Une Promesse*, j'ai appris la trahison de Denis Donaldson' illuminates the coincidence of its creation with his knowledge of Donaldson's treachery in December 2005. His statement: 'Depuis, je cours après mes fantômes. Les trahisons, la guerre, l'enfance, le cancer, le père' is consonant with his metaphor of refusing to turn the page and deliberately embracing his pain. His observation: 'Avec mon dernier roman, je referme le livre du père' is evidently his current position and may be comparable to his ostensibly definitive assertions in 2015 to Viviant and in 2016 to Hees about *Profession du Père*. His speculation: 'Peut-être vais-je revenir à la fiction pure' is intriguing and constituted my most pressing reason for a second interview.

He makes an unambiguously positive distinction between current events and fiction: 'Je fais une différence absolue entre fiction et actualité, roman et journalisme, heureusement. Ni opposition ni enchevêtrement'. He expands on their significance for him: 'Le journalisme m'a permis d'aller sur des fronts de guerre,

[79] Marie Dorigny and Sorj Chalandon, *Enfants de l'Ombre* (Marval, 1993) (unpaginated).

notamment, où j'ai puisé le matériel humain de certains romans. De la réalité, je m'évade vers la fiction, pour me permettre de dire "je". Même si ce "je" est metteur en scène de théâtre, biographe, luthier, libraire'. While acknowledging his artistic debt to journalism, he emphasises his escape to fiction, where, as he had clarified to Hees, he can articulate his own self through the diversity of his protagonists. Another echo of the Hees interview re-emerges here. Notwithstanding the distinction he draws between the two domains, there is a tacit and persistent interdependence: his journalism provides him with the source material for his novels.

He articulates his relationship with his fictional characters: 'Ces masques transparents me permettent seulement de prendre du recul par rapport à ma réalité', expanding upon his earlier observation to Georgia Makhlouf: 'Le roman est un masque à la fois protecteur et douloureux'. His oxymoronic expression may imply a dual purpose: they provide him with a wafer-thin distance or respite from reality, while eliciting recognition from the reader. Equally, his assertion: 'Les pages que je refuse de tourner sont les blessures de ma vie. Je vis avec. Elles sont mon socle', suggests that he refuses to erase the foundational role of pain in his life. Finally, with 'Aucun défi à relever', he dismisses any problematic dimension in the encounter between his father's story and Klaus Barbie's. However, he reiterates the point he made to Amélie Nothomb on *La Grande Librairie* regarding the sense of a missed meeting with his father: 'Seulement le sentiment d'un rendez-vous manqué avec un père. Une grande tristesse'. His sorrow is patently still raw.

Valuable though my first interview was in extending my current knowledge, it raised further issues. I wanted to learn more about his father's life in Tunisia. I also wished to probe his interpretation of his ambiguous comment to Hees that he does not feel like 'un journaliste de roman.' More precision regarding the adjustments he had to make on becoming a reporter with *Le Canard enchaîné* could assist my critique of his more recent journalism. Equally, my discovery in December 2021 of his prose poetry in an early photojournalism project merited a re-appraisal both of his modest assessment of his collaborative contributions and his stylistic heterogeneity. Moreover, as noted above, my most important question concerned his hope to return to 'la fiction pure' after *Enfant de Salaud*. This is pivotal, because it addresses not only what he aspires to in his art, but also whether he

considers such an orientation even possible, given the centrality of his ‘masques transparents’ and the gravitational pull of the father.

His swift response to my supplementary questions revealed a willingness to elucidate. ‘Fiction pure’ heralds the vanishing of the journalist and the collaborator father’s son: ‘Je n'y serais pas. Et la première personne du singulier ne me désignerait pas. Pure fiction, c'est écrire que je suis astronaute, ou paysan grec, ou fleur des champs’. He refers specifically to *Une Promesse* as an exception to the traumatic geneses of his other novels, which emanated from a deeply personal wound or misfortune. He responds to the concept of ‘journaliste de roman’ by reiterating his commitment to ‘la fiction pure’: ‘Je me suis peu aventuré sur les chemins de la fiction pure. Et, à part *Enfant de salaud*, parce que c'était nécessaire, jamais je ne mettrais plus un journaliste en scène dans un roman’.

He helpfully clarifies the modification of his journalistic approach at *Le Canard enchaîné* as needing to ‘réfléchir à traiter avec humour, y compris des sujets graves’, comprehensively evident in my analysis of his contributions to the newspaper in Chapter Two. He also provides a broader explanation of his father’s circumstances in Tunisia. It seems he never worked at all while his mother always worked. Conversely, in *Le Petit Bonzi* and *Profession du Père* he scaffolds family dynamics upon paternal agency and concomitant maternal powerlessness.

His continued minimisation of his role in his photographic collaborations may be a function of what William J.T. Mitchell, cited by Andy Stafford, terms ‘a certain reserve or modesty,’ with the essay or text only interpreting the images.[80] Chalandon characterises his work with Robine in *Rue de la Pompe* as: ‘Un jeu avec l’image, sans conséquences’ and presents his contribution almost as a favour to a friend: ‘Ses photos seules n’auraient pas été publiées’, possibly because of the unusual subject matter of footwear in urban settings. Indeed, Robine was confronted by the CRS when he attempted to photograph himself chatting with

[80] William J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Presentation* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 289 in Andy Stafford, ‘Non-pareille? Issues in Modern French Photo-Essayism’, in *The Modern Essay in French: Movement, Instability, Performance*,ed. by C. Forsdick and A. Stafford, Modern French Identities (41) (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), 101-118 (p. 105).

female contractors.[81] The extent to which these collaborations represent aesthetic 'oases' for Chalandon after the psychological turmoil of war reporting and the memory of his father is explored in Chapter Two.

His concluding observation signals the paradox inherent in his work: 'Sans ce père je ne serais pas devenu journaliste et sans ce métier de journaliste, je ne serais pas devenu écrivain. Tout est lié'. If everything is linked, the distinction he has drawn between his journalism and his fiction writing in his interviews with Hees, Laurent and me is surely problematic. Neither is it obvious precisely why he became a journalist because of his father, unless he is implying that his clandestine childhood reading and writing were a response to, and a refuge from, his father's splenetic antipathy to the artistic and the intellectual.

2.11 Béatrice Kammerer's Interview with Chalandon (April 2022)

This discussion provides both corroborative evidence regarding his writing, and fresh information about his relationship with his mother. To Kammer's initial question probing his perspective on his passage from 'une écriture factuelle sur les autres et le monde à une écriture personnelle et fictionnelle', he responds: 'On ne passe pas de l'une à l'autre, on se sert de l'autre pour supporter l'une.[82] He underpins what fiction offers him -revisiting places, wounds, accidents- with what he terms 'un léger décalage avec la réalité, qui aide à s'en distancier', a key aspect of his assumption of the 'masques transparents' to which he alluded in my interview. His rejection of any therapeutic purpose in his writing: 'Au contraire, je veux que mes plaies restent entrouvertes' also accords with the position he takes with Laurent. Kammerer observes that he speaks little about his mother, who seems devoid of affection and unable to protect her son: 'Lui avez-vous reproché sa passivité?' He replies: 'Je lui en ai surtout voulu de son silence'. However, he reasons: 'Avec le recul, je sais que c'était d'abord une femme terrorisée par son mari…Comment voulez-vous que cette femme ait pu aider ses enfants?' (p. 10). As the discussion focuses on the harsh school discipline prevalent in his novels, he

[81] Joël Robine and Sorj Chalandon, *Rue de la Pompe* (Pontoise: Éditions Edijac, 1986), (unpaginated), endpaper. Further references to this work are prefixed *RP*.
[82] Béatrice Kammerer, "Je veux que mes plaies restent entrouvertes', *L'école des parents*, 643, (April, 2022), 8-11 (p. 9).

recounts how his left-handedness was ‘corrected’ by tying this hand to the back of his chair, in order to compel him to write with his right hand. He observes ‘Plus tard, j’ai réalisé que presque tous les bègues de mon âge étaient des gauchers contrariés’. The apparent coincidence may lie in the effect of the psychological trauma caused by enforced right-handedness upon speech development. Importantly for Chalandon and contributing to his characterisation of Jacques Rougeron in *Le Petit Bonzi*, he managed to surmount this double impediment to his oral and written expression.

Conclusions and Reflections

Chalandon’s eponymous fabrication constitutes an intricate intermeshing of the ‘auto’, the ‘bio’ and the ‘graphy’ strands, a development of Gunn’s ‘autobiographical situation’ interpreted through his self-projection and others’ perceptions. Through their perspectives, imagery and tone, the interviews provide a preliminary understanding of Chalandon the colleague, friend, patient, journalist and novelist. His interactions with M.N, Manzoni, Hees, Mari, Viviant, Gandillot, Laurent, Kammerer and me, and his televised and personal disclosures regarding *Enfant de Salaud*, reveal a mosaic of dissonant instincts. Chalandon displays principle and insight in asserting and exemplifying his journalistic independence in Northern Ireland, and the separation between his professional focus and social interactions. He shows humility and pride in his knowledge and display of Irish political iconography. He appears elucidatory and reflective, collegial and idiosyncratic, gregarious and solitary, stoic and vulnerable in his exposition of his personal, professional and psychological experiences. The explicatory instinct in his fiction and his sensitivity to the potency of the individual word exemplifies what J. David Velleman terms ‘the explanatory force of story’.[83] It is a reflex which infuses the timbre of his journalistic writing. His readiness, for example, to extrapolate parallels between his fictional writing and his life to Hees echoes Kermode’s observation on the imbrication of the individual and his narratives (pp. 38-39). His interview with Laurent elicits a maturation of his personal,

[83] J. David Velleman, ‘Narrative Explanation’ in *The Philosophical Review*, 112, 1 (Jan. 2003) 1-25 (p. 5).

professional and artistic philosophy discussed extensively with Hees, such as his distinction between journalism and fiction and his relationship with his father. In his meeting with Mari, conducted in his own home, he allows himself to articulate long-buried anguish from his time in Lebanon, sustained by his own icon-filled 'pantheon' and the strains of *The Wild Rover*, the soundtrack to his own peregrinations and the emotional magnetism of Ireland.

Paradoxically, the period *between* the 2016 Hees and the 2020 Laurent interviews may be as significant as the discussions themselves. Previously unseen facets surface in his 2017 discussion with Gandillot, namely the part his father's toxic legacy played in the turbulence and anger of his young adulthood, and the awakening of his social and political sensibilities. Pursuing artistic legitimacy in *Le Jour d'avant* and *Une joie féroce*, the Chalandon of 2020 appears more resolute, confident and even contrarian than before: 'Je compte sur mes propres forces, je compte sur mon propre instinct animal et je marche dans la vie comme ça. Je n'attends pas' (Laurent, p. 179). It is reasonable to assume that events such as his wife's and his own cancer diagnoses contributed to the emergence of this more austere perspective. In this interview, he demonstrates a greater willingness to embrace dissonance. It is quite possible that he modulated his responses '*en fonction*' of the contexts and perspectives of his different interviewers and his distinctive relationships with them. A logical refutation would be that he could only respond to the questions he was asked, and that he instinctively connected with the discourse of his interlocutors.

The substance and tone of his discussions on RTL and *La Grande Librairie* regarding *Enfant de Salaud* are arguably the most personal and passionate. In his candid depiction of his relationship with his father, he alludes to his unfulfilled aspiration that the older man could elicit something of himself from the novels. The most salient aspect of these interviews is Chalandon's portrayal of his father as 'traitor'. A complementary dimension to paternal mendacity surfaces in Chalandon's resentment towards his mother's silence in Béatrice Kammerer's interview; yet his rancour is tempered by his acknowledgement of her terrorised powerlessness and, more positively, by his evident joy in his own family.

Chalandon's written replies to me corroborate and extend my knowledge of the author and his views on his journalism and fiction. His elucidation of his activism

in anti-psychiatry as an ‘aide-soignant occasionnel’ reinforces my perception of him as a committed advocate for the vulnerable. His practical involvement complements his fundamental precept of listening to the lives of others. The most significant aspects for my current understanding of his journalistic and fictional evolution are his continued reticence regarding his photographic collaborations; his articulation of ‘fiction pure’ as the expunging of the ‘I’ as journalist in his fiction; and his assertion that ‘tout est lié’, in terms of his relationship with his father, his journalism and his fiction, while insisting on the demarcation between the two realms of writing.

Moreover, this latter declaration amplifies the matrix of interlocking paradoxes. Although Chalandon asserts his principal professional identity as a journalist, he considers that it is his fictional writing which purges him of the murk of his primary vocation. While intent on letting others speak, he maintains his scepticism. Although his fiction could hitherto have been characterised as cathartic, his most recently expressed instincts are not only to cleave to his trauma, but also to frame it as a pathway to his ‘true’ father. He has left Ireland physically, but it still retains affective and visual significance for him. Although he has received several literary awards, he delineates his quest for credibility as a fiction writer. He perceives synthesis within his life and work yet bifurcation within the latter. These seemingly conflictual components epitomise the ultimately problematic disaggregation of Chalandon the journalist from Chalandon the author.

The exploration and interrogation of the wider context of transnational journalism in Chapter Two is indispensable in three regards. It enables the positioning of a more profound scrutiny of Chalandon’s reporting within a universalising current. Moreover, the search for legitimacy is a significant vector in the origin, development and consolidation of modern global journalism. Finally, it interprets the incremental and interlocking stages discernible in Chalandon’s passage from journalism to fictional narrative.

Chapter Two: Declaim, Describe, Debride: The Evolution of Sorj Chalandon as Journalist -Author

'Je suis un journaliste qui se nettoie, qui nettoie sa vie par le roman' (to Jean-Luc Hees).

Chalandon distils his compelling interconnection between his primary professional activity as a journalist and his fictional writing as a form of purgation, discussed in Chapter One. But what is he cleansing? What does this process entail? And what are its effects? His development from journalist to author emerges in the examination of his practical experience as a foreign correspondent and in his journalistic and fictional writing below. That he considers journalism as his principal occupation is evident in his interview with Hees. He explicitly states that it is clearly written on his business card that he is a journalist, not a writer. Yet, this assertion appears ambiguous. As these cards serve to inform *others*, the question is: 'but what does *he* think he is?' His differential characterisation of the two activities reveals his inclination to express feelings through fiction, to locate the 'Je' by transcending the journalistic parameters of fact and actuality. Moreover, his insistence that: 'Je ne voulais pas faire des romans, je ne voulais être romancier. Je voulais écrire un livre qui serait un roman' reveals a crafted naïveté. Equally, his rejection of the generalised 'faire des romans' for a more specifically intentional 'écrire un livre' signals his emotional investment. (Hees).

Section One: Collegial and Scholarly Appraisals of Chalandon's Journalism: Chalandon's Initiation into Journalism

The conjunction of Chalandon's political and professional priorities emerges in an overview of his induction and development as a *Libération* correspondent. Founded in Paris in 1973 by Jean-Paul Sartre and Serge July, *Libération* was staffed by 1968 activists who, like Chalandon, sought an escape from their ideological 'ghetto'. Yves Roucaute describes its chaotic beginnings; its burgeoning but modest success between 1974 and 1981; and the dedication of its reporters before its temporary closure and re-launch as a professionally organised newspaper.[84] Chalandon's colleague Jean Guisnel describes it as 'une aventure moderne'. He considers its 'hiccups', successes and reincarnation as a reflection of

[84] Yves Roucaute, *Splendeurs et Misères des Journalistes* (Calmann-Lévy, 1991), pp.123-124.

French society in the late twentieth century (Guisnel, p. 7). He also emphasises the enduring strength of personal relationships among the staff. (p. 9). Journalist David Dufresne corroborates this collegiality: 'Le collectif avait quelque chose de magique, y compris dans ses dissensions'.[85]

Chalandon describes his début to journalist Yann Lévy as haphazard, consonant with the early ethos of *Libération.* His decision was driven by Pinochet's overthrow of the democratically elected Allende government in Chile in 1973: 'Je suis entré à *Libération* en 1973. J'ai poussé la porte le 15 septembre, après le coup d'État au Chili'.[86] The pertinence of his reference to Pinochet's coup is reinforced by details from Thierry Gandillot's interview, discussed in Chapter One. He presented proprietor Serge July with his drawing 'où l'on voit un sbire de la CIA indiquer la carte du Chili avec en légende: « Bonne chose de faite! ». À sa grande surprise cette caricature de médiocre inspiration passe'.[87] Chalandon's artistic 'passport' into *Libération* reflects those characteristics which would shape his approach to his journalism and his fiction: a highly developed social conscience, equally alert to 'local' and international injustice ; and an unyielding determination to pursue his 'story'.

Recalling Guisnel's statement in Chapter One, his first (paid) contribution was a cartoon: 'Derrière les murs de l'asile'. Yet, despite his colleague's warm assessment: 'une formidable petite bande dessinée', (p. 100), corrected by Chalandon to 'un strip de quatre dessins quotidiens' in our first interview, he is moved to the editing department. Ruellan's explanation for this change in professional direction is: '…parce qu'il fait preuve de piètres qualités comme technicien…' (p. 159).

My acquisition of two original *Libération* newspapers from December 1973, three months after Chalandon's arrival, enabled me to amplify Guisnel's viewpoint. Each edition features his four-frame drawing of a seated androgynous figure, draped in shapeless clothing and wearing oversized slippers, signed 'SORJ'. The

[85] Loïc Ballarini, 'Entretien avec David Dufresne', 17 June 2020 <www.hal.archives-ouvertes.fr>, [accessed 11 March 2021].
[86] Yann Lévy, 'Je vis avec la mort et la trahison en essayant de me garder de l'une et de l'autre', 2013, *Entretien avec Sorj Chalandon,*<http://<www.editionslibertalia.com>, [accessed 20 August 2014].

first drawing from 3 December depicts the patient in the throes of sneezing, when suddenly in the final frame, he is slumped forward and wearing a straitjacket under a sign which reads 'Agité', the only indication that the patient is male, so comprehensively has the sufferer been de-sexed and de-humanised by the system. His illustration of an individual sedated for merely sneezing because it is considered disturbing reflects his revulsion at the medicalisation of mental health (*Libération* 109, p.7). The strip from 12 December shows the same seated figure, tranquilised and grinning fixedly in the first three frames. By now, unhappy and resigned, he says: 'Épuisantes ces opérations "Portes ouvertes"'. (*Libération* 116, p. 11). This drawing illustrates what Chalandon may have witnessed as a volunteer in a psychiatric hospital as a stark example of over-medicalisation: the practice of calming patients during visiting hours. The genesis of the sparse, incisive and yet empathetic language of his fiction is discernible here, epitomising the core talent of the cartoonist: excoriating eloquence within editorial exiguity.

This skill is particularly prominent in his two incontestably political cartoons. In the edition of 3 December, he depicts a gleeful President Pompidou with the caption: 'Et maintenant que le fric de la vignette est rentré…CRAC! interdit [*sic*] les bagnoles!' (*Libération* 109, p. 6). The wording invites several observations. Chalandon clearly targets what he considers governmental hypocrisy: the President is banning cars now that car tax has been collected. His instinct for rooting out institutional dissembling will remain undiminished in his columns for *Le Canard enchaîné* over three decades later. Moreover, the double-dealing appears even more pronounced in Pompidou's case, since he was famously attached to his own DS car and allegedly remarked: 'Que voulez-vous, les Français aiment la bagnole'.[88] However, a more significant point is the difference in style between Chalandon's drawing of the psychiatric hospital patient and his Pompidou caricature. The former's stark featurelessness exudes pathos, fragility and vulnerability, held together by a dignity of sorts. The latter is wholly dominated by Pompidou's globulous head, avaricious grimace and alarmingly exuberant eyebrows which entirely occlude his vision. Precisely the same facial tropes appear

[88] Pierre- Yves Augsberger, 'Georges Pompidou, Le Président qui aimait les voitures', <www.smartmobility.lu/actualites/george-pompidou-le-president-qui-aimait-les-voitures>, [accessed 22 October 2022].

in Chalandon's projection of the President onto an oversized microphone attached to a tape recorder in the later edition (*Libération* 116, p. 7). His drawing illustrates *Libération*'s thunderous headline that day: 'L'ÉTAT POLICIER: L'Affaire des écoutes du Canard', referring to the bugging of the offices of the satirical newspaper. The scandal itself is discussed below in relation to the history of *Le Canard enchaîné*. Chalandon's cartoon constitutes a scathing representation of the murky entanglement of the government and the security services. It also seems to have enhanced his status because it appears under the legend 'Le dessin du jour'. His decision to channel his empathy with the dispossessed and his anger at abuses of power into 'public-facing' art is consonant with his rejection of political violence. He tells Yann Lévy: 'Je ne suis pas entré à *Libération* pour être journaliste, mais parce que j'avais deposé les armes'.[89]A kind of ideological armistice, not journalism, is therefore his initial motivation, while his sense of an evolving vocation mitigates this political homelessness. He finally settles into 'faits divers', giving him access to ordinary lives.

After this apprenticeship, he worked internationally, notably in Ireland, Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan. He asserts that, rather than fearing death, he sometimes feared losing his interest in peace. He illustrates this risk by evoking the psychological jolt he experienced after the Sabra and Chatila massacres while watching a pensioners' demonstration in Paris: 'J'avais perdu le sens commun'. The meshing of the personal and professional is particularly salient in his response to Lévy's question on his haunting by betrayal. For Chalandon, his fear of treachery is rooted in familial and professional origins. His assertion that his father lied to him foreshadows his characterisation to Laurent as 'mon premier traître', although he does not clarify what his father lied about. He declares himself 'fissuré par ces mensonges'. He frames the dread of betraying a cause or a friend as something which 'inhabits him'. The arrival in 2005 of a new *Libération* proprietor, Édouard de Rothschild, and Chalandon's departure in 2007 have been noted in Chapter One. It may be assumed that his leaving was precipitated by the dismissal of his mentor and founding editor, Serge July. De Rothschild, a friend of

[89] Yann Lévy, 'Je vis avec la mort et la trahison en essayant de me garder de l'une et de l'autre', 2013, *Entretien avec Sorj Chalandon*,<http:// www.editionslibertalia.com>, [accessed 20 August 2014].

Nicolas Sarkozy, took a 38.6% stake in the newspaper following a dramatic decline in circulation. He allegedly requested July's resignation after an angry exchange in a Paris restaurant.[90]

Professional Assessments by Chalandon's *Libération* colleagues, Jean Guisnel and Gérard Lefort; Scholarly Commentary by Denis Ruellan and Karine Deslandes

Guisnel refers to Chalandon's excellent articles on Northern Ireland. He notes that he did not show interest solely in the Nationalist side. His perception of Chalandon's even-handedness: 'sans commettre l'erreur de ne s'intéresser qu'aux républicains de l'IRA -qu'il connaît, et qui le connaissent, fort bien – et en prenant soin d'aller voir également les Unionistes' (p. 170), corroborates Chalandon's emphasis on his professional impartiality in his interview with M.N., examined in Chapter One. This seems at variance with the findings of Karine Deslandes and analyses of his photo-journalism collaborations, in which he appears more empathetic to Nationalist culture. However, newly acquired evidence discussed in relation to his Northern Irish journalism below demonstrates his awareness of Loyalist sensitivities. On a more practical level, his colleague Guisnel mentions a potentially career-limiting detail, stating that Chalandon's inability to drive precluded him from replacing the wounded Jean Hatzfeld as *Libération's* Bosnia correspondent (p. 184).

Gérard Lefort's assessment of Chalandon's work enriches an understanding of him as journalist and author. He observes that Chalandon waited until his departure from the newspaper before reflecting on his reporting. His account skilfully blends allusions to *Mon Traître* with a consideration of his style and his broader perspective on Irish politics. Although he references autobiographical elements: 'Pas besoin d'être un grand sorcier pour détecter qu'il y a beaucoup de Sorj Chalandon dans le personnage d'Antoine, et que derrière Tyrone Meehan se profile la silhouette de Denis Donaldson', he also provides a strikingly original

[90] Angelique Chrisafis, 'France's leftwing mouthpiece plunged into existential crisis as editor told to leave', 14 June 2006, <www.theguardian.com/media/2006/jun/14/pressandpublishing.france>, [accessed 5 March 2021].

critique of his journalistic style : 'Il y a du Dickens dans sa façon de sillonner l'Irlande du Nord'.[91] His explanation for this improbable comparison is that, like Dickens but not for the same reason, Chalandon walked everywhere because he never learned to drive, corroborating Guisnel. He was therefore obliged to devise various coping strategies which he discussed in a *Libération* article in August 1993 entitled: 'La débrouille d'un sans-permis' (p.170). He was, literally, a journalist 'on the ground'. Regarding his political views, Lefort notes that, although he expressed a certain sympathy with IRA Republicans, he always investigated their adverse impact on the Unionists, echoing Guisnel's view of his impartiality and Chalandon's observations to M.N. above. Chalandon was also concerned about Republicans' 'punishment shootings' within their own communities, probably in relation to drug-dealing, as he also described to M.N. Perhaps Lefort's most potent image is Chalandon 'Avec toujours une bonne pinte d'humour plus noir que la Guinness', inextricably mingling mentality, milieu and *métier.* Yet this benign drollness may have contributed to a perception amongst his colleagues of a whimsical attachment to Ireland, as Chalandon also described to blogger M.N. in Chapter One.

In Chapter Six of his study *Le Journalisme ou Le Professionalisme du Flou*, cited in my Introduction, academic and former journalist Denis Ruellan presents two journalistic modes which he discusses under the rubric of 'Rhétoriques: le terrain et la feuille blanche'. He locates Chalandon in the first category, which he defines as 'la rhétorique de l'amont'. It is epitomised by the journalist's proximity to, and affinity with, his reporting context: 'une relation intense au terrain' (p. 157). He contrasts this with 'la rhétorique de l'aval' (p. 158), or 'on the page' and distant from the source. He asserts that the journalist on the ground absorbs a direct understanding of his subject. Although he does not specifically address the risk of injury, the impact of the immediacy of conflict emerges in his account of his interview with Chalandon. He richly summarises Chalandon's approach as: 'la forte intimité qu'il fait exister entre ce qui le touche personnellement et ce qui lui paraît important dans l'absolu' (p. 159). His reference to Chalandon's childhood

[91]Gérard Lefort, 'Zones de guerre' in *Libé 40 ans : Le Livre Anniversaire*, ed. by Nicolas Demorand and others (Éditions Flammarion, 2013), pp. 169-173 (p. 170).

anecdote of a man shouting in the street and his disappointment that this did not feature in the next day's newspaper, illustrates his early personalisation of news and his need to be at the event. Ruellan's comment: 'Ce goût pour l'immédiateté de la relation au réel' further distils Chalandon's profound identification with the dynamism of 'live' events (p. 160). Moreover, the full significance of 'relation' as personal involvement surfaces in Chalandon's readiness to exceed his professional remit in order to assist victims, even carrying the body of a dying child, although this was never mentioned in his reports. Ruellan alludes to another critical moment when the horrendous scenes he witnessed in the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps in 1982, as recounted to Jean-Paul Mari in Chapter One above, make him want to kill. Chalandon also refers to his affection for local people and his sadness at leaving them behind, perhaps to die: 'Mais cela ne s'écrit pas' (p. 161). By suppressing his own emotions, he provides space to chronicle those of the voiceless.

Ruellan counterpoints two aspects of Chalandon's perspective on his journalism, prefiguring aspects of the Hees and Laurent interviews. Significantly, he considers that letting people speak for themselves provides him with real images of their lives. Equally, foreshadowing his professional scepticism expressed to Laurent, he presents his tendency to doubt as a defence against duplicity. He appears to be highly attuned to the fragility of fact: that something which one believes to be true could soon be shown to be false. He associates this ephemerality with his preference for writing for a daily newspaper rather than a monthly publication: if he says something foolish, it only remains on the shelf for a day, not a month (pp. 160-161). Ruellan's conceptualisation of the 'terrain' and the 'page' delimits the parameters of Chalandon's journalistic spectrum, from 'close- up' personal reportage to more detached but trenchant commentary. His journalism as a foreign correspondent at *Libération* is demonstrably informed by 'la rhétorique de l'amont', a dynamic of 'on the ground'. In contrast, his reporting in *Le Canard enchaîné* reveals a shift towards 'la rhétorique de l'aval', in terms of a more removed and acerbic perspective.

Karine Deslandes's scrutiny of *Libération* and *l'Humanité,* from the 1980s Republican hunger strikes to the signing of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA), contextualises Chalandon's Northern Ireland journalism. Consonant with

Libération's political stance as the Irish Republican voice in France, her evidence provides some support for Chalandon's empathy with Nationalism. She refers to his empathy with the hunger strikers in *Libération*'s support for Irish political prisoners in a range of articles (21 and 28 October 1980 and 13 May 1981). She observes that 'le quotidien s'est toujours montré pro-républicain et a toujours considéré les membres de l'IRA provisoire comme "des combattants," "des soldats"'.[92] Juxtaposed with Chalandon's observation to M.N. that the French press tended to caricature the Republican movement, Deslandes's assessment suggests that *Libération* maintained a more serious stance. However, her characterisation of the paper as 'pro-Republican' is countered by Chalandon's assertion to blogger M.N. that there was an extremely strong spirit of impartiality and by his reports on people and events within the Belfast Protestant community, examined below.

Chalandon's moral support for the hunger strikers is both rousing and sombre. Depicting Bobby Sands as 'un soldat irlandais', he asserts: 'Pour l'Irlande, la grève de la faim, c'est la dernière manière d'être une femme ou un homme libre, la dernière manière de refuser sa condition'. His repugnance for what he considers the culpable passivity of the British Government towards the rapidly mounting toll of hunger striker deaths shapes his view of Margaret Thatcher: 'des assassins en dame de fer, dame de mépris, dame de violence et Reine de mort'. Following the death of the eighth hunger striker on 3 August 1981, he entitled his column: 'Irlande: Londres laisse mourir'. A week later, after the ninth death, he wrote: 'Thatcher fait le mort', drawing an unambiguous causal connection between British political power and the fate of individual Irishmen. The pro-Nationalist stance I identified in Chalandon's contributions to Daniel Hérard's photographic work on working-class Belfast is discernible in Deslandes's analysis. She discusses the subjects for his 1991 article 'Portraits of Ordinary Families of Ireland', in which three out of the four were Nationalist, with only one Loyalist

[92] Karine Deslandes, 'Immixtion du conflit nord-irlandais dans la vie politique française: le reportage des grèves de la faim en 1981 dans L'Humanité et Libération',*Études irlandaises*,35-2010, 30 septembre 2012, https://doi.org/10.4000 /études irlandaises 1770, [accessed 9 January 2023].

family.[93] Deslandes's findings challenge the impartiality asserted by his colleagues Jean Guisnel and Gérard Lefort. However, Chalandon's participation in a 2008 virtual question-and-answer session reveals a more dispassionate view, possibly assisted by geographical distance. A shift is evident in his response to a question concerning the treatment of Troubles-related crimes. His statement: 'Négocier, c'est s'asseoir avec le salaud qui est en face. Londres négocie, Sinn Féin négocie, les Unionistes négocient. Les morts et les drames n'appartiennent pas à l'histoire mais à la mémoire,' reveals his customary sensitivity to memory but yoked to a new pragmatism.[94] More personally, his remark: 'C'est long et douloureux' may refer to his mourning for the demise of the Denis Donaldson he thought he knew, as well as the tortuous peace process.[95]

Although the diverse aspects of Chalandon's journalism cannot *precisely* be connected with preceding journalistic trends, it is possible to track the development and influence of certain occupational attitudes and traits detectable in his experience of the journalist-becoming-author. The supporting conceptual framework in Section Two contextualises these features, encompassing issues pertinent to news 'construction' and their reverberations in fictional writing.

Section 2: French and Anglo-American Journalism: Comparative Perspectives

The Development of the Professional Journalist

'French journalism has always been more of a journalism of expression than a journalism of observation. As much as the presentation of facts, it is always interested in the exposition of ideas'.[96] Rodney Benson's translated reference to this distinction drawn by Pierre Albert between French and American journalistic

[93] Karine Deslandes, 'French Perspectives on the Northern Ireland peace process and the Good Friday Agreement', *Open Library of the Humanities*, 4 1 (2018) 27. doi:https://doi.org/10.16995/olh.254 [accessed 9 January 2023].

[94] 'Sorj Chalandon quitte Libération',4 February 2007 <www.nouvelobs.com/medias/20070204.OBS0472/sorj-chalandon-quitte-liberation.html>, [accessed 8 February 2021].

[95] Vingt minutes, 'Vos questions sur l'Irlande du Nord, vous interviewez, Sorj Chalandon répond', 14 January 2008 <www.20minutes.fr/vousinterviewez/206087-20080114-questions-irlande-nord>, [accessed 4 January 2021].

[96] Pierre Albert, *La Presse française* (La Documentation française, Paris, 1998), p.41 in Rodney Benson, 'Mapping Field Variation: Journalism in France and the United States' *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, ed. by Rodney Benson and Érik Neveu (Polity Press, 2005), pp. 85-112 (p. 85).

traditions offers a fruitful starting point. Benson supports Albert's contention in referring to the politicisation of the French and the American press following their respective revolutions. In France, however, this politically open stance became subject to censorship under Napoleon Bonaparte. Benson discerns 'a more literary and "explanatory" approach to journalism', possibly implying a pedagogical standpoint (p. 96). Signalling a bifurcation between the news values and priorities of the French and the American press, Benson locates the transatlantic focus on garnering information, within the notion of 'objectivity' which gained ground in the early twentieth century. He perceives two dynamics favourable to this development. He links objectivity with an increasing reliance on advertising revenue; and he identifies a process of professionalisation within the mainstream press, reflected in the establishment of dedicated training establishments, qualifications and the inception of the Pulitzer Prize. Drawing broader comparisons between the French and American social contexts before 1939, he contends that, whereas there was 'a broad ideological acceptance of the governmental system' in the United States, no such consensus existed in French society, underpinned by 'a highly "polarized pluralistic" political system' (p. 97). Given the extent of political factionalism and mutual suspicion, he considers the French press to have been much more sectarian. It is notable that it was the quest for an ostensible post-1968 political purity which led Jean-Paul Sartre and Serge July to establish *Libération* in 1973.

Corroborating Benson's observations on Anglo-American objectivity, Érik Neveu reinforces the distinctiveness of this model from the French tradition of journalism. Describing a professional model, he emphasises the importance of the American reporter's connections with the local community: knowing 'useful' individuals; honing note-taking skills; checking information; and managing interviews. He links the primacy of information-gathering to the notion of objectivity, separating information and opinion. He further postulates that a plain reporting style might partly be a function of what he terms 'la capacité de condensation de la langue anglaise', citing Michael Palmer who highlights its predominance of bi- and tri-

syllabic words.[97] Neveu identifies another strand as the entrepreneurial expansion of the American press in competing for larger circulation, driven by effective advertising. In 1835, Alexis De Tocqueville notably considered this detrimental to political discourse . He is contemptuous of the relative quality of French and American journalists:

> 'Les journalistes, aux États-Unis, ont…en général une position peu élevée, leur éducation n'est qu'ébauchée et la tournure de leurs idées est souvent vulgaire…L'esprit du journalisme, en France, est de discuter d'une manière violente, mais élevée, et souvent éloquent les grands intérêts de l'État'.[98]

Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini provide further insight into professionalisation. Like other commentators, they consider the American view of journalistic professionalism to be synonymous with neutrality or objectivity, based upon an ideology of 'public trust'. They discern the core elements of this ideology as the protection of confidential sources; a separation of editorial and advertising material; and the oversight of what they term 'common standards of "newsworthiness"'.[99] From an international perspective, signalling the rare cases of journalists controlling their newspaper, they allude to the origins of *Libération* as an embodiment of the radical ideals of post-War France (p. 117). Their characterisation of its alternative and non-hierarchical ethos in its early years accords with the observations of Roucaute, Guisnel, and Lefort above, and Chalandon's own informal induction.

Christian Delporte, Bernard Voyenne and Jean Chalaby chart the development of the journalist as a social and cultural figure, the first two from a French perspective, the third from a transnational standpoint. They suggest that crucial stages of the journalistic tradition to which Chalandon is heir may be characterised as the evolution of their 'externalisation', that is, their movement from the book-lined study to the field of action, an early instance of Ruellan's 'en amont' perspective. Concerning their status, Delporte and Voyenne allude to the low

[97] Michael Palmer, 'L'information agencée fin de siècle? Vision du monde et discours en fragments', *Réseaux*, 75, 1996, 87-110 (p. 109) in Érik Neveu, *Sociologie du journalisme* (Paris: La Découverte, 2013), p. 11.
[98] Alexis De Tocqueville, *De la Démocratie en Amérique* (Édition Köbbo, Kindle edition, 2019), pp. 323-324.
[99] Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 35.

esteem in which journalists are held in France. Delporte draws upon popular culture as reflected through novels, theatre and cinema to depict the journalist as a swindler or a liar, with specific reference to Honoré de Balzac's representation of corrupt publicists.[100] Vituperative commentary is advanced by an early critic, Delisle de Sales, also cited by Voyenne, who categorises journalists either as gifted men, competent to judge their peers; as clandestine writers bent on smothering any fame, legitimate or otherwise, nefarious to their own position; or as talentless haranguers with no listeners.[101] Voyenne cites commentator Rochefort Luçay's subtler definition of journalism: 'l'art de dire quelque chose tout en n'ayant l'air de rien dire', which succeeds in simultaneously admiring *and* disparaging what is regarded as a knowing stylistic ruse.[102] Suspicion of journalists may originate from a sense of envy towards writers who are imprinting their own identity in the public sphere, as a 'contre-pouvoir' or countervailing force against the established social and political order. Balzac's jaundiced view of journalists and their trade, emanating from his sense of the more 'noble' pursuit of literature, is unequivocally expressed by his character, poet Fulgence Ridal: 'Je vois les journalistes aux foyer de théâtre, ils me font horreur. Le journalisme est un enfer, un abîme d'iniquités, de mensonges, de trahisons d'où l'on ne peut sortir pur'.[103] The conjunction of the personal and the polemic is identified by Voyenne as particularly French, leading to a transgenerational succession of writers vigorously disseminating their arguments through the medium of periodic pamphlets (pp. 128, 129, 130). Delporte also discusses the synthesis of the literary, the polemical and the reflective as a salient feature of Gallic journalism (p. 60). Chalaby notes that French journalism developed from 'opinion-oriented discursive practices', in which writers inscribed their own commentary.[104]

[100] Christian Delporte, *Les Journalistes en France 1880-1950: Naissance et Construction d'une Profession* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1999), p. *9.*

[101] Jean-Baptiste-Claude Delisle de Sales, *Défense de l'Essai sur le journalisme*, (Hachette Livre, reproduction, 1813), pp. 12-15.

[102] Bernard Voyenne, *Les Journalistes français* (Paris : Éditions CFPJ Retz, 1985), p. 130.

[103] Honoré de Balzac, *Illusions perdues* (Independent publisher: ISBN-13 979-8664895056, 2020), p. 106.

[104] Jean. K. Chalaby, 'Journalism as an Anglo-American Invention: A comparison of the Development of French and Anglo-American Journalism, 1830s-1920s', *European Journal of Communication*, Vol.11 3 (1996), 303-326 (p. 312).

French newspapers began to prioritise the speedy assimilation and publication of factual content. Journalists were now required to be where news was unfolding, each was 'un chasseur de vérités'. These rapid pursuers of truth are somewhat sardonically framed in the 1869 Larousse definition of 'reporter' as hard-bitten interrogators, taking notes of burned children, beaten husbands and crushed passers-by (Voyenne, p. 149). A shift emerged, entailing a physical and psychological displacement from the safe confines of the office to the unpredictable field of action. Delporte usefully illustrates what might be termed the 'wilding' of the French journalist through technological innovations: the telegraph, the telephone and improved transportation which accelerated the break with what he terms 'le sédentarisme traditionnel du monde des journaux' (p. 61). As well as emphasising the increasingly factual orientation of Anglo-American journalism, Chalaby identifies the emergence of the war correspondent as a 'special' category of reporter in the second half of the nineteenth century. Significantly, the role was expanded by British and American newspapers, particularly during the Crimean War, with their French counterparts relying on them for information (p. 307).

An examination of the connection between the reporter and the 'event' facilitates an understanding of Chalandon's relationship with his reporting subjects. Gaye Tuchman argues that that news is constructed, not according to prevailing social norms, but, more dynamically, in relation to the exigencies of the event. She thereby challenges the view that news reflects the society in which it occurs, insisting rather that news redefines social reality. A pertinent aspect of her discussion on the impact of news on social context is her contention that: 'News stories not only lend occurrences their existence as public events, but also impart character to them by selectively attributing to them specific details or "particulars"'.[105] Her example of the transformation into 'the' riot by the reporting of 'a' riot suggests that in discharging his 'informant's' role, the journalist is simultaneously memorialising or embedding an event within the local or national psyche. The 'happening', constructed and disseminated as a 'news event' mutates into a shorthand, like 'Hillsborough' or 'Grenfell', each bearing a particular socio-

[105] Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (The Free Press, 1980), p. 190.

political ‘indexicality’, as she terms it (p. 189). This process is discernible in Chalandon’s journalistic and fictional memorialisation of Sabra and Chatila as, respectively, an international yet intensely personal index for wanton slaughter.

As an alternative perspective on war reporting, it is useful to consider the ‘unreality of reality’ pervading Jean Baudrillard’s analysis of the reporting of the Gulf War of 1991. Distinct from Tuchman’s notion of journalists’ dynamic assessment of newsworthiness, Baudrillard espouses the ironically dystopian view that the virtual nature of war has now superseded actuality. His title is not intended to imply that the Gulf War never happened, but that it did not happen *like* a war, being reducible to an elaborate game within a simulated environment without physical contact with the enemies. Baudrillard argues that ‘Current research aims to achieve seamless manipulation in which the seams between reality and virtuality will be deliberately blurred’, leading to a kind of hyperreality.[106] His exposition effectively ‘writes the journalist’ out of the story; indeed, there is no story. He contends that, because of their superior power and sophisticated technology, the United States were pre-destined to be victors. For Baudrillard, the technologisation of war constitutes a retreat: a deliberate immuration within ideological silos, ‘including information in its informational bunkers’ (p. 63). His characterisation of this technological warfare devoid of ‘its passions, its phantasms, its violence, its images’ problematises the role of war correspondents whose *raison d’être* is to engage with and report these aspects (p. 64). Even their mission to inform is diminished in this context: ‘Information has a profound function of deception. It matters little what it “informs” us about…its purpose is to produce consensus’ (p.68). This virtual state suggests an intellectual sterility within a bunker mentality, the inverse of Chalandon’s adamantine engagement with the event.

In situating Chalandon within the war reporter tradition, it is apposite to examine Albert Londres’s approach, foreshadowing Ruellan’s formulation of the taste for immediacy. With his legacy established through the eponymous annual prize, awarded to Chalandon for his coverage of the Northern Ireland troubles and the Klaus Barbie trial, Londres is considered one of the first French investigative journalists for his despatches from the Front during the First World War.

[106] Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War did not take place* (Power Institute and Paul Patton, 1995), p. 4.

According to his biographer Pierre Assouline, he was obsessed with never missing the story.[107] His unusually personalised reporting style was already evident in his first signed report when he reported on the conflagration of Reims Cathedral and its aftermath for the Parisian newspaper *Le Matin* (pp. 78- 79). Conscious of the potentially numbing effect of ubiquitous and unremitting violence, he included perspectives from the civilians he encountered in the devastated countryside. This sensitivity to war-weariness impelled him to report beyond what he termed 'les grandes lignes de catastrophes' to evoke simple, unexpected gestures and incidents. His writing humanises the blasted buildings, where shattered clock towers become 'moignons' (p. 87). One of his most compelling descriptions of the prodigality of war is in his account of 'Cinquante jours d'eau, de feu, de canons, de cris sublimes, d'âmes qui montent: on a gagné un kilomètre' (p. 85). Londres's deliberate immersion in human and material annihilation lies at the opposite end of the journalistic spectrum from Baudrillard's critique of the bloodless virtuality of war. Voyenne also identifies the unusually intimate nature of Londres's reporting style, impelled by his instinct 'de promener son âme' (p. 167). Ruellan cites the view of Marc Kravetz, a Middle East correspondent who also received the Prix Albert Londres. Kravetz maintained that, although he understood the importance of the Anglo-Saxon tendency to check the reliability of sources, he considered that imprecision also had its merits: 'Le flou n'est pas improductif, au contraire. Le problème est de savoir où il commence et entre quoi et quoi il se déplace'. He foregrounds the journalist's perceptivity -'intuitionner'- in eliciting unseen aspects of a story, an instinct central to New Journalism (p. 181, 182).

The Journalist and Writer: An Invisible Join?

Chalandon's transition from journalist to fiction writer can be understood within the context of a significant mid-20th century departure from strictly factual 'objective' reporting: the emergence of North American New Journalism. To contest the boundaries between journalism and fiction was to acknowledge journalism's literary potential.[108] Crucially Tom Wolfe, a leading exponent,

[107] Pierre Assouline, *Albert Londres (1884-1932) : Vie et mort d'un grand reporter* (Éditions Balland, 1998), pp. 17, 22.
[108] Doug Underwood, *The Undeclared War between Journalism and Fiction: Journalists as Genre Benders* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 4.

contended that journalism could incorporate an aesthetic dimension. His discussion of the 'newness' of New Journalism problematises fictional writing and interrogates the narrator's voice. He eschews notions of objectivity or subjectivity focusing on the aspect of personality: 'energy, drive, bravura…style in a word'.[109] New Journalism aimed to surmount the 'beige narrator' by observing the event through an actual engaged witness, thus problematising the boundary between reported fact and fiction (p. 32). Consonant with the scathing views on journalists delineated above, he cites *New York Times* critic Renata Adler's withering assessment of New Journalism as 'zippy prose about inconsequential people' (p. 53). Countering this, Wolfe claims that the most potent elements of the realistic novel -immediacy and concreteness- were already being deployed by journalists in their use of dialogue. He insists that it was they who covered 'the recording of everyday gestures, habits, manners customs…and other symbolic details that might exist within a scene' (p. 47), a salient dimension of Chalandon's photojournalism collaborations. Moreover, he considers stylistic dynamism central to the journalist's craft, driven by continuous experimentation. Decades later, a French literary magazine article probed Wolfe's approach, inquiring whether he had become 'un écrivain schizophrène'. Elucidating his journalistic strategy, Wolfe comments on the importance of listening: 'Je venais, je ne disais pas un mot, j'écoutais. C'est alors qu'on commence à remarquer des choses'.[110] His observation echoes Chalandon's insistence on listening to allow others to speak.

Hunter S. Thompson is one of New Journalism's best -known exponents through his 'gonzo' style. Christopher Hitchens's introduction to a collection of interviews with Thompson captures his pressure to perform. He emphasises Thompson's commitment to what he calls 'living the story, to being part of it and changing it by the way he wrote it. Which is ultimately what "Gonzo" means'.[111] In his interview with Matthew Hahn, Thompson rejects 'gonzo' as a definition of his work: 'Gonzo journalism is a term I've come to dislike because of the way it's been cast:

[109] Tom Wolfe, 'Like a novel' in *The New Journalism* ed. by Tom Wolfe and E. W. Johnson (Picador, 1996), pp. 23-36 (p. 31).
[110] Robert Louit, 'Tom Wolfe : Entre journalisme et roman', *Magazine littéraire*, 378, (Juillet-Août 1999), 154-159 (p. 159).
[111] Christopher Hitchens, 'Introduction', *Ancient Gonzo Wisdom: Interviews with Hunter S. Thompson*, ed. by Anita Thompson, (Picador, 2010) pp. xiii-xx (xv).

inaccurate, crazy'. He emphasises instead what he terms 'the political factor' as a major source of the pleasure he derives from journalism. He excoriates what he considers the traditional journalist's approach, unequivocal in his view that there is no journalism without a reaction.[112]

A sense of the variegated intentions and effects of the journalist-author can be gauged from a comparative overview of Truman Capote, Michael Frayn and Andrew Marr of, respectively, *In Cold Blood* (1966), *Towards the End of the Morning* (1967) and *Head of State* (2014). Predicated upon the diversity of subject matter, style and social context, the authors are linked by the exploitation of their professional vantage point. The most obvious similarity between Capote's and Marr's narratives is that they are publicly known: the 1959 murder of the Clutter family in rural Kansas and the 2016 British referendum on continued membership of the European Union. Contrastingly, Frayn's novel focuses on the more personal journey of a Fleet Street journalist amid technological, social and cultural change in mid-1960's London.

Capote's transition between journalism and fiction is arguably a juxtaposition rather than a merger. This becomes evident from the first chapter 'The Last to See Them Alive', in the descriptions of the Clutters within the close- knit farming community of remote Western Kansas.[113] The stylistic parallel of fictional and forensic detail is discernible in the alternation of witness, police and press accounts with the frenetic peregrinations of the young fugitive killers. Capote's compelling reconstruction of their conflicted lives challenges Wolfe's observation that: 'One seldom feels that he is really inside the minds of the characters' (p.135).

Frayn's novel is more privately conventional, in that it is not inspired by any public event. It draws upon his work at the *Guardian* and the *Observer*, although Frayn rejects any close association with his protagonist John Dyson, a thirty-something editor of miscellaneous features. However, he does allude to a link between himself and the novel: 'I was still writing a weekly column, but I'd made a start as a novelist and I was already more than half out of journalism, as my

[112] Matthew Hahn, 'Writing on the Wall: An Interview with Hunter S. Thompson', 26 August 1997 <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/unbound/graffiti/hunter.htm>,[accessed 14 November 2018].
[113] Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood* (Penguin Books, 1996).

characters feel they will have to be before they're forty'.[114] Dyson's daily crusade against the disorderly and the unpredictable exemplifies Frayn's comment about the tensions facing the ambitious young journalist in the 1960's: 'On the one hand we were simple craftsmen and trade-unionists; on the other we had certain social aspirations.' (p. ix.) Dyson's angst foments his increasingly doomed determination to adhere to 'traditional' pen-and-paper journalism in the face of encroaching modern technology. Essentially, the novel concerns the farce and turmoil of adjustment to change within and beyond the newspaper office, and the sense of massing external forces beyond the individual's control.

Marr's novel, *Head of State*, diverges sharply from Frayn's 'private' narrative. Until January 2022, Marr had been the eponymous anchor of a long-running Sunday morning political talk show, a journalist and author of non-fiction. His narrative was based upon an original idea of business reporter, Peter Chadlington. Chadlington notes in the Foreword: 'The basic idea behind this novel has been in my mind… Andrew Marr has singlehandedly turned it into political entertainment with verve and satire.'[115] Chadlington's allusion to satire accords with the macabre punning title, where 'head' is not only titular but also fatal: the Prime Minister's secret assassination before a crucial EU referendum involves a clumsy decapitation. Unlike Capote and Frayn who present their credentials as fiction-writers, Marr, through farcical narrative sleights-of-hand, deliberately exposes the 'join' between journalism and the novel through self- referential allusions: 'I can't think why he didn't do the Andy Marr show yesterday' (p. 70); 'He didn't even do Marr yesterday' (p. 96). He revels in the suture between journalist and author by allowing the reader to witness the intentional seepage of intricate technical political knowledge into a ludic pageant of strident caricatures.

It can be concluded that two interconnected facets emerge beyond the contextual and stylistic diversity in the novels of Capote, Frayn and Marr. All three writers publicly inscribe themselves within the domains of both journalism and fiction. Equally, emanating from a more personal imperative, there is a nexus with Chalandon's reflection to Hees: 'Ce qui n'a pas trouvé sa place, c'est 'Je'. Ce qui

[114] Michael Frayn, *Towards the End of the Morning* (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), p. xi.
[115] Andrew Marr, *Head of State* (London: Fourth Estate, 2015), p. viii.

n'a pas trouvé la place dans les articles de presse…dans tout ce que j'ai écrit, c'est ce que l'homme, moi, ce que je ressentais'. In writing novels, he discovers how to articulate his emotions, inappropriate in his newspaper articles. Unlike Capote and Marr, although with some similarity to Frayn, novel writing for Chalandon constitutes a response to an irrepressible need to release the 'I'. This instinct is reflected by journalist John Carlin, conceiving of writing as 'therapy on the go - a coming to terms with searing events'.[116] Journalists' psychological survival during and after their assignments is explored below from contemporary correspondents' perspectives.

Incommunicable Realities: The Making and Breaking of War Correspondents

Antoine Durand's presentation of the complexity of the war journalist's role: 'Première ambiguïté, la présence au cœur de la mêlée, qui met le journaliste au plus près de l'événement, mais l'empêche de prendre de la hauteur', locates the reporter in, but not of, the action.[117] His allusion to 'une réalité largement incommunicable' illustrates this liminal position (p. 15). It is further compounded by what he perceives as the media's 'heroisation' of war correspondents; and the problem created by some countries (including France) in acceding to ransom demands for journalists, making them more vulnerable to hostage-takers (p. 37). These and other pressures are associated with what Doug Underwood describes as 'the impact of trauma and coverage of violence on journalists'.[118]

Tumber and Webster scrutinise the professional and personal experiences of seasoned foreign correspondents. They attribute journalists' transition problems on their return to their unwillingness or inability to engage in 'small talk' about their assignments. However, the authors balance this ingrained reticence against the correspondents' indefatigable commitment to witness significant events. An insight into fear for personal safety is provided by frontline correspondent Luke Harding, for whom the obsession with getting the job done dilutes fear, depicting it

[116] Howard Tumber and Frank Webster, *Journalists under Fire: Information War and Journalistic Practices* (Sage Publications, 2006), p. 148.
[117] Antoine Durand, *Grands reporters de guerre: entre observation et engagement* (Éditions Rue d'Ulm, 2012), p. 13.
[118] Doug Underwood, *Chronicling Trauma: Journalists and Writers on Violence and Loss* (Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2011), p. 2.

as ‘a kind of adrenalin that sees you through in key situations [so] you don’t need to think about it’ (p. 118).

The physical and psychological transition from conflict to relative peace is tracked through the experience of several correspondents. Jon Swain, a veteran reporter of Vietnam and Cambodia, observes that ‘No-one can be unaffected by war’ (p. 144). Chris Ayres refers to the kind of *ennui* he suffered returning from Iraq. For him, the overwhelming emotion was boredom and a desire to return to a more dangerous existence. Perhaps more tellingly, he states that: ‘I got a feeling that nothing was really that important. After you’ve been in a life and death situation for a few weeks, it makes you question everything…I couldn’t get enthusiastic about a lot of things.’ (p. 145). This lethargy recalls Chalandon’s uncharacteristic apathy towards a pensioners’ demonstration on his return to Paris. From a French perspective, Marc Kravetz echoes Chalandon’s dedication to his reporting subject(s): ‘la seule verité possible du reporter-correspondant de guerre est celle de l’instant et du lieu où il se trouve’, adding that the reporter’s reality resembles that of a novelist, although he does not address journalists’ vulnerability to PTSD.[119]

The unseen havoc wreaked upon these correspondents’ psyche resonates in the title of Jean-Paul Mari’s investigation, *Sans Blessures apparentes: Enquête sur les damnés de la guerre*, introduced in Chapter One as the basis for his interview with Chalandon. His extensive research into the traumatising effect of war examines its impact on the lives of soldiers and journalists in conflict zones. Detailing France’s engagement in fifteen global conflicts between 1983 and 2008, he notes the sanitisation of military language: ‘Aujourd’hui, on ne parle plus de guerre, mais “d’interventions extérieures” ou “d’opérations de maintien de la paix”’ (p. 167), recalling Baudrillard’s perspectives on the sterility of modern warfare. Imbued by his own trauma as a Middle East correspondent, his compulsion to understand his own impaired psychological state impels him to investigate that of American, French and British army veterans and fellow journalists, including Chalandon. His analysis is framed as a quest for an interview with an American infantry captain, Philip W., regarding his alleged involvement in the killing of two Palestinian

[119] Marc Kravetz, ‘Profession: correspondant de guerre’, *Magazine littéraire* 378, (July-August 1999), 98-102, p. 100.

civilians. While relentlessly seeking him, he describes his own 'odyssey'. In the second chapter entitled 'La Rage', he dissects his bubbling fury, charting its unpredictable course after his Iraq assignment. Characterising it as an ever-present lava pool, he describes how he needs to roam Paris before daring to return home. He states that he needs to avoid anger in front of his children. Equally, he recognises the paradox of feverishly desiring love while simultaneously fearing that it will un-man him (pp. 48-49). These allusions evoke protagonist Georges's restlessness in *Le Quatrième Mur*, his fury at his young daughter and his paradoxically evasive yearning for intimacy with his wife. Mari's communication of his agitated wandering is distinctive for its classical representation. Indeed, in a later chapter 'Ulysse à la plage', he refers to the etymology of 'Odysseus' as 'se mettre en colère' (p. 79), blending it with his own endemic anger.

Mari's approach to his journalism is reflected in his determination to file his copy punctually, despite explosions and gunfire. A graphic illustration of his dedication is his shielding of his laptop with his bullet-proof vest in Rwanda, prioritising the protection of his work above his own safety. He expresses the significance of writing: 'Écrire, c'est brûler vif et s'atteler à une tâche qui est parfois plus grande que nous' (p. 146). He insists that reporters need to feel pain and sorrow. The suffering which he and Chalandon associate with writing resonates in Mari's psychotherapeutic interpretation, cited in Chapter One, of sating oneself with traumatic imagery in the hope of returning to a 'normal' world.

Section Three examines Chalandon's developing creativity, tracing a continuum from his factual journalistic register to a discernibly personalised idiom. His movement from observer to vicarious participator is propelled by his enduring engagement with the image, sequenced through reporting genre and subject, rather than chronologically. Selected articles from *Libération* and *Le Canard enchaîné* are followed by his award-winning report of the Klaus Barbie trial and his photo-journalism collaborations.

Section Three: From Actuality to Artistry: Perspectives on the Evolution of Chalandon's Journalism

Chalandon's Ireland in *Libération*

A substantial selection of Chalandon's *Libération* articles on Ireland was published in October 2022 in *Sorj Chalandon: Notre Revanche sera le Rire de nos Enfants*.[120] The collection has an unusual provenance because it was not compiled by Chalandon himself, but by two individuals, Marc and Julien, whose surnames remain undisclosed. He relates its genesis in his Preface:

> Je ne connaissais ni Marc, ni Julien. Ils sont entrés dans ma vie comme ça, sans un mot ou presque, il y a quelques années, à l'occasion d'un Salon du livre. Comme moi, ils avaient l'Irlande au cœur…Ils avaient quelque chose à me dire. Je me souviens que leurs yeux brillaient comme une fièvre…En secret, ils avaient décidé de retrouver, de compiler et de classer les reportages sur la guerre d'Irlande que j'avais écrits pour *Libération*,de 1977 à 2006…Ils ont demandé mon autorisation gracieuse…J'ai dit oui à tout. Comme on tope là dans un marché d'antan. Poignée de main, sourire, une bière, bonne chance les gars! (*NR*, p.45).

He describes how Marc and Julien informed him about the progress of their project twice or three times a year until it was finished. He pays tribute to their meticulous work, in which they contextualise his journalism with detailed notes on Irish history, the social geography of Belfast and pen portraits of the key actors. They have also prefaced their compilation with twenty-eight photographs by Patrick Frilet, a photographer and sometime French teacher in Belfast, which depict people, districts and events from both Nationalist and Loyalist communities. In their *Prélude* (*NR*, pp.57-64), compilers Marc and Julien have reprised Chalandon's text from *Avoir 20 Ans à Belfast*, which I had analysed in its original form in conjunction with Daniel Hérard's photography, discussed below.

Framed by detailed commentary on the intricate evolution of Anglo-Irish diplomacy, Chalandon mines the impact of the Troubles on ordinary Catholics *and* Protestants. His focus on Loyalists' responses is an aspect that I had hitherto been

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[120] Sorj Chalandon: *Notre Revanche sera le Rire de nos Enfants:Reportages Irlande, Libération* [1977-2006] (Grenoble: Black-star (s)éditions, 2022). Further references to this work are given by page number in the text and prefixed *NR*.

unable to examine in order to corroborate his *Libération* colleagues' views on his impartiality. However, Chalandon's even-handedness is not reflected in Marc's and Julien's choice of title for their collection: it is a quotation attributed to the Republican Hunger Striker Bobby Sands (*NR*, p. 43).

Chalandon's Preface is significant for an understanding of his personal and professional investment as the author of those articles:

> Ce que vous allez lire n'est pas une compilation d'éditoriaux, de points de vue, de chroniques écrites de Paris par un « informé ». Ce sont des reportages au cœur gros. Des articles souvent pleins de larmes et aussi de désarroi, de colère ou d'espoir. Qui m'ont inspiré pour écrire mes deux romans irlandais. (*NR*, p. 46)

In the spirit of Chalandon's own allusion to the sadness, desperation, anger and hope imbuing his journalism on Northern Ireland, I have selected two articles from the collection. These reports highlight his sensitivity to Loyalists' experiences and provide a countervailing perspective to the foregrounding of the Nationalist narrative discernible in his photographic collaborations, discussed below.

'Les Graham, Protestants et Par Le Cœur et Par La Raison' from June 1991 provides an intimate portrayal of a working-class Protestant family, the Grahams. Chalandon transports his readers directly into their living-room and introduces each family member:

> Tony est assis sur un accoudoir du fauteuil. David debout au milieu de la pièce. Hugh, le père, a porté une tasse de thé à hauteur de ses yeux mais il ne boit pas. Caroll, la mère, est adossée à la porte de la cuisine. Elizabeth a cessé de lire et regarde la télévision. Comme tous les autres. (*NR*, p. 535)

They are shocked and angered by what they are watching: the unbearable sorrow of a devastated widow at the graveside of her husband who had been killed by the IRA because he was a member of the Ulster Defence Regiment (a mainly Protestant British infantry regiment stationed in Northern Ireland). The televised funeral unleashes the Grahams' fury, bitterness and despair, particularly as hopes had been raised by the prospect of peace negotiations between the local political parties. Accompanying the predictable « *salopards de républicains*! » sixteen year old David expresses exasperation: « *Voilà ce que l'IRA en pense, de ces pourparlers* ». (NR, p. 536) Chalandon reveals Hugh the father's conflicted

feelings. He has considered leaving Belfast but cannot decide, defiantly repeating: « *Je suis ici autant chez moi qu'eux* », referring to the Nationalists. Like the Catholic mother whom Chalandon describes in *Avoir 20 Ans à Belfast* below, Hugh and his wife are concerned about their son's growing involvement with (Loyalist) paramilitarism. His attempt to reason with David's extremism: « *Mais nous n'avons rien contre les catholiques eux-mêmes* » is met with an implacably blunt: « *Connerie, leur pays c'est l'Éire, pas l'Ulster* ». A stony stalemate ensues as Tony fumes in his bedroom where a map of Aberdeen (the family's city of origin) and his Glasgow Rangers football club scarf are displayed beside the more mainstream teenage iconography of Sting and Madonna.

Perhaps the most poignant aspect which Chalandon evokes is what might be termed 'the paradox of insecure security'. The Grahams' staunchly Loyalist enclave of East Belfast may afford them a measure of physical safety, but theirs is a fragile sanctuary. He relates that, two hours after his visit, another young man (this time a Paratrooper from London) was murdered by the IRA in front of his fiancée. That killing took place only metres from the Grahams' home.

In my second extract, 'Belfast, Chacun Sa Peine, Chacun Sa Haine' from October 1993, Chalandon juxtaposes the sorrow of the two communities: one mourning the murder of two Catholic workmen by Loyalist paramilitaries; the other grieving for eight Protestants (including two children) killed in a fish shop on the Loyalist Shankill Road by an IRA bomb which also blew up the perpetrator. I cite the final paragraph in full:

> Sur Shankill la lumière est la même et la douleur identique. Dans les poings serrés des hommes, des envies de revanche. « *Si on ne se défend pas, ces salauds nous aurons* », murmure un commerçant aux vitres fraîchement mastiquées. « *L'IRA a déconné avec sa bombe, et alors? Si elle avait explosé à temps en tuant des gars de chez nous, ça aurait été justice*? » Ce soir, les gens de Belfast parlent peu. Ils remontent le col, observent la rue et s'enferment. La ville a son visage des heures les plus sombres. (*NR*, p. 572)

Chalandon presents three key realities. He firstly emphasises the mutuality of communal anguish, endured under the same sky. In a 'zooming' movement which characterises his later photo-text collaborations, he then centres on the unbowed reaction of the Protestant shopkeeper whose premises were directly affected by the bombing. He concludes by moving outwards again to incorporate the survival

instincts of the Belfast people and his anthropomorphic allusion to the city's appearance at this tragic moment.

On a more distinctly personal level, Chalandon's *Libération* profiles of two prominent figures within their communities during the Troubles, Republican Martin McGuinness (3 December 1999) and Loyalist Johnny 'Mad Dog' Adair (24 August 2000), illuminate embryonic elements of the characters peopling his 'Irish' novels.[121] Although both articles are of approximately the same length, the McGuinness piece is more detailed in its accompanying socio-historical narrative. It frames his ascent from a modest background in Derry, through decades of Republican activism against the British military presence, to the position of Minister of Education in an all-party government assembly. The headline: 'Martin McGuinness, Sinn Féiner et ministre de l'Éducation nationale du nouveau gouvernement. Le nationaliste flexible' highlights two facets of Chalandon's interaction with his subject.[122] Firstly, he configures McGuinness's remarkable career as a (literally) hard- fought compromise between two seemingly polarised identities: the Republican combatant and the democratically elected representative. Secondly, and more subtly, his use of the epithet 'Sinn Féiner' indicates the extent to which Chalandon is imbued with local parlance (recalling 'Andytown' in *Avoir 20 Ans à Belfast* and in *Mon Traître*). Its prominence crystallises McGuinness's historic challenge to the old political order, while demonstrating the distance travelled to attain his solidly civic status.

In contrast, the title of his article on Johnny Adair: '"Mad Dog", haï des catholiques, craint par ses amis', with the sub-heading: 'responsable de l'UFF [Ulster Freedom Fighters], l'homme oscille entre paramilitaire et voyou', allows scant margin for nuanced exegesis.[123] Chalandon reports that 'Mad Dog' Adair, involved in about twenty killings, imprisoned for sixteen years before his release

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[121] My analyses of these two biographical accounts, accessed from digital sources, had been completed before my acquisition of *Notre Revanche sera le Rire de nos Enfants,* in which only the McGuinness article appears (*NR*, pp. 675-677).

[122] Chalandon, Sorj, 'Martin McGuinness, Sinn Féiner et ministre de l'Education du nouveau gouvernement. Le nationaliste flexible', 3 December 1999 <http:// www.liberation.fr/planète/1999/12/03/martin-mcguinness-sinn-feiner-et--du-nouveau-gouvernement-la-nation> , [accessed 14 May 2018].

[123] Chalandon, Sorj, "Mad Dog," haï des catholiques, craint par ses amis', 24 August 2000 <*www.liberation.fr/planète/2000/08/24/mad-dog-hai-des-catholiques-craint-par-ses-amis*>, [accessed 14 May 2018].

under the terms of the GFA and implacably opposed to the peace process, made many enemies because of alleged drug trafficking. Unlike his detailed and empathetic portrait of McGuinness, the only fact disclosed about Adair's family is a terse postscript: 'Il a aussi une femme et trois enfants'. This dearth of personal detail contrasts with Adair's visibility observed by local journalist Brian Rowan, cited above: 'There was nothing anonymous about him, nothing shy or secret. His name was all over the place, on the tip of every tongue' (p. 71). This suggests that Chalandon may have had ample opportunity to shape a more comprehensive backstory, if not from Adair himself -there is no evidence to indicate whether they ever met- then almost certainly from his acquaintances.

A striking reflection of Chalandon's stronger personal engagement with Mc Guinness is his regular intermeshing of broader strands of Irish history. Three examples illustrate this process: his conflation of McGuinness's early alienation as an impoverished Catholic with the maxim of the Northern Ireland state: "Un État protestant pour le peuple protestant"; his decision as a teenager to join in with 'la bagarre pour l'égalité'; and the citation of a Republican mural slogan, in the context of increased British military deployment and resurgent IRA activity: 'Dieu nous a fait catholiques, le fusil nous fera égaux'. This is not to imply that Chalandon is excusing Republican acts, but rather that his more finely grained presentation of McGuinness's political journey compared to Adair's suggests closer proximity to, and a better understanding of, his Republican subject. His commentary on McGuinness's recruitment into the IRA is insightful: 'Le jeune devient mécanicien, commis boucher et puis, "la rage au cœur" selon ses amis, se lance dans la bagarre pour l'égalité.' Chalandon alludes to him as: 'Charismatique, attentif, tantôt chaleureux, tantôt plein d'un humour glacé', depicting a likeable, intelligent man, and congruent with the complexity of Irish history, a multi-layered personality, as adept at fishing and Gaelic football as he is at political and military strategy.

Conversely, consonant with his deliberately aggressive self-projection, the former Loyalist 'brigade commander' Adair appears irredeemably unprepossessing. His thuggish appearance: 'Largement tatoué, les deux seins percés, barbe de quelques jours ou crâne rasé, il promène Rebel, son berger allemand, et sa musculature soignée' presents the menacing carapace of a murderously anti-Catholic mentality.

He vaunts his refusal to distinguish between a Lourdes pilgrim and an IRA gunman, considering each as a legitimate target for sectarian murder. Chalandon observes curtly: 'La violence physique, amie familière, est son moyen de clore le débat'. Although it is accurate that Adair and his UFF associates 'specialised' in the random killing of Catholics, Chalandon does not probe the socio-economic forces which may have shaped the Loyalist's bloody career (Adair was the youngest of seven children from a deprived area, riven by fierce sectarian rioting in the Troubles). He examines him instead through an unremittingly paramilitarised prism. It is of course entirely possible that Adair possessed no more noteworthy attributes than his ability to escape several assassination attempts, some within his own community. However, it would have been enlightening to interrogate the roots of Adair's virulent anti-Catholicism through the lens of endemic Protestant working-class alienation. Chalandon's apparent disinclination to mine this Loyalist actor's worldview contrasts with his empathetic engagement with the experiences of the Protestant Graham family and the Shankill Road shopkeeper, discussed above. Moreover, his seemingly stronger rapport with the Nationalist narrative resurfaces in his collaborative work with photographer Daniel Hérard, explored below.

Chalandon's Trenchant Truths in *Le Canard enchaîné*

Consistent with the newspaper's incisive irony, Chalandon's style is imbued with humour even about serious subjects, as he observed to me. Markedly different in tone and perspective from the daily centre left *Libération, Le Canard enchaîné* is a satirical weekly publication. Founded in 1915 by former meteorologist for *Le Matin*, Maurice Maréchal, it is dedicated to exposing political and financial scandals, proceeding from 'leaks' from sources inside government, politics and business and the lampooning of public figures in its cartoons and jokes. Unlike other newspapers, it accepts no advertising or sponsorship and is fiercely independent. It has no political stance and is critical of government. Indeed, the zeal and tenacity of its journalists apparently represented a threat to the establishment, illustrated by the 'Watergate'-style break-in on its new premises in December 1973. Artist and administrator André Escaro surprised a group of 'plumbers' late at night; however, it transpired that these 'tradesmen' were agents of the Direction Surveillance du Territoire, installing microphones to identify *Le*

Canard's informers. Although Prime Minister Pierre Messmer attempted to dismiss the operation as 'un canular monté par "*Le Canard"* pour se faire de la pub', it forced the resignation of Interior Minister Raymond Marcellin, whom the paper mocked in its headline: 'Oh Marcellin, quelle Watergaffe'.[124]

The newspaper's uncompromising and fearless attitude is evident from commentary in its centenary compilation of cartoons and articles. The editors observe that in normal circumstances, launching a satirical paper would be a daunting enterprise; but to promote press freedom during a period of wartime censorship demonstrated extraordinary audacity (p. 4). They cite Maréchal's personal instinct: 'Mon premier mouvement quand je vois quelque chose de scandaleux…C'est de m'indigne; mon second mouvement, c'est d'en rire…C'est plus difficile mais plus efficace'. They also note that from the end of the 1950s *Le Canard* became an investigative newspaper. Maréchal and his collaborator had devised the name after some deliberation; 'Canard' was already a popular term for a fib and a newspaper. His epithet 'enchaîné' was a sly reference to the prevailing censorship and to *L'Homme enchaîné,* a daily paper whose editor was Georges Clémenceau. Two enduring attributes of *Le Canard enchaîné* are highlighted by Martin and Comment. Firstly, its remarkable stability: over the century it has been overseen by only five directors, one woman and four men. Additionally, the collegiality of its reporting team is vividly depicted: 'une équipe qui, comme une famille, s'engueule parfois, traverse des crises, connaît des désaccords politiques et des claquages de portes tonitruants, mais sans se prendre trop au sérieux' (p. 5). Unlike the affirming evaluations of Chalandon's *Libération* colleagues cited above, there is currently no evidence that sheds light on his relationship with other *Le Canard* journalists.

Consistent with *Le Canard*'s investigative mission, Chalandon probes and challenges what he regards as regional and international hypocrisy and subterfuge. These articles, spanning December 2009 and June 2020, concern three cases of alleged political or constitutional impropriety and, contrastingly, his review of a televised documentary. The first piece demonstrates Chalandon's considerable

[124] Laurent Martin and Bernard Comment (eds) *Le Canard enchaîné, 100 ans: Un siècle d'articles et de dessins* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2016), p. 268.

transnational 'reach'. According to a report entitled 'Marie-Jeanne vs. *Le Canard'*, his article, published shortly before Martinique's independence referendum on 10 January 2010, provoked outrage in what became known as 'L'Affaire Marie-Jeanne'.[125] He alleged a conflict of interest in the awarding of 1.5 million euros for the building of a primary school in Domenica by Maguy Marie-Jeanne, the regional head of international relations and daughter of Alfred Marie-Jeanne, President of the regional council of Martinique. The money was granted to a construction company belonging to Mark Frampton, honorary consul for Domenica in Martinique and an associate owner with Maguy Marie-Jeanne of a fashion boutique. On 6 January 2010, Maguy threatened *Le Canard enchaîné* with legal proceedings unless she received a front-page apology. The timing of Chalandon's allegation was highly sensitive: Maguy and Alfred Marie-Jeanne campaigned for greater autonomy for the island, but a significant majority voted to retain its status as a French *département.* A question arose about the potential influence of Chalandon's article on voters' rejection of independence. Responding on 13 January 2010, shortly after the referendum, he reproved Maguy Marie-Jeanne, observing that, despite her own admission that Frampton was her partner, *Le Canard* respected people's private lives and had not published this information.[126] It is difficult to believe, given the emphatic 'no' vote, that Chalandon's article could have played any meaningful role in the referendum result. His decision to address the issue was prompted by his repugnance at perceived corruption, regardless of its distant provenance. Yet his journalistic instinct could not be as finely tuned as in Ireland and the Middle East. There is no evidence that he had been to Martinique and he lacked the indispensable local networks upon which he depended in Belfast and Beirut. It might be suggested that he demonstrated rare naïveté in reporting at such a geographical remove. Recalling Ruellan's concept of journalistic immediacy and distance, Chalandon's connection with the island was not one of 'le rhétorique d'amont', but rather of 'le rhétorique d'aval'.

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[125] Sorj Chalandon, 'Conseil régional et familial en Martinique: l'abeille et l'architecte', 30 December 2009 <www.bondmanjak.com/martinique/28-a-la-une/8716conseil-regional-et-familial-en-martinique>, [accessed 16 September 2020].

[126] Kam, 'Marie-Jeanne vs. *Le Canard*: 'Jeu, Set et Match pour Le Canard', 17 January, 2010 <www.charlieenchaine.free.fr/Marie-Jeanne-vs-Le-Canard>, [accessed 16 September 2020].

On 2 December 2015, under the ludic headline 'Le massage solennel du roi des Belges', Chalandon reported that the King and Queen of Belgium had spent two nights at a luxury spa in Brittany, while their country was under a terrorism alert.[127] He included a photo of the King in a bathrobe, sipping a cocktail. The seven-paragraph article blends fact, humour and punning satire to recount the royal couple's untimely 'mini-break'. His astute interplay of respect and irreverence differs markedly from his approach in *Libération*. In his introduction, he employs a kind of 'style indirect libre', musing as an ostensibly worried citizen on the King's whereabouts after the terrorist attacks in Paris: 'Réfugié en son palais? Drapé dans un silence souverain?' His crushing conclusion is that, while Belgium is in the throes of an emergency, 'Philippe de Belgique se prélassait dans le spa d'un palace français'. His crafted collision of 'what should be' and 'what is' unmasks the asymmetry of expected and inappropriate royal behaviour. Under the sub-heading 'Cocktail explosif', Chalandon heightens the tension created by the King's continued invisibility, culminating in the question posed by *Le Vif/L'Express*: 'Le roi a-t-il pris la fuite?' He parries hypothetical demands for answers with 'Rien de tout cela', before expressing mock relief by reassuring the Belgian people that their sovereign has not decamped. He delineates the damning *minutiae* of the King's movements: 'Philippe de Belgique sirotait tranquillement un verre à L'Océan, le bar du Sofitel de Quiberon, en Bretagne. Entre le cocktail multifruit de la thalasso 5 étoiles et les multi-embarras du niveau 4, son choix était fait'. Infused by his customary rich brevity, Chalandon achieves a felicitous equilibrium between the emergency in Belgium and the nonchalant behaviour of a Royal in opulent surroundings. Equally, an unambiguous dissonance emerges between the regal solemnity of his formal title and the banality of the décor, captioned '…Jus de fruits, bouquin, peignoir: l'heure est grave, la thalasso est donnée', drawing a similarly mordant contrast between public expectation and royal response. Chalandon deftly undermines the Royal Palace's assurance that the King was in constant contact with the Belgian authorities by observing that the King was in a working meeting: 'plongé dans un livre, en mules et en peignoir, tandis que la reine rêvassait à ses côtés'. However, he reflects soberly that the King's decision to

[127] *Le Canard enchaîné*, 2 December 2015, p. 3.

curtail his self-financed break was the least he could do, given the outcry at his father's delay in returning from holiday during the Dutroux paedophilia scandal, almost twenty years earlier. After the King's reappearance on 23 November, 'au grand soulagement des Belges', Chalandon concludes wryly with Philippe's request for security collaboration with the King of Morocco: 'Et des tuyaux sur le spa de La Mamounia pour la prochaine alerte?' He knowingly commingles linguistic and circumstantial detail: the pun on 'tuyau' as a physical and informational conduit; and the reference to the luxury Marrakesh hotel, implying that it could be another royal sanctuary during the next public crisis.

Chalandon combines his forensically precise observation with simulated admiration and pseudo- commiseration in an article of 16 August 2017, entitled 'L'élu béarnais qui s'offre son hologramme'.[128] He examines the case of Hervé Lucbéreilh, a mayor in south-west France, calling him variously: 'le dévoué maire', 'cet athlète', 'surhomme' and 'notre supermaire'. He alleges a lack of transparency concerning Lucbéreilh's travel expenses because, as Chalandon comments archly: 'ce vice-président du Centre national des indépendants et paysans a réussi l'exploit d'apparaître le même jour dans plusieurs endroits à la fois pour le seul bien-être de sa commune'. He cites details from Lucbéreilh's official diary, indicating that he made a 104 km round trip by car between his town and Bayonne on 16 February 2016 on business, while also meeting investors in Tours, five hundred kilometres away. He is later shown to have flown to Paris from Pau from 30 May until 5 June, although there is evidence that he drove to Paris on 2 June. Having termed him 'Champion du monde', Chalandon summarises the mayor's peregrinations, before referring craftily to a children's song: 'il court, il court, le furet'. As with his ironic defence of the Belgian King, he chides potential sceptics: 'Évidemment, cette omnipresence incommode les grincheux'. Chalandon adroitly includes further information, such as Lucbéreilh's proximity to *Civitas* (a traditionalist, right-wing Catholic group). As in the previous article, Chalandon's final rhetorical question: 'Et alors? Il ne peut être

[128]Chalandon, Sorj, 'L'Élu béarnais qui s'offre son hologramme',17 August 2017 <www.oloron.blog/2017/08/16herve-lucbereilh-et-son-hologramme-mon-grain-de-sel-a-la-suite-de-larticle-publie-par-le-canard-enchaine>, [accessed 22 September 2020].

partout à la fois' epitomises his amused but caustic perspective on perceived chicanery.

In marked contrast, Chalandon's article of 8 July 2020 reviews Fabrice Macaux's television documentary, *Aux pieds de la gloire*, on the talented young Le Havre player, Abdelmalek Amara.[129] This piece exhibits discernible facets of his compassionate pen portraits in his photo-journalism collaborations. Under the headline 'Ballon d'oxygène', Chalandon details the triumphs and disappointments dramatised in Macaux's film. He evokes the complexity of Abdel's attitude towards his sport, and the pressure for him to succeed for his disabled mother. He understands the vicissitudes of a footballer's career, its fragile opportunities and the fickleness of formerly supportive friends: 'quand vous vous retrouvez sans club, croyez-moi, les potes, tout ça, il n'y a plus personne'. Chalandon depicts Abdel's prowess with vivid and energetic concision : 'Nous voyons le jeune buteur monter à l'assaut, dribbler comme il dansait, feinter, scotcher les défenseurs et tirer à l'instinct un boulet de canon de 25 mètres dans le filet adverse'. In his final paragraph, he mines the young man's thoughts as he awaits the Board's decision on a contract offer: 'Dans quelques secondes, il sera footballeur professionnel ou juste un gosse à la rue, sac sur le dos et rêves oubliés sur le banc de touche'. Chalandon captures the excruciatingly fine balance between Abdel's two contrasting futures. His empathetic characterisation of the psychological impact on the young man of a possibly unfavourable outcome is so tender, that it is as if he had created Abdel's story, rather than reviewed it.

Arguably the most profound expression of his capacity to read and re-conceptualise the lives of others is his masterly coverage of the Klaus Barbie trial in 1987. The full personal significance of this major assignment emerges most forcefully in his most recent work, *Enfant de Salaud*, tracing his discovery of the roots of his troubled relationship with his father. This novel and its implications for a critical reframing of Chalandon's work are examined in Chapter Four.

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[129] T.S. Productions, 'Un bel article de Sorj Chalandon dans *Le Canard enchaîné* sur le film de Fabrice Macaux, *Aux pieds de la gloire*, disponible sur le site Arte', 10 July 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/tsproductionsts/posts/24365029982795>, [accessed 22 September 2021].

Chalandon's Report of the Klaus Barbie Trial (11 May-3 July 1987)

Klaus Barbie was the chief Gestapo officer in Lyon during the Occupation, the notorious "Butcher of Lyon". Having evaded justice through his recruitment by American Forces to combat communism, Barbie was eventually extradited from Bolivia and found guilty of the torture and murder of children and adults from the Lyon region. He was alleged to have ordered the deaths of 14,000 people. One of his most nefarious crimes was the deportation of forty-four Jewish orphans to Auschwitz. Barbie's trial in Lyon was doubly unique: it was the first war crimes trial on French soil, and it was filmed because of its historical importance. Chalandon was one of seven hundred accredited journalists in attendance. He also covered the later trials of Paul Touvier, a French Nazi collaborator, and René Bousquet, Head of the Police under Vichy. The structure of his report mirrors the forty daily sessions, where survivors and their families, friends, eyewitnesses and expert testifiers appeared before thirty-nine barristers and the presiding judge. Chalandon imbues the titles of his daily reports with a blend of objective and personal significance, conveying their technically precise, poignant and even ironic aspects. This mission constitutes a personal and professional re-centring for Chalandon. Removed from physically perilous war correspondence, he concentrates on the psychological preparation and accompaniment of his readers through the drama of the legal proceedings in a specially constructed courtroom. Contrasting with his Middle East reporting, he is here contemplating the unimaginable experience of Holocaust survivors. This exploration examines Chalandon's choreography of their stories.

The six selected extracts reflect the diversity of his coverage of witnesses' testimonies. The title of Chalandon's first report on 11 May, 'Un prisonnier au visage banal', confronts readers with the defendant Klaus Barbie. With 'Il entre. Vieillard fantomatique en costume noir', Chalandon emphasises the seeming ordinariness of this old man, his unremarkable appearance contrasting sharply with the aura of notoriety surrounding him (*PKB*, p. 31). This insistence on the individuality of the defendant evokes Hannah Arendt's observations at Adolf Eichmann's trial.[130] Now a prisoner, his spectral features resemble those of an

[130] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann à Jérusalem* (Éditions Gallimard, 1991), p. 457.

emaciated nocturnal bird. However, Chalandon discerns glimpses of the old Barbie, in his defiance and in his thin smile which becomes a grim rictus. Chalandon perceives his amusement in front of the cameras. His observation: 'Amusé comme un homme pris par un autre qui s'apprête à suivre un autre procès que le sien' (p. 32), concisely encapsulates Barbie's psychological abstraction from the proceedings which becomes a physical removal when he refuses to attend subsequent hearings.

The second extract is Chalandon's report of Jewish victims' testimony at the Union Générale des Israélites de France (the General Union of French Jews) in Lyon, where they were tricked, arrested, tortured and deported by the Gestapo on Barbie's orders. In this section entitled 'La Rafle de la rue Sainte-Catherine', Chalandon fuses calmly, astutely and respectfully the presence of the victims, their verbatim statements and the circumstances which led them to their fate. His presentation of the personalities and fierce energy of these witnesses robustly dispels any sense of amorphous victimhood. What is perhaps most striking is Chalandon's controlled and sensitive modulation of the timbre of his report. His solicitous guidance of the reader marks the opening of the session: 'Enfin, ils arrivent. Les acteurs, les noms fragiles, les voix cassées, les phrases tremblées, les dos voutés ou fiers…les costumes riches, les ensembles pauvres, les fantômes revenus' (p. 51). Shorn of verbs and possessives, the paragraph foregrounds the images of the witnesses in their vulnerability, advanced age, pride and sorrow, determined to testify against their torturer.

Chalandon's adroit contextualisation and dramatisation of their accounts reinforces their coherence. This technique is particularly discernible in Léa Katz's testimony. Here Chalandon follows her statement about the brutal policeman's uncertainty about allowing her to return to her sick mother with his own re-imagining of the unbearable tension while her fate is decided: 'Le moment où tout joue. Un regard du policier, une idée qui lui passe par la tête, une pensée pour une autre mère. Peut-être rien du tout, un coup de chance. Elle est libre.' (p. 52). Connected with this third extract is from the session of 3 June, entitled 'Le dernier convoi pour Auschwitz, train 14166' (p. 85), referring to the train of 11 August 1944, transporting mainly Jewish prisoners, firstly from Lyon to Drancy in Paris, the main holding centre and assembly point, before their deportation to Germany and

Poland. This was the final convoy from Lyon because of Allied advances from Normandy and the South. Chalandon's assiduous guidance can be seen through a triple prism. In his introduction to, and commentary on, the testimonies of survivors of this final convoy to Auschwitz, he notes that although they all spoke about the camp, none mentioned the train except to observe that they boarded it. His purpose is to emphasise the survivors' instinct to censor or minimise the horror. Whether a pact was made never to mention the ordeal of the convoy, according to one survivor, his observations are nevertheless richly epigrammatic: 'Ces lieux aussi étaient exempts d'humanité'. Equally, his sensitivity is reflected in his interpretation of female survivors' reluctance to allude to their personal experience of the deportation and their silence on their sexual humiliation. Another salient feature relates to Chalandon's inclusion of the reader as a fellow spectator through his repeated exhortation to listen: 'Écoutons Alice Joly, femme résistante…' and most significantly 'Alors écoutons Auschwitz', the name crystallising for him uniformed executioners on one side and naked humanity on the other (p. 87). His constant alertness to the reader's presence mitigates 'horror fatigue' and sensationalism.

The fourth extract, although brief, signals Chalandon's attention to ephemeral events. Poignantly coinciding with *Résistante* Lise Lesèvre's powerful testimony as a Ravensbrück survivor, he observes that a sparrow has flown under the courthouse dome. His remark: 'Comme s'il percevait les signes de détresse' (pp. 59- 60) subtly melds the heartrending stories unfolding in the courtroom with the imagined empathy of the natural world.

The fifth narrative extract underscores Chalandon's ability to synthesise, in his consideration of the significance of numbers, described by a witness to the deportation of the Jewish orphans. Édith Klebinder, an Austrian Jew, was arrested and detained in Cell Number 9 of an interrogation centre. Chalandon refers to the astonishing ability of witnesses to recall numbers, all of them having one constantly before them, whether the number of a prison cell, a deportation carriage, a secret address, the number of other prisoners crammed into a cellar or, most cruelly, the number tattooed on their left arm (p. 75). Through this numerical lens, Chalandon conveys the ubiquitous psychological, social and penal anguish to which the victims were relentlessly subjected.

Concluding Chalandon's report, the sixth extract traces the seepage of the controversies of the judicial sphere into the city outside. A sentence of life imprisonment for crimes against humanity has been declared and the expressionless Barbie has been taken down. The public is filing out and journalists and others swarm around Jacques Vergès, Barbie's pugnacious lawyer. He asserts that justice has been violated and France wounded by this case, adding: 'Même si on pavoise en Israël', and resolves to seek an annulment of the verdict (p. 148). Against this contentiousness, Chalandon depicts the warm night, with young people bathing in the fountain. His almost lyrical remark: 'Une nuit faite pour le bal ou la promenade, ou les choses interdites' contrasts the joyful potential of the evening with the seething reaction of the increasingly restive crowd towards Vergès, by now demonised as a Nazi apologist. Through his observation: 'On entend que Vergès est un SS après avoir cru, au crépuscule d'un procès qui remit les mots à leur place, que ce qualificatif ne serait jamais plus employé pour qualifier un policier. Ou un avocat', Chalandon discloses a sad paradox. The chants identifying Vergès with the SS negate the discourse of a trial where advocates strove to define their terms precisely and justly. The lynching atmosphere, which the defence lawyer evoked to characterise the anti-Barbie spirit of the courtroom, is now targeted against Vergès himself in the streets outside. A Janus-like dimension emerges in Chalandon's final sentence : 'La foule commence à se disperser dans la nuit étouffante, laissant derrière elle des gorges serrées par la colère' (p. 149). It portrays the crowd moving into the future of the stuffy night while, backwards in time and memory, the throats of the victims are tightened in anger.

Chalandon's supportive preparation of the reader and his expertly choreographed and personalised intervention contextualise and valorise the status and voice of the witnesses. His engagement with the photographic medium, discussed below, represents a crucial stage beyond his chronicling of the Klaus Barbie trial. He is now untrammelled by court- reporting protocol, while remaining faithful to his stipulation of letting others speak through a powerful 'presencing', rooted in his abiding empathy with his subjects. Spanning almost two decades and several trans-continental locations, his textual contributions infuse the visual with the intensity and pathos of a personal encounter. They constitute the linguistic equivalent of his

listening to others, redolent of Patrick Chamoiseau's quest to record the victims' experience of the Guyana penal colony: 'how might one write things differently, so that the history and memories [with their small letters] that official narratives have erased can be heard?'[131]

Chalandon's Textual Contributions to Photographic Journalism

Chalandon's relationship with photographers and his involvement with their work incorporate elements of what Andy Stafford distinguishes as 'collaborative' and 'retrospective', given that the contemporaneity of his collaboration with them cannot be categorically ascertained.[132] In Stafford's reference to him regarding the significance of the image, Rancière considers a photograph to be merely an image: '"Ce n'est pas la figure qui définit la photographie, c'est le cadre"'.[133] Stafford considers that 'this suggests an increased role for any mode of contextualization in the meaning of a photograph' (p. 35). His criteria for selecting his own photo-text material mirror the connection between Chalandon's texts and the photographic material he is 'writing to': 'in a photo-text, the photograph must not be a simple illustration of text, and the text is not a simple description of the image(s).' Discussing critic François Soulages, Stafford observes 'There is the work by a poet or writer who either recreates a new work "à partir de la photographie" in a process typical of all acts of creation, that is, recombining; or who makes the photograph itself into a new work' (p. 41). Equally germane to the delicate harmony between Chalandon's language and the photographs of Northern Irish life during and after the Troubles is the reflection by Andrée Michaud and Angela Grauerholz : 'La fiction n'invente pas toujours. Elle prend, reçoit, se conforme aux contours de l'image d'où elle tire son origine…Il arrive que la fiction soit déjà contenue dans la configuration d'une image', positing the presence of a pre-existing story embedded in visual memory.[134] Perhaps even more pertinent to Chalandon's professional

[131] Max Silverman, 'Memory Traces: Patrick Chamoiseau and Rodolphe Hammadi's "Guyane: Traces-mémoires du bagne"' in *Yale French Studies*, 118/119, 'Nœuds de mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture' (2010), 225-238 (p. 225).

[132] Andy Stafford, *Photo-texts: Contemporary French Writing of the Photographic Image* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), p. 6.

[133] Jacques Rancière, 'L'Art de la distance', in Raymond Depardon, *Détours* (Paris: Maison Européenne de la Photographie, 2000), in A. Stafford, *Photo-texts*, p. 35.

[134] Andrée A. Michaud and Angela Grauerholz, *Projections* (J'ai VU, 2003), p. 15.

début as a cartoonist for *Libération* and his aesthetic origins – blending his own image with his own words – is Barthes's observation: 'Il y a un travail que j'aime énormement, c'est celui qui consiste à monter un rapport entre le texte et l'image'.[135]

The first collection, *Still War: photographs from the North of Ireland*, is described by journalist Colin Jacobson as 'documentary photography,' depicting everyday life for the resilient working-class Catholic community in Belfast.[136] Editor Trish Ziff presents the work as 'an attempt to describe…a people who see themselves as Irish and see Britain as another country whose soldiers are a foreign army of occupation' (*SW*, p. 11). The title of the work is arguably a triple pun, illustrating conflict-stricken streets, frozen in the 'still' black-and-white images; the adverbial sense of 'ongoing'; and 'still' in the sense of muted poverty and violence, unknown to the wider public. The section titles evoke the community's bulwarks and flashpoints: 'Interiors'; 'Street'; 'March'; 'Church'; 'Children'; 'Walls'; 'Guerrilla Days'; 'Night'; 'Death' (which includes Chalandon's contribution); and 'Borders'. His association with this unambiguously Nationalist publication is unsurprising, given the orientation of his Northern Ireland journalism discussed by Deslandes above, but there are two noteworthy facets. Firstly, his text is in English, probably because the collection is an anglophone publication. Secondly, it is a *public* signal of his empathy with the experiences and aspirations of the working-class Catholic community. However, a more considered analysis reveals that he proceeds in this work from a socio-historical perspective, rather than a sectarian, standpoint.

Chalandon's untitled contribution comprises nine paragraphs and is accompanied by two photographs. The images show the funeral cortège of three IRA volunteers killed in Gibraltar by British Forces in March 1988, proceeding from Dublin airport along the hundred-mile journey to Belfast and watched by throngs of mourners. Chalandon's work is a prose elegy, a lament not solely for the three young Irish lives summarily ended by British bullets, but more broadly for the

[135] Roland Barthes, *Le grain de la voix, Entretiens 1962-1980* (Éditions du Seuil, 1981), p. 378.
[136] Colin Jacobson, 'Foreword', in *Still War: Photographs from the North of Ireland*, ed. by Trish Ziff (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1990), p. 9. Further references to this work are given by page number in the text and prefixed *SW*.

perpetual tragedy of oppression, violence and death which every Irish generation is condemned to endure. The text opens and closes with an almost identical evocation: 'March. Images of darkness and of rain. Spring is around the corner but the air reeks of November'(*SW*, p. 110). It anticipates his sparse, tight style in *Mon Traître* almost two decades later, with its emphasis on the dourness and grime of a Nationalist enclave, to the point where he evokes the synaesthesia, also present in that novel: he can hear the coal smell of the city. His configuration of the crowds like rows of trees growing from 'the sticky soil…', his capturing of the myriad vantage points from which the mourners crowd to watch the three hearses passing: 'At the crossroads…behind a sodden embankment…against a wall, under a neon sign, in a pool of darkness...on the steps of a church, behind a steamed- up pane…' prefigure his unflinching but affectionate observations of the deprived yet proud Belfast communities of *Mon Traître* and *Retour à Killybegs*. Ireland's historic struggle against oppressive British rule is rigorously illuminated through the intensity of individual images: 'the fury of fighting, the din of battle, choked sobs…The silence of the famine' culminating in the most powerful depiction of vulnerability in the face of external terror: 'Rustling noises as the thatch is ripped from the roof' (pp. 110-111). It is an image repeated in the antepenultimate paragraph, signifying that the country will ceaselessly mourn the same violent consequence of occupation.

His contribution to this photo documentary constitutes a transition from journalist to author, from explanation to imagination, sustained by his knowledge of, and his integration into, a close-knit community, mired in deprivation and beset by sectarian and military violence. From this rawness, seeded in his early prose poetry in *Rue de la Pompe* discussed below, emerges a paradox observed elsewhere: 'Ireland is almost a land without history, because the troubles of the past are relived as contemporary events'.[137] The precise nature of his proficiency in the language is currently unknown but his English text produces two contrasting effects. Although accurately and lyrically expressed, there is a sense of the French 'bones' protruding through the English 'flesh', particularly in the Gallic timbre of

[137] Frank Burton, 'Ideological Social Relations in Northern Ireland', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 30, No.1. (Mar., 1979), 61-80, (p. 63).

the final sentence of the fifth paragraph. ‘Rebellions, rebellions, more rebellions crushed as many times’, (*SW*, p. 110). Yet in this same paragraph Chalandon creates the most arresting image of the deliberate destruction of the shelter of the thatched roof by external malevolence.

Chalandon’s contribution to *Enfants de l’Ombre* constitutes a further development from *Still War*. It is an unpaginated photographic collection by Marie Dorigny, sponsored by the International Labour Office to highlight the abuses of child labour. The title alludes to its shadowy illegality, where children as young as five work long hours for very low wages in highly dangerous conditions, producing goods destined for Europe or local tourist markets. They are coerced into working for unscrupulous gang-masters to support their impoverished and indebted families. Forced labour sites range from Indian glassmaking plants and Egyptian tanneries to Colombian mines and brick-making factories.

Chalandon’s collaboration with Dorigny on this philanthropic project reflects an instinct palpable from his writing in *Still War*: a strong affinity with the victims in their environment and an obligation to bear witness, although in his response to me, cited in Chapter One, he characterises it as ‘un mince apport cosmétique’ (Annex 1). His injection of sombre passion into a tight structure is perhaps the most salient stylistic feature of his introduction to the collection. He presents a portrait of despair and oppression sustained by quiet rage : ‘D’abord vient l’obscurité…Ensuite viennent les regards…Alors viennent les gestes’. In ‘Une presque nuit…le jour hésite…l’éclat est toujours un éclat de labeur’, his laconic but scalpel-sharp description depicts the shadows masking all unnecessary light. He moves inexorably to the expressions of the enslaved youngsters, capturing their brutal abandonment: ‘Regards de solitude, de quai désert, de séparation soudaine’. Chalandon’s anger is channelled through his biting accretion of the sources of the children’s misery. His exhortation for ‘la colère et encore la colère’ as the appropriate response to these images, and his concomitant rejection of compassion and sighs, proclaim his personal investment in the exposure of global child cruelty. Attesting to the universality of this evil, he personalises it through individual references: ‘Ils s’appellent Mahajan, Hari ou Mariela, ci ou là. Peu importe. Portraits d’une même enfance’. Although he did not directly observe these specific

scenes, he would have witnessed enough instances of abject poverty during his overseas assignments to sensitise him to these children's plight.

Chalandon's ruefully ironic narrative strategy permeates six captions accompanying photographs of children working or briefly resting. The first is nine-year old Hari Shanker, making bracelets for tourists. In 'Menotté de verre douze à quatorze heures par jour', Chalandon deftly conflates Hari's captivity and his working material, simultaneously contrasting the decorative product of his labour with Hari's degradation. His persistent cough from the toxic fumes in the manufacture of the bracelets is characterised as his only protest. Another photograph depicts Ram, a young girl working in an Indian chalk-making plant. Chalandon imagines her dream to be elsewhere: 'Ram Kali aussi rêve de craie. L'autre craie…Celle que l'écolier crisse contre le tableau noir en faisant attention à ne pas tâcher son uniforme'. He presents the stark irony of a young girl packing chalk sticks, the tools of an education she will never enjoy during her evanescent childhood.

Three further examples foreground the victims' individuality. Chalandon's commentary on Pedro Rincón who works in a Colombian mine, releases the little boy from his frozen photographic pose. His observation : 'Quand il parle, c'est en petit homme fatigué, en presque homme, en fierté tranquille de celui qui ne mendie pas' captures Pedro's man-boy demeanour. Describing the young brickmakers in Bogotá, he recounts 'Les mains d'Andrés', the raw hands of the five-year old boy, whose injuries were wrought by the yellow clay. Finally, he presents Ahmed, the little metalworker from Cairo: 'Enfant polisseur à la peau de métal'. Emphasising the toxic fusion of the child's discoloured skin and the metal he handles, Chalandon presents the ultimate dehumanisation of the child labourer.

In *Avoir 20 ans à Belfast,* published five years after the 1998 GFA, he collaborated with photographer Daniel Hérard. The rationale for this series on young lives amid international conflict is: 'Comment à 20 ans, un peu plus ou moins, vit-on le monde? Rêve-t-on la réalité? Croit-on aux espoirs d'hier ? A-t-on des envies nouvelles, ou des ennuis communs?'[138] Chalandon's text constitutes a creative

[138] Daniel Hérard and Sorj Chalandon, *Avoir 20 ans à Belfast* (Paris: Éditions Alternatives, 2003), endpaper. Further references to this work are given by page number in the text and prefixed *AVAB*).

continuation, chronologically and stylistically, from his journalistic work as foreign correspondent for *Libération* and from his elegiac exposition of the stoicism of the Nationalist community in *Still War,* over a decade earlier. His association with both projects may have ensued from his decision to leave war reporting after his trauma in Lebanon, but it may equally have been the intriguing attraction of the image which drew him to photographic collaborations. In the later collection, Chalandon progressively interposes his own exegesis, leading to his final cautionary observation on the fragility of the peace process: 'La guerre est mère de haine et de méfiance. Certes, il faudra plus que des mots pour rassurer'. (*AVAB*, p. 7).

He begins and concludes with an evocation of an unexpectedly sensory aspect of Belfast, foreshadowing his protagonist Antoine's impressions of the city in *Mon Traître* and echoing the synaesthetic imagery of *Still War.* With 'Ainsi la ville. Et voilà son odeur. Un mélange de pluie, de salpêtre, de charbon et de terre', Chalandon foregrounds a sensorial miscellany embracing the climactic, the militant (saltpetre is a constituent of explosives), the everyday and the historic (p. 9). The final positioning of 'terre' resonates with the significance of its ownership, defence and legacy at the core of Irish resistance. These opening sentences perform three interlinked functions beyond their obvious presentational role. They recall Chalandon's embodiment as reader's 'guide' in the Barbie trial. They also indicate an early emergence of the journalist-author as Rancière's 'spect-actor' in the synthesis of the obvious (the rain) and the clandestine (the saltpetre), the latter only detectable by those familiar with Belfast's volatile undertow. Moreover, this mosaic of sensory reference points highlights Chalandon's 'écriture à la râpe', in that he evokes the elemental rawness of the city, a restlessness reflected in his refusal to take complacent refuge in what he feels. For him, constants and comforts such as the dependable rain, the coal warming modest homes and the acrid smell of turf are pitted against the threat of violence emanating from the self-perpetuating cycle of possession, dispossession, rebellion, repression and re-possession.

It is useful to compare this section with the first sentence of his final paragraph, to gain a sense of his perspective on what has and has not changed for young people since the peace accord five years earlier. 'Ainsi, voilà la ville. Et voilà son odeur. Un mélange d'espoir, de crainte, de concessions et de renoncement' (p. 16). Hope,

fear, concessions and renunciation illustrate both ferment and fixity: ‘Alors voilà, c’est la trêve. Et tout est autre et tout est identique’ (p. 14). Despite the confidence and compromises, the general tenor of Chalandon’s account induces pessimism. Although he initially refers to laughing children playing in the shabby streets of Catholic north Belfast, his predominant focus is on the weight of historical Irish Republican martyrdom and its contemporary impact on the lives of young working-class people. He cites the perennial sectarian identification with particular football clubs, which the love of the game cannot erase: ‘Non parce que la haine naissait au stade, mais parce que le stade ne l’éteignait pas’. He expresses this intercommunal hatred compellingly as ‘une hydre endormie’, latent, grotesque and ubiquitous (p. 10).

One of the most poignant illustrations of the effect of the Troubles and the subsequent tenuous peace is Chalandon’s depiction of a family, emblematic of all those engaged in, and affected by, sectarian and military violence. His diptych-like tableaux prefigure domestic and paramilitary settings in *Mon Traître* and *Retour à Killybegs*. They demonstrate Chalandon’s art of evoking confined interiors and the tense proximity of polarised aspirations. In the first scene, Chalandon ushers his reader into a working-class Catholic family’s home, in a street disrupted by the incursion of an armoured car, provoking insults and stones from the residents. The mother, the widow of a dead IRA activist and sister of an incarcerated Republican, is rearing her four children alone. There is an unspoken fear that the eldest son, alienated from family life, Mass attendance and involved with similarly disaffected youths, is on the cusp of emulating his late father’s ill-fated activism: ‘Il avait cessé de communier. Les petits le regardant par dessous. Il joue moins avec eux, ne raconte plus d’histoires. Il semble en inquiétude’ (p. 12).

The second scene comprises a complex web of personal and familial adjustments necessary for the success of the peace agreement. Prisons are opened as the fathers and sons of both communities return to their families, supplanting their elder children and siblings at the head of the household, ‘car l’autorité est revenue’, like the soldier returning home after battle. In his observation of the upheaval caused by the prisoners’ release: ‘Et la femme doit réapprendre aussi. S’habituer à ce poids sur l’autre bord du lit. Retrouver l’aspiration de l’homme’, Chalandon acknowledges the paradoxically disempowering impact of peace on the hitherto

dominant wife and mother, a foreshadowing of the stoic Sheila Meehan. Equally ironic, and later discernible in Chalandon's depiction of the soldierly camaraderie between Tyrone and his fellow IRA activists, is his evocation of the fraternal dimension of war, where volunteers sing defiant songs, unified under the same flag. This sense of a shared clarity of purpose is juxtaposed with a sterile peace: 'La paix, c'est redevenir plombier au chômage, s'en souvenir. Et l'accepter' (p. 16). These 'pre'- and 'post- GFA' tableaux channel the enduring Nationalist-Republican socio-historical narrative of indomitable communal solidarity; material poverty; matriarchal fortitude; British repression; repossession of the street space; and the evolving psyche of the young (usually male) spectator-poised-to-become-actor in the increasingly irresistible armed struggle. Although appearing only once in Chalandon's text, 'rôder' captures the pervasive, prowling menace of sectarian hatred (p. 10).

Chalandon's differential engagement with his Nationalist and Unionist subjects in this collection emerges in the quantitative dissonance between his text and Hérard's photography. Of the thirty-eight photos, fifteen feature scenes in Protestant areas; five in Catholic districts; and eighteen in 'mixed' environments, such as drama clubs, an integrated school, a tattoo parlour, a greyhound stadium and a city centre pub. However, Chalandon predominantly discusses the resistance and resilience of Catholics, with few references to neutral spaces. Moreover, he eschews what he considers the sham normality of central Belfast: 'Mais tout cela est encore illusion. Allons dans les ghettos' (p. 15). He makes only cursory references to Protestant interests, such as Linfield (misspelt as 'Lienfield'), the major Northern Irish football club with a staunchly Loyalist following (p. 10). None of the Protestant scenes is described on its own terms, unlike Hérard's photographs of Protestant teenagers at marches, youth clubs, in their back gardens or drop-in centres. Equally, the tenor of Chalandon's language appears warmer when depicting Catholic areas ('Andytown' for Andersonstown) than when referencing their Protestant counterparts. My earlier perception of his relative unsusceptibility to the Loyalist context has been challenged by the inclusion of his articles on Protestants' reactions to IRA atrocities in *Notre Revanche sera Le Rire de nos Enfants*. Yet it is still arguable that the most empathetically lyrical and elegiac expression resides in his articulation of the urban Nationalist narrative.

My non-chronological inclusion of Chalandon's early prose-poetry accompaniment to a colleague's photographs is intended to underscore the intrinsic interrelationship between his journalism and his creativity, perceptible two decades before his first novel. With Joël Robine, a Parisian freelance press photographer, he conceived the notion of marrying his poetic commentary with Robine's transnational images of people's footwear in street scenes, 'les pieds de la rue'. Editor Liliane Fiorito observes in her Preface. 'Chaussures qui êtes une partie de la vie, inspirant tantôt le désir, tantôt la crainte, parfois la haine, vous êtes lascives, agressives ou vengeresses.'[139] She also alludes to Chalandon who, with one foot in France and the other in Ireland, 'a chatouillé sa muse pour qu'elle chante des poèmes en prose…'. Robine's photographic theme could be placed in a broader context in terms of its intended impact. Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites observe that, through their erasure of individuality, images of detached feet and hands reinforce a sense of commonality and relationality amongst social groups.[140] It could therefore be posited that, through his prose, Chalandon 're-individualises' Robine's disembodied subjects in his imaginative reconstitution of their stories.

In his foreword, Chalandon discusses his attraction to the project: 'J'ai toujours regardé par terre. Ni par pudeur, ni par humilité. Plutôt par habitude…Tout ce que la vie crée est attiré vers le bas. Le reste, c'est de la voltige'.[141] He does not refer here to his contribution as a means of ensuring the publication of Robine's work, noted in Chapter One in his written responses to me. Approximately fifty photographs illuminated by Chalandon's text are grouped under six loosely temporal rubrics: 'Aurore'; 'Café crème'; 'Midi et quart'; 'Cinq Heures'; 'Sans heure' and 'Entre Chien et Loup'. The following is an analysis of the more distinctive pieces.

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[139] Liliane Fiorito, Préface, in Joël Robine and Sorj Chalandon, *Rue de la Pompe* (Pontoise: Éditions Édijac, 1986) (unpaginated).

[140] Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, 'Hands and Feet: Photojournalism, the Fragmented Body Politic and Collective Memory' in *Journalism and Memory*, ed. by Barbie Zelizer and Keren Teneboim-Weinblatt (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 131-147 (p. 137).

[141] Avant-propos, *Rue de la Pompe*.

His first commentary focuses upon the bare feet of a mother who is helping her child to walk:

Ne vous méprenez pas. L'enfant
tient la mère et lui réapprend à
marcher. Aller vers l'enfant, vers
les lutins, vers les elfes, les
monstres…
La mère croit conduire mais elle est
sur le siège arrière, les yeux
écarquillés.

Chalandon depicts with gentle irony the child's authority over the mother who thinks that she is leading, although she is learning and seeing the world differently because of her daughter. The most arresting aspect is his capacity to 'explode' this simple image with imaginative paradox.

The second piece introduces Robine's photograph of a child's turned-in feet, encased in dusty shoes. His drunken uncle and father's scoffing and yawning while the boy recites poetry cogently depicts the collision between cultural engagement and oafish contempt, also a leitmotif of Chalandon's own childhood:

……L'habit du dimanche
Sent déjà le lundi et les chaussures
Grincent sous les coups répétés
D'alexandrins assassinés.

Projecting what will become a crucial characteristic of his fictional writing, Chalandon adroitly compresses synaesthetic moments of vision, smell and sound, but here he also imbues the episode with a menacing ambivalence: are the repeated beats linked to the child's recital or to his physical chastisement?

Robine's photograph of the boots of two youths ignites Chalandon's portrayal of working-class culture:

Doctor Martin's. Cuir. A
Liverpool, elles hantent les docks.
A Swansea, les usines
métallurgiques. A Belfast, les
artères des deux ghettos confondus

Chaussures ouvrières…
A peine achetées, brillantes et
Bêtes, elles viennent fracasser par
Surprise le visage du premier
Inconnu rencontré.

Another nascent theme emerges: his knowledge of, and interest in Belfast and its sectarian topography. Chalandon's laconic ambiguity emphasises the allusive freedom offered by the prose poem form. Does 'cuir' refer simply to the material or could it also be an Anglophone reference to the subversive nature of the boots as in 'queer', challenging received views of sexual and cultural normality?

This final example, preceding Robine's image of the crossed feet of a woman seated on a park bench, reflects his sensitivity to individuals' pain:

Il m'avait dit onze heures et il est
Midi. Une lueur dans le regard. Il
Mentait. Il m'avait dit onze heures,
Ici, sur le banc. Onze heures, il y a
un an.

Possibly the most affecting and prophetic commentary in the collection, this study of a failed meeting metamorphoses into callous abandonment. Chalandon's espousal of the female perspective foreshadows Jeanne's narrative almost three decades later, just as the mordant deception presages his enduring engagement with betrayal, culminating in that of his father. More broadly, this prose-poetry collection could constitute a flight from his trauma in Lebanon four years earlier and speculatively, his engagement with 'living' feet to mitigate the memory of those of the dead children he witnessed in the refrigerated lorry in Tripoli, Lebanon.

Conclusions and Reflections

'Locating' Chalandon within French and Anglo-American journalism is arguably as problematic as charting his trajectory from journalist to fiction writer. His entry into the profession owes much to happenstance and tenacity. Elements from the evolution of journalism clearly accord with Chalandon's experience. These include the gripping magnetism of the news event 'sur le terrain', connecting him with Ruellan's 'rhétorique de l'amont'; the foregrounding of compelling detail,

consonant with his fascination with nuance evoked with Hees, and recalling Albert Londres's strategy for mitigating the de-sensitising effect of war reporting; and his early personal engagement with 'faits divers'. His movement into fiction is neither a definitive displacement nor a smooth linear transfer, but rather a 'spiralling shuttle'. He has never ceased to be a practising journalist; as a novelist, he is progressively extending the boundaries of his created worlds beyond his autobiographical epicentre. The co-existence and complementarity of these two professions are acknowledged by Chalandon in his characterisation of journalism as 'day work', contrasting with his nocturnal fiction writing.

There are similarities with, and differences from, the journalist authors cited above. Chalandon's work does not possess Thompson's stentorian *élan*, although he shares an evident affinity with the political. While caustically satirising the *soixante-huitarde* naïveté of his protagonist Georges in *Le Quatrième Mur*, he counters it with his sober and sympathetic engagement with the suffering of the innocent Lebanese civilians. His empathy with, and indignation for, victims and their circumstances emerge in his depiction of the dynamics of the impoverished mining community in *Le Jour d'avant*, based upon a real industrial tragedy. In comparison with Capote, who spectacularly reanimates a notorious crime narrative, Chalandon's worlds are constructed on a more personal scale, although they possess greater social and geo-political currency than Frayn's novel. Furthermore, unlike Frayn, the correspondences between Chalandon and his protagonists are more biographically detectable. However, Chalandon's caveat in relation to Tyrone Meehan in *Mon Traître* and *Retour à Killybegs* remains instructive. The character is *not* his former friend and unmasked informant Denis Donaldson but has been constructed *because* of him. Chalandon's work shares no obvious similarity with Marr's self-consciously savvy account of coruscating hubris. However, it could be posited that each has mined his unique insight into the devastating impact of machination and unaddressed grievance within a turbulent political climate.

Chalandon's 'Je' emerges as a dynamic entity, continuously sculpted by shifts in perspective and circumstance, and protected and/or projected by his 'masques transparents'. Such fluidity resists any notion of a hermetic segmentation between journalist and author. His instinct to engage with the novel emanates from his

psychotherapeutic need to pare down to the pure ‘moi’, unattainable in his journalism. He confronts and embraces his still raw past ‘selves’: the emotionally neglected, stammering child; the cowed son despised and bullied by his overbearing father; the well-intentioned foreign journalist, betrayed by an ostensibly close friend in Northern Ireland; the dedicated Middle East reporter, broken by the violence he witnesses; the cancer sufferer sharing his wife’s illness; and the devastated son of a Nazi collaborator. This liberating process of disaggregating the ‘moi’ may be considered in terms of Rancière’s notion of the evolution of the spectator and of making connections between the known and unknown. Chalandon’s writing about *himself* filters out his journalist’s voice while increasing the volume of his own, enabling him to stake out his own position and achieve a measure of self-emancipation.

The imposition of his own voice is palpable in his early and immense affinity with the visual, palpable in his early anti-psychiatry drawings or cartoons which effectively became his ‘passport’ into the realm of journalism at *Libération.* His later photographic collaborations could be construed as a distancing strategy from his profoundly traumatic experience in Lebanon. Yet they could equally be regarded as the apotheosis of that passion for the irrepressible resonance of imagery and its capacity to spark a poetic response, despite his self-deprecating assessment of his involvement. His participation also speaks to the esteem in which he is held by his photographer colleagues. My recent discovery of his early prose-poetry accompaniment to Robine’s pedi-centric photography, *Rue de la Pompe*, demonstrates his instinct to personalise and exalt literally lowly street lives, recalling Stafford’s critique of Rancière on the potential to interpret photographs through diverse modes of contextualisation. Dorigny acknowledges the 'shape and soul' Chalandon brought to her photographic work *Enfants de l’Ombre*, even if he now underplays the importance of his text. His contribution to *Still War* exhibits a subtle shift, from his professionally acquired knowledge of Irish history to his more personal evocation of the narrative within and preceding this visual testimony of the Troubles, echoing Michaud's and Grauerholz's connection between image and story. His core journalistic precept, ‘laisser parler les autres’, pervades his account of the Barbie Trial. Recalling Rancière’s emphasis on the dynamic status of spectators as actors already inscribed with their

own stories, his assured but unobtrusive accompaniment of his readers acknowledges their diverse epistemological starting points, informed by their own perspectives, prejudices and assumptions.

The seeming disparity between Hérard's cross- communal photographic record in *20 Ans à Belfast* and Chalandon's apparent prioritisation of the working-class Catholic/Nationalist narrative does not in itself detract from the intensity and rawness of his evocation of the challenges of the peace process for both communities. Moreover, this asymmetry is countered by Chalandon's reports on the effect of the Troubles on Protestant families in the recently published compilation *Notre Revanche sera Le Rire de nos Enfants*. Yet his psychological debridement reveals an inherent empathy with Irish Republicanism's transgenerational resistance to British occupation. A complex interplay connects Chalandon the journalist, progressively imbued with Ireland's 'story', and Chalandon the fiction-writer, blurring the polarity between spectator and actor. The tension between real people and images provides an apt prism through which to explore Chalandon's dramatisation of the collision of geopolitical ferment and self-realisation in his novels *Mon Traître, Retour à Killybegs* and *Le Quatrième Mur* in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three: War Wounds: Space, Sight and Self-Sufficiency

‘C’est ce qui m’a le plus terrorisé dans la guerre: elle n’est pas faite par des bourreaux, mais par des hommes ordinaires qui deviennent des bourreaux’ (to Jean-Luc Hees).

Synopses of the Novels

Mon Traître (2007)

Mon Traître, dedicated to an unknown ‘Aude’, is prefaced by an invocation from March 1981 by Bobby Sands, a member of the Provisional IRA, an elected member of the British parliament and the first hunger striker to die, after 66 days, during the Republican prisoners’ campaign for political status and other rights in the Maze Prison, County Down. Described by Chalandon as an Irish patriot, Sands declares: ‘Je me tiens sur le seuil d’un autre monde/ tremblant/ Que le Seigneur ait pitié de mon âme’ (*MT*, p. 9). From this brief prologue, the narrator Antoine Chalons, a young French violin maker, introduces the man who will have a fateful impact on his life: Tyrone Meehan. Antoine has been inspired by Ireland through the photo of James Connolly, the Irish Socialist Republican leader executed by the British in the wake of the Easter Rising in 1916, given to him by Pêr, a young Breton violinist who frequents Antoine’s workshop. He teaches English, despite his hatred of England and has visited Derry because he loves Ireland. Although Antoine has his own culturally stereotyped ideas of Ireland, he is spurred by Pêr’s experience in the North, and by the story of James Connolly’s martyrdom, to go to Belfast. When he arrives from Dublin, he meets the O’Leary couple by chance who take him under their wing. It is this connection that leads him to Tyrone Meehan, their close friend and the eponymous traitor. Meehan is a well-known veteran Republican in the poor Catholic enclave where he lives, with whom Antoine forges an increasingly close friendship and through whom he learns how to speak, think and even dress like an Irishman. In parallel with the developing affinity between Meehan and the young Frenchman is the latter’s unremitting exposure to, and interaction with, the poverty, violence but also, paradoxically, the warm generosity of close-knit working-class Belfast. However, Antoine’s belief in the Ireland which is now his reality is devastated by the discovery that Meehan has been betraying his own Republican comrades to the British intelligence services for a quarter of a century. The final meeting between Antoine and Tyrone at

Meehan's dilapidated Donegal cottage shortly before his execution by IRA affiliates fails to resolve the question tormenting the anguished Antoine: had Tyrone ever really been his friend?

***Retour à Killybegs* (2011)**

Tyrone Meehan is the narrator and protagonist. The novel is dedicated: 'À ceux qui ont aimé un traître' (*RK*, p. 7). This is followed by: 'Savez-vous ce que disent les arbres lorsque la hache entre dans la forêt ? "Regardez ! Le manche est l'un des nôtres", graffiti on a Belfast wall' illustrating the nefarious influence of a traitor on his community (p. 9). The Prologue, dated 24 December 2006, constitutes Tyrone's introduction to his story. Written about ten days before his death, he states that, since everything has been revealed, others, including his former Republican comrades, the British, his family, friends and journalists who have never met him, will speak for him and dare to explain his treachery. He urges the reader to ignore what has been said and written about him, because only he can tell the truth (p. 11). Born in 1925 in impoverished rural Donegal, Tyrone recounts the turbulent life of his violent alcoholic father, a former IRA veteran who had fought British and Pro-Treaty forces in Ireland's Civil War. Pat Meehan's death in 1936 compels his wife and nine children to migrate to Belfast in search of work, where they are accommodated by an uncle. A witness to the devastation of wartime Belfast and to the sectarian injustices and violence wreaked by the Protestant majority on the Catholic minority, the young Tyrone is progressively imbued with the Republican ideal of a united Ireland through armed struggle, becoming an IRA volunteer and participating in the 1950's Border campaigns. Tragically, at the start of the Troubles in August 1969, while defending his district from sustained attack by armed police and Loyalists, he accidentally shoots his comrade Danny Finley, fighting alongside him. At the time, he allows himself to be hailed as a hero, trying to save Finley while protecting his community. His reputation as a respected Republican veteran burgeons, reinforced by internment without trial in Long Kesh/ Maze Prison. However, on his release, he is confronted with evidence by British Special Branch that it was his weapon which fired the fatal round at Finley. Facing public exposure, he agrees to become an informer for MI5 from the 1980s. It is during this long period of unsuspected treachery that he befriends Antoine. Finally, in ambiguous circumstances, he is unmasked as a traitor and interrogated by the

IRA Council in 2005. He returns to his father's cottage in Donegal where his final meeting with the stricken Antoine takes place, before his assassination in early 2006.

***Le Quatrième Mur* (2013)**

'À Valentine, qui me demande si elle aura le droit d'emmener son doudou au ciel: Chalandon introduces his sixth novel with a tender dedication to his young daughter (*LQM*, p. 7). The Prologue which follows is an extract from Jean Anouilh's drama, *Antigone* (1942), in which he presents his eponymous heroine: 'Elle s'appelle Antigone et il va falloir qu'elle joue son rôle jusqu'au bout' (p. 9). The innocence of the first clause and the relentless determination of the second resonate across this story. Georges's circular narrative begins and ends in Lebanon where he sustains severe leg injuries when the taxi transporting him to his flight back to Paris is attacked by a Syrian tank. However, the central plot is the process of staging a production of *Antigone* on the peace line between Christian West and Muslim East Beirut in 1982. This is the monumental project of Sam Akounis, a Jewish Greek theatre director, resident in Paris. He envisages that the parts will be played by local people representing the diverse communities of the Lebanese conflict. For Georges, the narrator- protagonist, a frustrated young man with dreams of international revolution, Sam is an inspirational and enigmatic figure whose affinity with Anouilh's *Antigone* as 'une héroine du « Non » qui défend sa liberté propre' emanates from his belief in the power of theatre and language (p. 40). Unfortunately, Sam becomes terminally ill and asks Georges to produce the play for him. In fulfilling his dying friend's wish, Georges, who has never left France, finds himself undertaking complex and protracted negotiations with amateur actors from diverse communities in an extremely dangerous environment. His unshakeable determination to achieve Sam's ambition provides him with the resilience to stage a successful rehearsal of the play in June 1982. Arranged for October that year, there is tragically no final performance because of the massacres of over 1,500 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians- including some of the actors- in the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps by Phalangists linked to the Israel Defence Forces. Although initially wary of travel, he discovers a new purpose in his work in Beirut, which renders him increasingly bored, restless and frustrated with his life as a husband and father back in Paris. His marriage to Aurore becomes

adversely affected by his unsettling affection for Imane, his uncharacteristically callous behaviour towards his young daughter Louise, and blighted by his memories of suffering and dead Lebanese children. The end of the novel mirrors the start, with the chorus accompanying Georges's final, unsteady steps towards death.

I. Conceptual Frameworks for Space, Sight and Self-Sufficiency

The notions of friendship and treachery in these narratives may be fruitfully examined through the concepts of space, sight and sufficiency, drawing on the theories of Rancière on the emancipated spectator; Tahar Ben Jelloun concerning the impact of betrayal on perpetrator and victim; and Hannah Arendt on the banality of evil. Arendt's argument is illuminated by Zimbardo's exploration of evil in its complex relational components. In the lethal labyrinths of political, paramilitary and physical spaces in Belfast and Beirut, individual friendships and personal principles are subjugated to 'the cause'. Loyalties are policed and challenged through the deployment of shadowy surveillance, entrapment and coercion. These urban battlefields seed self-perpetuating alliances and double-dealing, continually collapsing and reforming. The nexus between the spatial and the visual resides in the perfidious *mise-en-abyme*, traceable from a physically perceptible treachery to that which is invisibly implanted within the individual, such as Tyrone's killing of Danny or as explored in Chapter Five, Jeanne Hervineau's cancer. The link between treachery and self-sufficiency follows a different pathway: learning to recognise it or to understand its insidiousness in order to acquire a liberating resilience. Moreover, self-sufficiency is linked to self-knowledge, self-preservation and the realisation that one has been a betrayal 'survivor'.

Rancière's concept of the emancipation of the spectator is rooted in his assertion that 'L'émancipation, elle, commence quand on remet en question l'opposition entre regarder et agir'.[142] Simon Bayly identifies his foregrounding of equality between spectator and performer, proposing the complex notion of 'the figure of

[142] J. Rancière, *Le Spectateur émancipé*, p.19.

the spect-actor who exercises active powers of critical interpretation as well as the powers of participation…taking up his or her rightful place in the scene itself'.[143] Both Rancière's framing of emancipation and Bayly's allusion to the critical acumen of the spect-actor resonate with the capacity to 'see through' duplicitous representations in order to become a sensitised, autonomous actor. Equality resides in spectators' ability to present their own story – uncontaminated by others' potentially manipulative narratives- thus challenging what Bayly, citing Rancière, terms 'theatrical privilege'.[144] He locates the origin and complexity of the hybridity of the 'spect-actor' within Peter Hallward's exposition of the potential for theatre to blur the distinction between 'art' and life.[145] Rancière's perspective on the interplay of politics and aesthetics emanates from challenging his own assumption of a separation between workers' collective concerns and their individual interests and pursuits, contending that they are not obliged to enact the seemingly immutable roles to which they have been arbitrarily assigned.[146]

Rancière's cultural critique is congruent with the protagonists' social and psychological growth in the three novels in several respects. Proceeding from his perspective on the status of the spectator or reader viewing the unfolding story, it may be posited that Antoine, Tyrone and Georges are simultaneously spectators and actors within their respective narratives. Their respective 'learning' – Antoine's and Tyrone's in Belfast and Georges's in Paris – pre-disposes them to respond in specific ways to new circumstances. Antoine's romanticised idea of Ireland colours his subsequent interactions with Tyrone and his entourage. He learns painfully the grimy, messy reality of the troubled North, where loyalty is not necessarily reciprocated. His youthful exposure to familial and communal turbulence propels him to espouse the exigencies and camaraderie of Republican militarism to counter paternal defeats and deficiencies. Tyrone's lifelong participation in the armed

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[143] Simon Bayly, 'Theatre and the Public: Badiou, Rancière, Virno', *Radical Philosophy*, 157 (September/October 2009), 20-29 (p. 24).

[144] Jacques Rancière, 'The Emancipated Spectator', ArtForum International, vol. 45, no. 7, 2007, p.275 in Simon Bayly, 'Theatre and the Public: Badiou, Rancière, Virno', *Radical Philosophy*, 157 (September/October 2009), 20-29 (p. 25).

[145] Peter Hallward, 'Staging Equality', *New Left Review* 37, January–February 2006, p.24, in S. Bayly, 'Theatre and the Public: Badiou, Rancière, Virno', pp. 20–29.

[146] *Le Spectateur émancipé*, p. 25.

struggle and his heroic status gained from it are fatally undermined by a lack of courage when it matters. Georges's heartfelt but incoherent revolutionary fervour is tamed by Sam's grounded and empathetic guidance through which he attains a measure of social, political and personal maturity. A specific connection between him and Antoine is the challenging of their preconceptions, which is a precondition of emancipation for Rancière. His framing of a false dichotomy and a liminal space between observation and performance is discernible in the protagonists' instinct to think and move their way into *their* drama, and through their respective geographical, cultural and psychological displacement (Rancière, p. 25).

Their transition from 'spectators' as disillusioned or frustrated 'imaginers' to 'activists' who attempt to realise their ambitions commences with their ideological 'homelessness.' The lure of a political or communal affiliation also exposes them to the subversive intentions of a parallel 'underworld': militant Republicanism for Antoine; the British Secret Service for Tyrone; and an intricate web of Lebanese militias for Georges. More complex examples of the boundary between spectator and actor occur during Georges's encounter with 'his' amateur actors in Beirut, when each character interprets his or her role for the rest of the troupe. Their consciousness of their temporary renunciation or suspension of their 'real' selves in order to participate in the drama is articulated by the young woman playing the role of Antigone's nurse. She asserts their primary purpose as actors, suggesting that they forget their religions, their names and their 'camp', essentially urging their rejection of the factional strictures which govern their lives (*LQM*, p. 192).

Antoine's and Georges's narratives unfold and conclude in a foreign 'adopted' country, far from their native rural roots. Equally, Tyrone has established himself in Belfast, away from his native rural Donegal, to which he eventually returns. The fluidity between art and 'non-art' is visible in the protagonists' capacity for simultaneous artistic and geopolitical engagement. Antoine is a violinist and violin maker and becomes an enthusiast for Guinness and Republican iconography; Georges moves from conducting Parisian student skirmishes to directing Anouilh's drama on the Beirut front line; and Tyrone hones his street-smart observational and tactical knowledge into a paramilitary skill. Indeed, his journey from scout to soldier epitomises the 'spect-actor', in his enactment of his part on the stage of Irish history.

Regarding the undercurrents of friendship experienced by Georges and Antoine, Tahar Ben Jelloun's lyrical juxtaposition of its joys and the searing pain of its betrayal provides subtle insights into the paradoxically fragile strength of intimate friendship, perceived through the prism of sight and space. His formulation 'l'autre soi-même rêvé' presents a close friend as more than a mirror of oneself: it is a model to contemplate and to emulate.[147] This configuration emerges in the affinity felt by Antoine for Tyrone, by Tyrone for Danny Finley and by Georges for Sam Akounis. Also relevant to Rancière's paradigm is the resolve displayed by Antoine, Tyrone and Georges to inscribe themselves and *their* story into deeply embedded national narratives and communal memory, traced respectively by Tyrone, Danny and Sam. Their insertion into their national story discloses the synthesis of the aesthetic (Antoine's music and Georges's drama) and the political (Tyrone's Republican activism and Sam's experience of violent government repression). Tyrone's connection with Danny proceeds along a continuum of revolt against British repression: from imagination to involvement; from disorder and disillusionment to discipline and direction; and from the home to the centre of the street.

Ben Jelloun depicts the anguish of betrayed friendship, characterising it as an intolerable and incurable wound. Moreover, his anatomy of treachery discloses traits which are highly pertinent to my interpretative framework. Regarding sight, his assertion 'On tue à l'intérieur, sans verser le sang' foregrounds the unseen devastation wrought by betrayal (p. 135). He presents its covert, attritional nature more subtly in 'Méfiance et amitié ne vont pas de pair', emphasising the incompatibility of mistrust and friendship (p. 131). He exposes two further salient aspects of friendship corroded by treachery. In 'Il faut laisser le traître à ses misères, l'abandonner à ses bassesses', he recommends that the most effective strategy for dealing with the traitor is to create distance from him or her, while acknowledging the enduring, noxious effect of his transgression. 'Bassesses' also implies a moral *rapetissement*. He articulates in lugubrious wordplay the painful bind in which the victim finds himself or herself: 'On s'est trompé et on a été

[147] Tahar Ben Jelloun, *Éloge de l'amitié, Ombre de la trahison (*Éditions du Seuil, 2003*)*, p. 9.

trompé', that in erring in his choice of friend who has deceived him, he has failed to see and to foresee (p. 130). The rhetorical questions 'qu'est-ce qu'il y a en moi qui "autorise" la trahison? quelle faille en moi est assez visible pour que certains de mes amis s'y engouffrent afin de me trahir ?' constitute an intertwining of sight and blindness, of visibility and concealment (p. 139). A toxic cycle of self-blame emanates from the victim's supposed failure to see in himself or herself the flaw only too visible to others. The antidotes to his or her anguish are the jettisoning of the transgressor and a commitment to self-sufficiency.

It could be posited that space, sight and self-sufficiency coalesce in Hannah Arendt's report on Adolf Eichmann's trial for war crimes in 1962. Space is pertinent to the recurrent perspective of the perpetrator's diminution. Eichmann is confined behind a protective glass screen in a Jerusalem courtroom, the culmination of his flight, pursuit and final capture across Europe and South America. His psychological space for mitigation has become progressively straitened through the trial process. He is relentlessly compelled to construct new defence barriers until he is 'cornered': 'He remembered perfectly well that he would have had a bad conscience only if he had not done what he had been ordered to do'.[148] Arendt's observations on Eichmann's appearance: 'a medium-sized, slender, middle-aged man, with receding hair, ill-fitting teeth and nearsighted eyes' powerfully concretise the 'banality of evil' (Arendt, p. 5). Equally, they evoke strong comparisons with Chalandon's depiction of Klaus Barbie's emotionless, unblinking stare despite the camera flashes and the gaze of hundreds of people on his first appearance in the courtroom, 'Un prisonnier au visage banal', cited in Chapter Two (*PKB*, p. 31). Self- sufficiency as the ability to insulate oneself from one's imminent fate, is palpable in Eichmann's case, because of his reportedly self-controlled, self-assured and pompous demeanour, even moments before his hanging: 'he was in complete command of himself, nay he was more: he was completely himself … he forgot that this was his own funeral' (Arendt, p. 252) .Arendt's positioning of her comment: 'the fearsome, word-and-thought-defying *banality of evil*' renders the concept particularly significant

[148] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Penguin Books, 1964), p. 25.

because it appears near the end of her work, bringing to bear the entire weight of the trial upon this self-important but diminished figure, minutes from his execution (Arendt, p. 252). Although the nature of the crimes is not remotely of the same order, three elements of Arendt's report bear comparison with Chalandon's development of Tyrone Meehan's character. The first is that which is central to her presentation of Eichmann: the incongruity between the unremarkable presence of the man and the enormity of his crime. The second aspect is the enduring magnetism of evil, rendered even more striking by the ordinariness of the subject. However, in the case of Tyrone and Eichmann, the attraction is less that of evil *per se* than a sense of accomplishing an ideological duty to a higher cause, with the paradoxical conviction that one is doing good, rather than evil. Although Tyrone is a far more genial figure than Eichmann, he becomes physically, morally, socially and politically diminished. His self-imposed confinement in remote Donegal has obliterated his autonomy, his 'stage' has contracted, his troupe has vanished, and he is left engulfed in his own drama.

Two further aspects of Arendt's account merit attention: one resonating with the circular or cyclical progress of evil and the other a proto-version of Rancière's concept of the emancipated spectator. Firstly, her assertion that 'a trial resembles a play in that both begin and end with the doer, not the victim' echoes the narrative structure of *Retour à Killybegs* and *Le Quatrième Mur*, which both open and conclude in the same location (Arendt, p. 9). Secondly, her portrayal of Eichmann identifies his 'default' instinct during the trial: assuming a lofty, detached stance, distant from the horrific crucible of systematic mass-murder. Yet on the gallows, he strikes a dramatic posture in his delivery of an incoherent soliloquy.

Philip Zimbardo's commentary on evil, introduced in Chapter One, is informed by Arendt's original conception of the term. His definition of evil, cited above in relation to Chalandon's view that ordinary people commit atrocities, is applicable to Chalandon's protagonists. It deftly summarises Tyrone's deliberate concealment of his role in Danny Finley's death, and George's disproportionate post-Lebanon reactions within his Parisian family setting. Indeed, Zimbardo's overarching tenet, that people are not intrinsically evil but are pressured or coerced to become so - the eponymous 'Lucifer effect'- concurs with the spirit of Chalandon's own assertion in the epigram to this chapter. His notion of the disengagement of morality

epitomises the protagonists' re-setting of their priorities in order to deal with the insidious invasion of treachery into their lives.[149]

2. Overviews of the Narrative Structure

Mon Traître and *Retour à Killybegs*: Possession and Transgression

Chalandon interposes what might be termed an ignition and orientation phase, through which the friendships between Antoine and Tyrone and Tyrone and Danny are initiated and directed. Commencing with *Mon Traître*, the inextricable link between the possessive pronoun and the titular traitor is noteworthy as the earliest and most unequivocal indication of Chalandon's personal investment in his story. His stated determination to Jean-Luc Hees to write a book that would be a novel discloses his discovery of an authorial, rather than journalistic, voice. As noted earlier, *Mon Traître* is not the story *of* Denis Donaldson; it is a story which has been written *because* of him, a significant nuance examined in Chapter One. Commencing with Antoine's recollection of his first encounter with Tyrone Meehan, the Frenchman's story is recounted through a prism of mourning and loss, even while evoking the congenial ambiance of the community's social club. It echoes Dante's lament that there is no greater pain than remembering happy times in misery.[150] He is already living with the devastating truth about the father-figure who had become his mentor and guide through the intricate annals of Irish history and the dangerous present of the Belfast Troubles.

Given that Chalandon's writing illuminates and interrogates forms of treachery, Maurice Blanchot's view, cited by Jean-Michel Adam, is pertinent: 'Le récit n'est pas la relation de l'événement, mais cet événement même'.[151]Antoine's 'share' in the traitor is clearly signalled in Chalandon's usage of the possessive pronoun in the title. Yet this heralding of the transgressor -the ostensible subject of the novel- is itself misleading, because this novel focuses on Antoine's experience as the '*trahi'*. Furthermore, the conjunction of the two titular components masks a

[149] Philip Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: How Good People turn Evil*, p. 17.
[150] Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia di Dante Alighieri*, *Inferno*, Canto V (Firenze: Successori Le Monnier, 1975), p. 43.
[151] Maurice Blanchot, *Le livre à venir* (Éditions Gallimard, 1959, folio essais 2022), p.14 in Jean-Michel Adam, *Le Récit* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), p. 9.

complex alchemy of fondness and anguish, underscoring Anna De Fina's allusion to the co-existence of disparate and dissonant identities within the same individual.[152] Moreover, the elements 'Mon' and 'Traître' offer a compressed foretaste of the tenor of Antoine's discourse in the novel, blending admiration, reproach and lamentation. They reinforce Antoine's 'ownership' of this drama in which he is also an actor. Additionally, they foreground the egocentrism of Antoine's sense of betrayal, in that it is not only political, but also embodies *his* negative experience.

Titular resonance is even more potent in *Retour à Killybegs.* As the dramatisation of Tyrone's pathway to his betrayal of Republicanism, the notion of 'Retour' discloses several features relating to the novel's structure. In the most obvious sense of a *physical* return, Tyrone's geographic itinerary is elliptical, as he migrates from rural Killybegs to Belfast where he becomes involved in militant Republicanism in the 1940s. He subsequently moves to the Border area to participate in the armed campaign of the following decade, before returning to Belfast, where he establishes himself as an IRA activist during the Troubles before meeting Antoine Chalons. His secret informer's life includes his MI5 sponsored trips to Paris, before his eventual exposure in Belfast and his public confession in Dublin lead to his self-imposed exile back in Killybegs. The *temporal* organisation of 'Retour' invites several observations. The most recent scenes emerge at an early stage of the story: for example, Tyrone's final sojourn in Killybegs is detailed in Chapter Three, subtitled *Killybegs, dimanche 24 décembre 2006.* This creates a sixty-five- year gap from Chapter Two, detailing his family's early days in Belfast in 1941 as Catholic migrants from the Irish Free State. This elision of historical and contemporary consciousness, challenging a view of history as remote and distinct from present lived experience, re-frames the ramifications of an ages-old conflict. As Hopkins observed, it is also a nimble device for schooling the uninitiated reader in the history of the Republican movement before 1969.[153] Equally, there is the sense of 'retour' as the reverberation in Tyrone's life of

[152] Anna de Fina, 'Narrative and Identities,' *The Handbook of Narrative Analysis*, ed. by Anna de Fina and Alexandra Georgakopoulou (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2019), pp. 351-368 (p. 352).

[153] Stephen Hopkins, 'The "informer" and the political and organisational culture of the Irish republican movement: old and new interpretations', *Irish Studies Review*, 25 1 (2017), 1-38 (p.23).

momentous public events, such as the outbreak of the Troubles in August 1969 and the grim progression of the 1981 Hunger Strike fatalities.

'Retour' constitutes the narrative 'space' which Tyrone carves out for himself on the historical stage. The intersection between his adult experiences in a small Catholic working-class enclave and the recurring urban sectarian and military violence spanning a quarter of a century feels authentic. What perhaps appears more convenient than convincing is his family's arrival in Belfast from Killybegs on 15 April 1941, the day on which he meets his future wife (RK, p. 38). Historically, it was catastrophic for the city. On that date, Belfast suffered the most devastating Luftwaffe attacks of the War and proportionately the heaviest toll of civilian casualties in Britain, resulting from inadequate civilian shelter. The inclusion of the greater international conflict facilitates the emergence of three truths relevant to the complexity of the socio-historical context: the indifference of external forces to internal sectarian tribalism, as both communities suffered in the air-raids (p. 41); the blurring of factionalism, with fire brigades rushing from the South to extinguish fires in the North (p. 44); and Tyrone's first sight of a mutilated human corpse on a stretcher, images that problematise a binary conception of the conflict (p. 42). That his uncle deflected his brother's attempt to shield Tyrone's eyes from the carnage also speaks to an atavistic 'echo', a rite of passage marking a transition to adulthood through direct confrontation with the brutishness of death.

Perhaps the most provocative dimension is that of 'retourner sa veste'. Tyrone's return to his father's cottage is dictated by his treachery, by his being 'turned' by the British Secret Services who profit from his vulnerability. Indeed, as delineated below, the insidiousness of his betrayal distorts not only his relationship with his family and close friends, including Antoine; in propelling him to his rapidly contracting existence in Donegal, it also contaminates his view of the world. For Tyrone, the lesson must be that his transgression has rendered it impossible for him to escape the gravitational pull of his past. This cheerless hideout exudes insufficiency, unable to protect Tyrone from armed retaliation. Killybegs also provides a link to his childhood and a more 'innocent' past, but in his final days, it assumes a forlorn setting where he mechanically mimes a disconsolate daily routine. In its bleak state as a decaying, inhospitable husk, the paternal home is a

memorial to what his own father became, a portent of his own grisly fate. Arguably, for the condemned man, Killybegs recedes to its etymological root of 'Na Cealla Beaga' or the small cells inhabited by the monks who lived by the sea.[154] Tyrone's irreversible loss of status, autonomy and well-being contrasts painfully with the implied optimism for Antoine's future in his mutually supportive friendship with Gráinne Doyle, at the close of *Mon Traître.*

Le Quatrième Mur: Together Apart in Paris and Beirut

The title of Chalandon's sixth novel conceals a multiplicity of meanings. The fourth wall is fundamentally a conceptual barrier separating a fictional work from its audience or readers, usually in the context of a drama. This wall is a one-way screen because, although the audience can observe the action on stage, it is assumed in theatrical convention that the actors cannot see the audience. Chalandon clarifies his use of the term to Georgia Makhlouf in their discussion cited above: 'Il s'agit ici d'un jeu de mots. Ce quatrième mur, c'est celui de l'enfermement de Georges, c'est le mur qui clôt sa prison et qui fait qu'il ne repartira pas. C'est le mur qui sépare les vivants et les morts'. Yet paradoxically, this wall offers Georges the tantalising possibility of emancipation from the confines of everyday life to realise the ambition of staging *Antigone* in Beirut and to exploit the unifying potential of theatre in a divided society. The physical absence of the fourth wall also becomes an index for the devastated city of Beirut, when Georges first visits the ruins of a former cinema in which the play is to be performed: 'Trois murs seulement. Le quatrième avait été soufflé' (*LQM*, p. 178). However, as Cécile Barraud asserts, the dead city still retains its life-affirming capacity and the seeds of its regeneration (Barraud, p. 63). The emancipatory force of the simultaneously visible and invisible fourth wall transforms it into a bridge used by Georges to negotiate the maze of ideological, geographical, cultural and emotional boundaries. It fuels his determination, like Anouilh's Antigone cited above, to play his role until the end. This sequence of 'break-outs' and frontier navigation shapes Georges's character through his increasingly diverse interlocutors. Yet, if the fourth wall is considered to liberate the protagonist, it also emancipates readers or spectators to understand the paradoxically cathartic

[154] www.welovedonegal.com/killybegs.html/, [accessed 29 July 2019].

capacity of conflict. Equally, it emphasises the ambiguous liminality between spectators and actors (Rancière 2008, p. 19). A universalising and unifying element in the novel, the centrality of catharsis to the theatrical experience, is addressed by critic Myriam Watthée-Delmotte: 'Il favorise…dans un discours cathartique dont le théâtre tragique est le paragon, l'entrée du lecteur dans une communauté symbolique d'hommes souffrants, en surplomb de toutes les idéologies'.[155]

In exploring the intermeshing 'macro' dimensions of spatial sensibility, self-sufficiency and the power of the visual in the novels, it is apposite to gauge their significance to Chalandon's position as a foreign correspondent. It is incontestably his experience of reporting the seemingly intractable conflicts in Northern Ireland and Lebanon which forms the thematic connection between the three novels. Yet, beyond this obvious assertion, there is evidence that the apparently contradictory sensations of belonging, rootlessness, dislocation and re-engagement with established relationships are intrinsic to the foreign journalist's *métier*. Tumber and Webster capture the journalist's mindset in their comprehensive interviews, introduced in Chapter Two. Strong camaraderie is evoked by one foreign correspondent, observing that much closer relationships tend to be formed with colleagues because they have experienced similar emotions: 'You don't need to explain, they know how you feel' (Tumber and Webster, p. 149). Another interviewee acknowledges the ceaseless tension between the excitement and arduousness of war reporting, making him yearn for home, and the dull, but reassuring predictability of home life, attracting him back to the adrenalin of the 'field' (p. 151). This is a suggestive link to Chalandon's own journalistic experience, when he expresses disengaged reaction to returning to relative calm in France, in his discussions with Jean-Paul Mari, examined in Chapter One. He tells Françoise Laurent that peace terrifies him, especially seeing ordinary people and considering that they too could be brought to the point of massacring others (Laurent, p. 185), recalling Arendt's concept of the banality of evil. The psychological disorientation he describes may emanate from the substitution of

[155] Myriam Watthée-Delmotte, 'Commémorer pour légitimer. Du Tombeau des gloires au cénotaphe des obscurs', in *Rituels de la vie publique et privée du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, ed. by Anne Friederecke Delouis and others (Classiques Garnier, 2021), pp. 225-241 (p. 238).

one space, in which the journalist is primarily an observer-reporter, for another in which he must re-assume his burden of daily responsibilities.

3. Space: *Mon Traître* and *Retour à Killybegs*

For Chalandon, Belfast, Paris and Beirut retain a similar capacity to absorb newcomers, eager or forced to relinquish their native roots. In *Mon Traître*, Antoine delights in his return to the welcoming O'Leary household. He articulates his pride and sense of belonging, enhanced by the recognition and acceptance accorded him by the local Republican community. He details the key districts of his adopted home, each bearing its own 'indexicality' for civil disorder, recalling Tuchman's formulation in Chapter Two: 'Sur Falls Road, à Divis Flats, à Whiterock, à Ballymurphy, à Short Strand, à Ardoyne, au Market, à Andytown'. The last-named is shorthand for the Andersonstown district, highlighting Antoine's familiarity with local idiom, and echoing Chalandon's usage in his photojournalism collaboration with Daniel Hérard.

Antoine's persona subsequently appears to metamorphose fleetingly into that of Chalandon the correspondent in the middle portion of the lengthy sentence, where reportage becomes the principal register: 'des quartiers de pauvreté extrême, de beauté laide et de violence que craignent les journaux'. Yet in the final part of the sentence: 'Belfast me murmurait que j'étais un peu chez moi' his personification of the city as a hospitable presence predominates (*MT*, p. 15). Echoing Chalandon's synaesthetic evocations in *Still War* and *20 ans à Belfast*, explored in Chapter Two, Antoine recollects his first visit: 'Avec cet air épais de tourbe et de charbon. L'odeur de Belfast. En hiver, en automne, en été, même lorsque la pluie glace, je ferme les yeux et j'écoute l'odeur de cette ville. Un mélange d'âtre brûlant, de lait pour enfant, de terre, de friture et d'humide' (p. 35). The first sentence blends the rural and the urban with turf and coal, perhaps an allusion to Belfast's demographic growth through previous waves of rural migration, as experienced by Tyrone Meehan's family. Antoine's observation crystallises the domestic, maternal and climactic dimensions of a city which emphasise constant nurture, rather than spasmodic intercommunal hatred. He alludes to a visual feature unique to working-class urban communities in Northern Ireland, an intersection of the spatial and the visual: the street mural, painted on the gable walls of otherwise nondescript terraced houses. Its commemorative power is illustrated by the smiling

face of the murdered O'Leary child on the wall opposite their home: Denis, shot by the British Army as he was on his way to buy milk. The little boy joins the succession of great Irish rebels, including Antoine's hero, James Connolly, depicted in giant frescoes throughout the district by dedicated local artists (p. 38).

Antoine's description of graffiti 'Y a-t-il une vie avant la mort?'(p. 73) succinctly captures Belfast's ironic wit. It is also the same question he appended over twenty years earlier to Joël Robine's photograph of the feet of three lads seated by a dodgems ride, suggesting its deep fascination for him. Antoine also witnesses women in Republican areas banging dustbin lids on the ground, a custom to warn of an imminent British military incursion or, in this instance, as a knell for the death of Bobby Sands, the first hunger strike casualty. This action transforms the street into a space of unequivocal *female* resistance, a counterpoint to the armed male adversary. It connects with Karen Lysaght's and Anne Basten's notion of the unwritten 'boundary rulebook', in their discussion of the spatial 'coping' strategies developed by working-class residents in both communities to minimise their risk of sectarian attack from the 'other side' and which for Catholics would include the British Army.[156] On a broader canvas, Antoine's anthropomorphic evocation of a city in pain is depicted with delicate brevity in his remark that mists of distress cling to the surrounding hills (*MT*, p. 115). His conviction that, nearly a decade after the GFA, physical, political and sectarian divisions persist, is tersely summarised in: 'la méfiance était intacte, le calme règnait comme un malentendu', expressing the intractability of Belfast's conflict and the delusional 'peace' (p. 150). It diffuses a brooding ambiance, redolent of Chalandon's urban portraits in *Avoir 20 ans à Belfast* and contrasts sharply with the olefactory image of a homely, comforting and self-reliant city.

In *Retour à Killybegs*, Tyrone's account of the aftermath of the German air raids in April 1941, launched against Belfast's renowned shipyards, reveals a triple dynamic. Firstly, this destruction is not self- inflicted, but the consequence of European political and military tensions, whose instigators are indifferent to the Northern Irish conflict. The inclusion of this event may also have a didactic

[156] Karen Lysaght and Anne Basten, 'Violence, Fear and 'the everyday': negotiating spatial practice in the city of Belfast', in *The Meanings of Violence*, ed. by Elizabeth Stanko (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003), pp. 224-242 (p. 240).

purpose: to present a lesser known but locally significant disaster which had no collision between local and international geopolitics, where one voice declares that the Protestants got what they deserved, countered by a more measured challenge: '« Tu crois que les Jerrys font la différence? »' (*RK*, p. 41). The second dynamic concerns the paradox of war bringing an albeit temporary harmony, with the arrival of the fire brigades from Catholic Dublin, Dundalk and Drogheda to help extinguish the fires of Protestant Belfast. The mesh of identity and allegiance laid bare by the German air-raid are strikingly delineated in two scenes witnessed by Tyrone, as he wanders with his uncle through the bombed-out streets. A note of fantasy is introduced when an old lady mistakes the firefighters' Dublin accents for German, an index of the gulf of understanding separating the two communities. When shown their Southern-registered vehicle, she believes herself to have been blown across the country by the force of the bombing (p. 44). Thirdly, on a more solidly socio-political level, a man on a street corner loudly excoriates the Government for leaving the country exposed to two hundred Junker and Dornier bombers, with only twenty anti-aircraft guns and four shelters in the whole of Northern Ireland. A passer-by's casual assumption that the complainant was an anti-British Catholic exacerbates his ire: '« Je suis un protestant loyal! Britannique comme toi! Alors ne viens pas ici me faire la leçon. » '(p. 45). The chapter concludes with Tyrone's admission that this man was the first Protestant he had seen in his life (p. 46). These interactions illuminate the normally impermeable nature of Belfast urban society, while underscoring the irony of a deadly German bombing raid briefly blurring such traditionally immutable divisions.

Belfast, a welcoming, benevolent guardian to Antoine, reveals its malevolence to Tyrone in his family's forced migration *within* the city itself. This is occasioned by anti-Catholic violence and embodies A. T. Q. Stewart's characterisation, cited by Frederick Boal, of the two communities 'sharing a narrow ground while occupying…separate segments of it', with their ancient instinct to possess and retain their hard-won territory.[157] The displacement of Tyrone's family from Sandy Street to Dolphur Lane merits comment in terms of the street nomenclature.

[157] A.T.Q. Stewart, *The Narrow Ground: Aspects of Ulster 1609-1969* (London: Faber,1977), pp.186-187, in Frederick W. Boal, 'Northern Ireland: Geographical Perspectives on an Ethnically Polarised Society', *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol.13, No.2 (Dec.,1987), 33-42 (p. 34.).

'Sandy Street' may reasonably be assumed to be Sandy Row, a deeply impoverished working-class enclave, overwhelmingly Protestant since the mid-nineteenth century. However, it was originally a district in which Catholics resided peacefully with their Protestant neighbours, before cyclic spasms of sectarian violence drove them to safer areas of the city.[158] This periodic trans-urban migration signals a fundamental instability, an intercommunal mistrust permeating interpersonal relations. Another aspect of 'retour' is thereby illuminated: transgenerational recurrence and 'echo', the latter being Chalandon's own characterisation to Hees of the relationship between his two Irish novels. What might be termed the 'permission' of the street, in its power to facilitate or to impede normal movement, is discernible in Tyrone's account of the Loyalist lynching in 1942 of Declan Finley, twin brother of Danny who fatefully crossed to the 'Protestant' side of the invisible line separating the two communities (*RK*, pp. 61-62). In turn, Danny's killing over a quarter of a century later occurs as part of an insurrectional street drama, sparked by the B- Specials (quasi- military police reservists) and their followers (pp. 132-133).

Space: *Le Quatrième Mur*

For the ardent young militant, Georges, Paris symbolises the ideal setting for youthful revolutionary anger, conveying Chalandon's wry commentary on the aspirations of the *soixante-huitard* generation which he had formerly espoused before entering *Libération*. The city concretises Georges's fervent imaginings in his self-projection into moments of global significance (*LQM*, p. 24). Paris is the cockpit of his almost self-parodying splenetic version of international revolution. It represents the stage on which his 'pre- Sam' existence is depicted. It embodies his passionate, political immaturity; his search for, and embroilment in, anti-establishment clashes; and his need to be identified with a confraternity of dissent.

The reality of Georges's 'pre-Lebanon' Paris incorporates locales that frame either a challenge to his unreflective, anti-authoritarian anger, or the dying throes of his own vestigial revolt. Early in the narrative, the confrontation at the crossroads between protesters and armed police illustrates Sam's transformative influence on Georges through his repudiation of his complacent platitudes and unexamined

[158] Andrew Boyd, *Holy War in Belfast* (Anvil Books, 1969), 'Preface' (unpaginated).

tropes, exemplified in preventing Georges from chanting 'CRS=SS' at a demonstration (p. 19). Although not strictly part of the external architecture of the city, the lecture theatre in the Faculté de Jussieu, the hub of student debate, becomes the epicentre of his intellectual epiphany, presided over by Sam as the embodiment of contemplative and dignified revolt (p. 22). Other spaces evoke a different phase in the evolution of George's mindset, echoing aspects of Chalandon's 'laying down his arms' (Yann Lévy): the 'orphelins d'idéologie', illustrated by disillusionment and a retreat from the front line, amid scattered, faded leaflets (*LQM*, p. 33) ; physical withdrawal from the previously occupied and now locked Faculty building; the attraction of the theatre as a new forum of resistance *(*p. 42) ; and Georges's self-conscious sartorial defiance of the Town Hall's civic conventions on his wedding day (p. 55). His Paris includes no well-known landmarks, only his personal topography. More broadly, his idea of revolution is not specific to Paris, but represents a kind of abstract ideal transcending the urban space he inhabits. He ventures beyond his habitual environment by decamping to a railway siding on the night of his daughter's birth, daunted by the reality of fatherhood. His wandering into this inimical space forms part of his *becoming,* corroborated by his entreaty in the cold railway carriage: 'Laissez-moi devenir père avant de l'être tout à fait' (p. 57). His physical re-location, although temporary, represents a passage through the fourth wall separating his previous child-free self-absorption and the dawning consciousness of his impending new responsibilities.

A comparison with his 'post-Lebanon' Paris highlights a pronounced attitudinal change. No longer the militant fighting to regain the 'territory' of occupied faculty buildings, he becomes a hostage to his own surroundings, isolated within the narrowing parameters of his small apartment. Psychologically, he is equally captive within his '*idée fixe'* of a rapid return to Beirut. Chalandon detonates Georges's public emotional collapse through his frantic destruction of a small puppet at his daughter's third birthday party. His uncontrolled reaction appears to have stemmed from the imagined similarity between the limp toy and a young Lebanese civil war victim. The genesis of this scene may have been a synthesis of Chalandon's own remembered distress at the sight of a dead child in a Mickey Mouse tee-shirt, recounted to Hees. George's vehemence could also be the conduit

for Chalandon's murderous outrage at witnessing the aftermath of the Sabra and Chatila massacres (Ruellan, p. 161).

Georges's evanescent hold on reality hastens his retreat from 'big' thoughts and actions. The familiar undergoes a malign transfiguration into darker and incapacitating imaginings. Le Parc Monceau is the unlikely setting for his frenzied onslaught upon his daughter. His reaction is distressingly scaffolded, from crouching down as though to comfort her for dropping her ice-cream, to snatching the empty cone and scraping it against the dirt, urging her to eat it. His frustration only subsides when Louise falls over, hitting her face against the ground. The incident exemplifies his estrangement from the behavioural norms of his peaceful physical surroundings (*LQM*, p. 296). His dysfunctional interaction with Louise could be considered a toxic inversion of Chalandon's assiduously attentive approach to his own daughters' well-being, as he told Hees, by constantly checking that they were still breathing in their sleep. The disturbing disproportionality of George's reaction and its alarming escalation within an innocuous setting recall Chalandon's shock, described in Chapter One, in the Hôtel Le Cavalier in Beirut, when the simple act of showering precipitated a fateful trauma.

Georges's Beirut reveals itself as a territory replete with paradoxes, perhaps the most fundamental being that he appears more alive in the war- ravaged city than he felt in the relative peace and safety of Paris. This existential contradiction is illustrated most powerfully in Chalandon's evocation of George's ecstatic rage under the Israeli aerial bombardment of Beirut, when he feels literally possessed by war: 'Une joie féroce me labourait. J'ai eu honte. Je n'avais pas peur…J'étais en enfer. J'étais bien. Terriblement bien' (p. 227). As noted in the Introduction, Chalandon reprises this sense of wild exhilaration through the unexpectedly reinvigorating effects of cancer on four female sufferers in his eponymous and deeply personal novel six years later, explored in Chapter Five.

Critic Cécile Barraud's extensive examination of the subtle and indomitable incursion of nature into the ruined city is potently depicted from Georges's perspective: 'La végétation s'était emparée du quartier désert. Profitant de l'absence des hommes, l'herbe folle avait tout envahi' (*LQM*, p. 149). There is no precise parallel for this natural renewal in either Antoine's or Tyrone's Belfast,

perhaps because there has been no significantly lengthy clearance of the local population to favour botanical re-growth. There is, however, a comparison with Tyrone's dilapidated Killybegs cottage, which irrevocably recedes back to its natural state. Chalandon's imagery captures the ragged beauty of shattered buildings in Beirut in Georges's observation: 'L'immeuble Barakat en dentelles de guerre' (p. 149), recalling Albert Londres's anthropomorphic description of the 'stumps' of the devastated Reims cathedral, cited in Chapter Two.

Chalandon summarises the inescapable hostilities: 'Il y avait des tirs sur la ligne de demarcation, des escarmouches dans le Sud, de la tension dans le Nord' (p. 126). From this schematic representation, he builds a detailed and sensory perspective on Georges's friend Imane's impoverished and densely populated district. Although prefacing his description with the disclaimer: 'Je n'avais pas de mot pour cet endroit', he evokes its heterogenous and chaotic architecture. The oppressiveness of confinement and confusion is heightened by the mass of electric cables weighing upon the area. Whereas Antoine can 'hear' the peaty and milky smells of Belfast, Georges inhales the fetid air of this Beirut enclave: heavy as rotten fruit, exacerbated by the stench of burning rubbish and by 'ce jus', in which the children paddle (p. 130). Despite their unsavouriness, the odours demonstrate Georges's alertness to sensations which jolt him from his hermetic Parisian self-centredness.

There exists a slender parallel between Tyrone's Belfast and Georges's Beirut: the public veneration of political martyrs visible on street walls. However, whereas the more durable, painted Belfast murals retain their vibrancy through their constant refurbishment by local artists, the Beirut visual tributes, 'des affiches fanées', are scrappy and ephemeral, possibly signifying their irrelevance beside the residents' life-and-death preoccupations (p. 129). This instability is also reflected in the volatility of alliances, susceptible to change overnight because of a parking dispute or a disobliging look (p. 163). With its permissions and unwritten localised stipulations identified by Lysaght and Basten, cited above, the street *is* the stage in both cities, encompassing spectators *and* actors: the former edging cautiously along the gable walls or undertaking covert surveillance; the latter staking out and commandeering their positions in the middle of the road.

The significance of the location of the makeshift theatre where *Antigone* is to be staged is threefold. The centrality of its position, 'Ni à l'ouest ni à l'est, au milieu'

(p. 141), proclaims its rejection of factionalism and the restorative power of art. That the building is also a former cinema reflects a continuation of artistic heritage and purpose of the site, a fidelity to an aesthetic, albeit more modern, tradition. Moreover, the violent forces of the civil war shaping this partially devastated site create for Georges a striking structural metaphor of a three-cornered façade with the missing fourth wall: 'C'était une arène de plein ciel, un théâtre ouvert aux lions', a vulnerable space, simultaneously separate and inseparable from a ferocious external reality. Yet this apparent architectural casualty of war, reflecting the duality of 'saccagé et superbe' (p. 178), reveals a detailed artistry. The finely chiselled and sculpted columns, three still standing and the fourth smashed on the ground, recreate an ancient destructive force, linking the modern conflict to the origins of dramatic art.

The banality of evil recalled by Georges in his visit to the Chatila refugee camp after the deadly massacre by militias in September 1982 is represented not only in the petrified final postures of the victims, but also in the physical spaces which simultaneously envelop and disclose them. Georges's use of 'boyau', 'entrail', potently depicts the exiguous, serpentine alleys to the camp, exuding a suffocating animality (p. 262). It echoes Jean-Paul Mari's phrase 'cette bouillie sanglante,' in his description of the filthy chaos in which Chalandon worked in Lebanon (Mari, p. 228). In the novel, doorways are ajar, permitting ease of access, but also exposing the corpses of their residents eternally transfixed in routine attitudes. There is an echo of Antoine's Belfast as a city in pain, discernible in Georges's observation 'La rue était en larmes,' as he picks his way through pools of blood in Chatila (*LQM*, p. 263). This image echoes Chalandon's description of walking in human blood (Mari, p. 228). Georges's exit from the devastated camp contrasts markedly with his entrance through the sinuous 'boyau': 'J'ai marché au milieu de la route. Marché en aveugle vers l'air libre, suivi par les pleurs, les cris, le linge séchant pour rien au soleil de septembre' (*LQM*, p. 269). The image of the washing drying in the autumn sun conveys the heedless progression of time and reinforces the sense of quotidian banality.

Georges has traversed the depths of hell on behalf of Chalandon the journalist who confides to Hees: '*Le Quatrième Mur* m'a enfin permis de me réapproprier mes larmes, ma colère, ma douleur, même si je m'appelle Georges, même si je suis

metteur-en -scène de théâtre'. The forcibly repressed psychological impact of the scenes of slaughter he witnessed as one of the first foreign correspondents in Sabra and Chatila is reconstituted in Georges's shocking confrontation with, and anguished assimilation of, the aftermath of the massacre. What he has encountered has robbed him of his *vision*, allowing hearing, as with Antoine's and Tyrone's experience of Belfast, to function as his primary sensory guide.

4. Sight: *Mon Traître* and *Retour à Killybegs*

An exploration of the vector of sight enriches our understanding of the processes and effects of treachery, as the protagonists navigate and engage with their respective physical settings. This line of inquiry is corroborated by four strands of critical commentary. On the most markedly affective level, Ben Jelloun's observation above of betraying and being betrayed foregrounds the victim's frustrated sorrow of failing to foresee a friend's deception. The second, related, point amplifies Louis Casamayor's observation on the requisite intellectual acumen of the accomplished traitor: 'L'art de trahir ne peut être pratiqué que par des hommes qui, comme on dit, « disposent de toutes leurs facultés »'.[159] Casamayor also highlights the creative dimension of treachery: 'Le menteur ne crée pas, parfois même c'est un malade, tandis que le traître est un artiste' (Casamayor, p. 47). Thirdly, Kundera's assertion that 'Trahir, c'est sortir du rang et partir dans l'inconnu' assumes that the traitor's clandestine activity cannot reasonably be (fore)seen.[160] Lastly, perhaps a somewhat more nuanced perspective arises from an expansion of Nicole Prieur's conception of the traitor as 'un faiseur d'histoire', a story maker or faker.[161] This would logically cast the victim as a 'story taker' who mis-reads the deceiver's narrative or, by neglecting to apply his or her own insight to substantiate its veracity, risks being seduced by the traitor's story.

Mon Traître is predicated upon seeing, looking at, being looked at, being seen, wanting to be seen, and looking for. The first clause of the novel: 'La première fois que j'ai vu mon traître' is repeated three times in the first chapter (*MT*, pp. 11, 16).

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[159] Louis Casamayor, *L'Art de Trahir* (Éditions Gallimard, 1972), pp. 45-46.
[160] Hervé Hamon, *La diagonale du traître* (Brest: éditions-dialogue.fr, 2009), p. 9.

[161] Nicole Prieur, *Nous nous sommes tant trahis* (Paris: Éditions Denoël, 2004), p.152.

Reinforced by ‘Je l’ai regardé’ and ‘J’ai regardé mon traître’, it reflects Antoine’s emphatic delineation of Tyrone as he remembers him before discovering his treachery (pp. 17, 19). At this initial stage, Antoine’s gaze is assimilating those elements of Tyrone’s appearance and demeanour which will become increasingly significant for the young Frenchman as an *entrée* into the fascinating realms of ‘Irishness’ in general, and Belfast street life in particular. This stands in stark opposition to the disconsolate final meeting between the two men at Tyrone’s dilapidated hideout, preceded by Antoine’s tormented anticipation on how his former friend’s look might have altered. He specifically links it to the hypothetical transformation wrought by his treachery: ‘Que serait le regard de Tyrone Meehan? Est-ce qu’on perd son éclat après avoir trahi ?’ (p. 172). Antoine’s statement ‘J’ai regardé mon traître’ in this context is uttered in the full knowledge of Tyrone’s betrayal (p. 176). The glances exchanged between the two men mark both a psychological stalemate and an unbreachable gulf, poignantly captured by the pane of rain-streaked glass separating the two men on the cover of Pierre Alary’s illustrated version of the novel. Additionally, Antoine’s last sight of Tyrone is permeated with a triple deficiency: ‘Il m’a regardé sans que plus rien ne brille…J’ai vu sa main d’adieu. Je n’ai plus vu ses yeux, jamais’ (p. 180). Tyrone’s gaze is lifeless; Antoine sees his valedictory but wordless gesture, but crucially, he never sees his eyes. Antoine’s gaze goes forever unreciprocated, analogous with Tyrone’s refusal to acknowledge the authenticity of their friendship. In a sense, Tyrone’s intransigence places Antoine in an emotional limbo. Recalling Ben Jelloun’s sombre duality, he has undoubtedly been deceived by Tyrone, but he still does not know unequivocally whether he was mistaken in believing that Tyrone had been his friend.

There are three further aspects of the narrative in which sight precipitates deception, evoking the notion of a performance in which the spectator is insidiously transformed into the actor. Firstly, Antoine notes: ‘Je regardais les soldats nous regarder’ (p. 23). This pithily conveys the interchange of overt and covert observation. A communal response or counter-performance ensues in the mourners’ simultaneous opening of their umbrellas to screen the IRA marchers from military surveillance (p. 51). That this appears as a seamless ritual prompts the reflection that there is tacit acceptance of mutual scrutiny and concealment

between the army and the community. An instance of a projection of his newly acquired Irish nationalist *persona* is his self- conscious display of his Claddagh ring on the Paris metro, in his fruitless attempt to gain the attention of another passenger who is also wearing one. This deliberately public gesture, reprised by Chalandon himself in a photograph in the article by Thierry Gandillot discussed in Chapter One, signals Antoine's delusional belief in his Celtic *bona fides.* The third aspect concerns the capacity of visual representation to create and destroy illusion, exposing the gap between idealism and reality. Antoine's portrait of Connolly and the larger-than-life street murals of the other rebel leaders and of O'Leary's murdered child can never assuage the suffering of their adherents and mourners. They are the Catholic community's mythologised exhortation to transcend defeat and loss. This idealism-reality dichotomy pervades the juxtaposed past and present images of Tyrone in an English language newspaper in Paris, after Antoine has learned of his treachery from his son, Jack. His reluctant acceptance that the very old, almost bald and bespectacled man in the recent photo is in fact his friend: 'C'était Tyrone Meehan, pourtant', reflects the pain of reconciling 'his' Tyrone with the by now publicly despised individual (p. 143). The old familiar version of Tyrone no longer exists, for he is now contaminated by his betrayal. More broadly, the extent of the damage inflicted by Tyrone on his family, community and the Republican movement and his drift from the founding ideals of the Republican cause can be gauged though a comparison between Tyrone's shrunken demeanour and the (literally) lofty dignity of Irish patriots and martyrs in the murals.

The presence and impact of sight in the evolution of betrayal in *Retour à Killybegs* may be apprehended through three stages of Tyrone's IRA career: before, during and after Danny Finley's killing, the cataclysmic event leading to his entrapment by British Secret Services. Firstly, recalling his early days in the Movement as a young ambitious volunteer: 'Je surveillais mon coin d'Irlande, ma rue de brique, mon carré de petit soldat', Tyrone recalibrates the wider struggle to his own personalised purlieu, where he is brought into proximity with weapons he once glimpsed from a distance (*RK*, p. 65). The reiteration of the possessive, as discussed above, enhances the sense of his appropriation of his own narrative space. Secondly, the ignominy of killing his own comrade is not primarily conveyed through Tyrone's actions during the fateful riot of in August 1969. It is

Danny's uncomprehending stare upon being shot which marks the beginning of Tyrone's slide into subterfuge, mendacity and treachery: 'Il s'est retourné, m'a regardé bouche ouverte' (p. 133). His comrade's final bewildered look sets in train a sequence of vision-related moments. An ambiguity arises in the immediate aftershock, when Tyrone states: 'J'ai tué Danny Finley. J'avais fermé les yeux' (p. 134). The pluperfect would suggest that he had fired blindly before mortally wounding Danny, but his vision was fatally compromised by darkness and the enveloping white smoke from police CS gas. Later, it emerges that they were facing each other, the implication being that no-one other than Tyrone saw Danny's expression at the time of his killing (p. 137). Finally, in the year after Danny's death, as Tyrone becomes increasingly immured in his unmerited status of local hero, he is haunted by Danny's gaze: Tyrone's act has transformed him into an unwilling and unwitting actor, and Danny into an eternal spectator. The expiration of time to acknowledge the truth coincides with the appearance of Danny's portrait on the wall of the Thomas Ashe Club. Tyrone's interpretation of Danny's heavenward look as a kind of truce emphasises the amalgam of his self-justification and perfunctory regret (p. 143). The salient aspect of this third phase is the extent to which his exposure as an informer gains him brutal insights into his altered relationship with his family, his former comrades, Antoine and with himself. His son Jack's query as to how his father can look him in the face is not only an expression of shattered trust, but also indicates that Tyrone has forfeited the right to look like, and be, a father (p. 146). His retreat to his native Donegal reveals his stubborn contempt. Recalling his silent, bitter reception in Mullin's pub in Killybegs after the revelatory Republican press conference, his reaction is: 'J'ai traversé le pub sans un regard pour les regards', 'cancelling out' hostile stares (p. 81). It is as though he has already separated himself from wider society.

In contrast, during his life as an informant, he marvels at how the people he meets in his local shopping centre cannot see or recognise the traitor in him, although it appears engraved on his forehead (p. 184). His perspicacity regarding his former associates, 'Pour la première fois de ma vie, j'ai vu l'IRA comme la voit l'ennemi', ironically dawns on the eve of his abandonment by his British 'handlers' to whom he had betrayed those same individuals (p. 288). During his final days in his Killybegs cottage, Tyrone relives the bitter contrast between what

Antoine's gaze used to signify for him and its extinction in the knowledge of his betrayal. Through the prism of sight, Tyrone acknowledges for the first time Antoine's positive impact on his patriotic identity, reviving his soldierly triumphs and exploits with Danny Finley: 'Lorsque le petit Français me regardait, je m'aimais… Lorsqu'il me regardait, Danny Finley était vivant' (pp. 246- 247). However, at their last meeting, '…le regard d'Antoine s'était éteint…Il ne me voyait plus. Il cherchait le traître', Antoine's proud, protective, affirming loyalty, conferring status and respect, has been expunged (p. 247). Finally, Tyrone's admission that: 'Toute ma vie j'avais recherché les traîtres, et voilà que le pire est caché dans mon ventre' illustrates the blind, destructive circularity of the processes with which he has engaged (p. 190). This melds with Chalandon's observation to Hees on the universality of treachery in its capacity to embed itself in everyone.

Sight: *Le Quatrième Mur*

The interlocking themes of betrayal and sight are generally more nuanced and philosophically framed here than in the 'Irish' novels. Unlike Tyrone, Georges has not *actively* betrayed his family, community or ideals. However, he has been blindly faithful to his impulsive anti-establishment attitudes, perhaps stereotypical of his generation of 'bourgeois' students, which undermine his judgement and incur Sam's censure. If this morally distorted response to the widening chasm between appearance and reality is considered through the prism of sight, a blend of physical and abstract illustrations exemplifies the positive and adverse potential of visualisation. The most striking example of physical impairment is Georges's blindness caused by shrapnel during an attack on a hospital in the Sabra refugee camp. His first experience of the pain is conveyed in a queasy culinary allusion: 'Je sentais le cochon grillé. La poule du dimanche, que maman plumait au-dessus du feu' (*LQM*, p. 235). This grotesque faux-domestic reference conveys the coarsening perversion of sight, connecting with Chalandon's own admission of eventually feeling unmoved by a pile of corpses (Mari, p. 228).

Georges declares that nothing conformed to what he had believed. Through his mental vision now sharpened by his temporary blindness, he locates his personal ordeal within the wider conflict, noting the coincidence of his eye operation with the widespread Israeli bombardment of Lebanon, a surgically targeted military operation. His wry comment : 'Poussières de verre, cendres de bois, poudre de fer.

Il [le chirurgien] avait retiré de mes yeux de quoi reconstruire l'hôpital' (*LQM*, p. 240) reveals not only the copious matter extracted from his eye, but also his awareness of the expenditure of precious medical resources on a naive foreigner. This consciousness reveals George's increasingly empathetic insight. However, the second reference to visual damage invites a more unremittingly sombre analysis. His daughter's swollen eye from falling to avoid the dirt-encrusted ice-cream he forced on her, constitutes not only an obvious reproach to his lack of paternal care, but also his abandonment of rationality. His response to her injury echoes his inner turmoil: ''J'avais meurtri ma fille. Je lui souriais' (p. 297). His inattentiveness to Louise's injury discloses two diverging dynamics in Georges's psyche: that of the remorseful parent and of the reluctant father whose PTSD progressively desensitises him to his family. His blinding in Sabra, however, confers a clarity of purpose and binds him more closely to the members of his adopted community who have seen him at his most vulnerable and from whom he derives strength.

Psychological and emotional insight are largely afforded by Sam in his mentoring of an increasingly reflective Georges. Despite Georges's reckless risk-taking and his politically illiterate formulations, Sam declares: '« Je vois un homme qui refuse l'injustice et l'indifférence. Un gars bien »', possibly as Chalandon envisages himself (p. 76). Sam encourages Georges to reset his moral compass and to reclaim his true instincts as a seeker of truth and justice. He can therefore free himself from the seductive *soixante-huitarde,* Paris-based ideology, thus effecting an emancipation from spectator or cheerleader to actor.

5. Self-Sufficiency: Overview

Chalandon's assertion that he depends on his own instincts, cited in the discussion of his interview with Laurent in Chapter One, reflects his confident self-empowerment. From his formerly fervent and subsequently discarded Maoist stance, he has evolved his own non-ideological self-sufficiency. Considering his fictional characters through the lens of Ben Jelloun's melancholy exposition of betrayed friendship, the core notion of 'sufficiency' merits particular attention. It is the sense that one's friendship is ultimately not enough for the perfidious friend, and conversely, that the friend's duplicity manifests his or her inherent unworthiness of the relationship. There may also be a strategy of self-preservation

or self-protection at play, in that the betrayed party armours himself or herself against further pain.

A significant attribute of the bonds shared by Antoine and Tyrone and by Georges and Sam is a relational asymmetry, a consequence of one man's need to 'prove' himself deserving of the other's friendship. Each friendship is inextricably embedded in, and shaped by, its geopolitical setting. Moreover, the protagonists' differential engagement with their 'adopted' surroundings mirrors their future relational pathway, in that their primary motivation and evolving feelings about their new environment influence the trajectory of their friendships. However, while this process appears more evident in the Irish novels, an exploration of *Le Quatrième Mur* reveals a more densely layered complexity.

Self-Sufficiency: *Mon Traître* and *Retour à Killybegs*

Antoine's eight references to Tyrone as 'mon traître' in the first chapter seem to delay the necessity of uttering his former friend's name (*MT*, pp. 11, 16, 19). This process of warding off what is hostile or discordant, while embracing that which gives value, dignity and comfort, surfaces in the increasingly cordial relationship between Tyrone and Antoine, and in the Frenchman's gradual acceptance by the local community. That Antoine's first meeting with Tyrone occurs when the Irishman teaches him how to urinate without wetting his shoes underscores two complementary aspects of the relationship: Antoine's gauche and vulnerable demeanour and Tyrone's fatherly gruffness. Yet this developing filial-paternal bond emanates from Antoine's burgeoning fascination with Ireland, conceived within the confines of his Parisian apartment. Ireland is the original stimulus which invigorates his senses, fortifies his confidence and shapes his sensibility to Irish culture. Ireland becomes his 'education', as Tyrone progressively assumes the role of mentor, as with Sam and Georges, although their relationship resembles that of older and younger brothers.

Antoine embarks on a sensory and epistemological pathway in his quest for self-sufficiency. From a blended musical and linguistic perspective, the young violin maker discerns the timbre of war in the rebel songs of the beer-fuelled evening in the Thomas Ashe Club, and the topographical distinctions he makes between rural Irish accents: the 'stony' brogue of Kerry and the 'muddy' parlance of Donegal

(pp. 12-13). He applies his musical expertise to playing a traditional Irish air on his violin surrounded by his new Belfast 'family', the O'Learys and the Meehans (p. 57). A more surprising demonstration of his auditory acuity is his amusingly passable Gallic reconstruction of the seemingly impenetrable Belfast accent to which he increasingly becomes attuned (p. 20). His taste (in the gustatory and aesthetic senses) is also enlivened by his cautious induction into Guinness-drinking and his purchase of the Claddagh ring. This image accords with the impression of Chalandon shared by his *Libération* colleague Gérard Lefort, cited in Chapter Two. Antoine's receptivity to Irish cultural influences reaches its zenith with his venture into sartorial emulation. In the mirror he considers himself Irish, in his tweed jacket, too-short trousers, and now sporting a knitted Aran beret, the latter pre-figuring Jean-Paul Mari's reference to Chalandon's 'casquette irlandaise' (Mari, p. 227). Tyrone performs Antoine's symbolic investiture when he buys him a tweed cap like his own and places it on his head and re-baptising him: '« Tu étais Antoine, te voilà Tony »' (*MT*, p. 122). Beyond Antoine's figurative 'celtification,' the jaunty ritual marks his immersion into Tyrone's identity: T-o-n-y, born of T-Y-R-O-N-E, an ostensible melding of their destinies.

In tandem with Antoine's vestiary induction is his heightened political sensitivity. From the status of an observer at an annual Republican Easter Parade in the company of Tyrone and other new comrades, his absorption into the joy and defiant pride of the commemoration becomes cathartic as he weeps spontaneously (p. 49). His deepening identification with the Republican cause incites him to uncharacteristic outbursts of anger, as in his frenzied destruction of the hunger-striking shopkeeper's shelter back in Paris, considering it a mockery of the real concurrent fast by Republican prisoners (pp. 101-102); and his spontaneous praying in the street in Belfast on the morning of Bobby Sands's death (p. 102). He has been subsumed by Tyrone, his community and its struggle.

Further aspects of Antoine's response to betrayal merit comment. Firstly, the ephemeral nature of the relationship with Ireland and his 'outsider' status as a Parisian violinmaker and mourner at 'foreign' funerals connect with the sense of a deficient domiciliary fit. He cannot achieve an authentic 'Irishness', nor has he a settled home in his native France. It is this sense of an 'insufficiency' or lack which drives him to re-invent himself. Yet, paradoxically, his pursuit of self-

sufficiency is dependent upon others. In his quest for acceptance through the forging of an 'Irish' identity, his self-worth is contingent on the approval of Tyrone and the Republican community. It is ultimately unfeasible for him to function autonomously because he relies on their willingness to welcome and maintain him within the fold. A specific reference to insufficiency occurs in the intersection of Antoine's narrative in the middle of the chapter entitled 'Le Silence' in *Mon Traître* with Tyrone's perspective recounted in *Retour à Killybegs*. Having been deposited by Tyrone's wife Sheila at his Donegal cottage, Antoine helps Tyrone gather firewood: '« Ça suffit? » ai-je demandé, montrant ma charge. « Ça ne suffit jamais », a répondu Tyrone.' (*MT*, p. 172). The identical exchange opens Chapter 18 of the later novel, where Tyrone watches Antoine gingerly picking up the wood (RK, p. 245). This sense of incomplete trust recalls Chalandon's articulation of the most pernicious component of Donaldson's treachery and mendacity: 'When you lie to someone it means you don't trust him'.[162] The men's final hours together across both novels reveal the extent to which this 'never- enoughness' is emblematic of their interaction. Despite their dovetailed recollections and accretion of paternal and filial feeling, there is a palpable undertow of disjointedness, deflection and deviation. The embryonic lack of 'fit' between Antoine's early description of his profession as 'violin-maker' and Tyrone's interpretation of it as 'violence-maker' resurfaces in these overlapping scenes *(MT*, p. 19).

As Antoine ruminates on physical and psychological changes in the traitor, his internalisation of Tyrone's transgression leads him to erase his identity, replacing it with 'mon traître'. Significantly, it is the intensity of his gaze, not his words, which prompts Tyrone to ask what he wants to know, with Antoine simply responding: '« Rien »' (p. 175). His brief but profound questions distilling his suffering: '« Et notre amitié?'» and '« Elle était vraie? »' (p. 177) epitomise Wayne Booth's observation that 'every speech, every gesture narrates'.[163] Antoine's unanswered questions are smothered by Tyrone's rough embrace. There

[162] Eithne Shortall, 'IRA spy confessed and part of me died', <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ira-spy-confessed-and-part-of-me-died>, 1 May 2011 [accessed 30 July 2019].
[163] Wayne Booth, 'Types of Narration', in *Narratology: an introduction*, ed. by Susana Onega and José-Angel García Landa (Longman Group Ltd, 1996), pp. 145- 154 (p. 148).

remains a sense that Antoine has lost something of his recently- constructed Celtic identity through the demise of Tyrone's friendship. However, his attempt to forge a new self-sufficiency emerges in his promising new friendship with the spirited Francophile septuagenarian, Gráinne O'Doyle, whose vivacity supplants Tyrone's introspection.[164]

Despite the asymmetrical configuration of the friendship and the experiential gap between them, both characters are victims of self-spun legends: Antoine, in his uncritical enthusiasm for Ireland fanned by stereotypical symbolism, mesmeric tropes and Irish Republican ritual; and Tyrone, in his obdurate collusion with the myth of his spurious heroism and failure to acknowledge publicly his fatal shooting of Danny Finley. Antoine and Tyrone are impelled by very different circumstances and motives, including what might be termed their individual geopolitical predisposition. Antoine visits Ireland of his own volition, attracted by the story of Ireland's national struggle. Tyrone has no choice about his family's enforced migration after his father's death from the peaceful rural Irish Free State to urban Belfast. Antoine's familial context does not influence his decisions, living and working far from his original family home in the Vosges, although it could also be posited that the Meehans, and by extension the Thomas Ashe Club regulars, constitute his surrogate Irish family. He is, at least in his 'pre-Tyrone' phase, relatively self-sufficient. Tyrone, on the contrary, appears entrammelled in a sporadically vicious relationship with his own father. He becomes trapped in an inherited, nationalistic straitjacket. His grandfather's death at the hands of the British conferred the dignity of martyrdom on the Meehans. Four decades later, the sudden, tragic-comic demise of his father Pat, 'un homme sans importance', on his way to commit suicide (*RK*, p. 22), prefigures Tyrone's final moral disintegration as another noxious component of this ill-fated patriarchal struggle.

The ruthlessness and respect, ferocity and faithfulness, loathing and love, stereotypically embedded in the mentality of the freedom fighter/terrorist, are tempered in Tyrone's reflections and interactions with others. He thinks himself into the role of nationalist defender, seeking to demonstrate sufficient patriotic zeal

[164] Pauline Harris, 'Raw Writing: Truth and Treachery in the Novels of Sorj Chalandon', presented at *Betrayal-Trahison: an interdisciplinary graduate conference*, La Maison française, New York University, 9-10 November 2018, 1-14 (p. 5) (Unpublished paper).

and commitment. Projected onto this backcloth of socio-political volatility is the evolution of his friendships with Danny Finley and Antoine Chalons. Tyrone's relationships appear ultimately self-serving, including the manipulation of his wife Sheila to facilitate his spying activities in Paris. The asymmetry of his relationship with Finley is inevitable, given the latter's senior position in the Republican movement and the vicarious legendary status conferred on him through the killing of Finley's younger brother by the British. Danny is not an uncritical friend but a superior officer who demands uncompromising allegiance to the IRA, above and beyond their comradeship and their shared Catholicism. For Tyrone, Danny's presence and authority undoubtedly bestow legitimacy on, and access to, the skills and experience of Republican activism for which he must prove himself sufficient. Their joint internment in 1943 and subsequent involvement in the 1950s Irish Border campaigns reinforce their camaraderie, forged in the brutality of guerrilla warfare. Paradoxically, the most intimate sequence of images that Tyrone conveys of Danny is in his death throes: 'Il s'est relevé. Il s'est retourné, m'a regardé, bouche ouverte. Il a eu un geste. Il ne comprenait pas. Il était stupéfait', as he expires from Tyrone's bullet (p. 133). Yet even his loyalty and admiration for his friend cannot compel him to admit his guilt, although his conscience acknowledges it six times. Tyrone portrays his entanglement between the unwitting admiration of the local community and his own cowardice.

The trajectory moves from his pusillanimous concealment of the truth of Danny's death to his instrumentalisation of his relationship with Antoine. Tyrone's cynical manipulation of Antoine is later ferociously dissected by his IRA council interrogators: ' « À aucun moment, tu n'as parlé de ta trahison au Français…Tu l'as balancé aussi, Meehan. Tu as balancé cinq volunteers et un brave gars qui croyait bien faire »' (*MT*, p. 147). Ironically, it falls to hard-bitten IRA activists to denounce his unscrupulous treatment of the innocent Frenchman. More starkly, Tyrone remains unrepentant in his rationalisation of Antoine's involvement in his assignments as a MI5 and police informer. 'Je l'ai regardé. Je ne regrettais rien. En me servant de lui, je réparais son coup de folie…J'allais le protéger' (*RK*, p. 265). Tyrone's justification emanates from an instinct to fill a void, an insufficiency, deviously enmeshing Antoine in the Republicanism with which he has become infatuated.

Self Sufficiency: *Le Quatrième Mur*

The challenge to another young man's unexamined preconceptions derives from the benign and noble idealism of Georges's friend and mentor Sam, in stark contrast to Tyrone's sour cynicism. The new sense of purpose which Sam's mission lends Georges constitutes the core of *Le Quatrième Mur*. Its genesis connects with the 'Irish' novels through Chalandon's foreign assignments. However, the 'rawness' he draws upon in his exposition of Georges's experiences is of a different order from his portrayals of the duped Antoine and the perfidious Tyrone. *Mon Traître* and *Retour à Killybegs* represent a highly personalised exploration of his close relationship with Denis Donaldson before its traumatic collapse. Contrastingly, it is the visceral savagery of the Lebanese Civil War which contributed to Chalandon's psychological devastation. It is not that the adverse impact on the writer is less personal for him (as noted earlier, Chalandon's forename was originally Georges), but it emanates from a broader and more intricate geopolitical canvas. It may therefore be useful to conceive of 'the fourth wall' as an amalgam of the manifold boundaries which Georges crosses in his dogged determination to play his director's role. Like Antigone, his journey to a greater ontological sufficiency ends tragically.

Sam Akounis is not only an enigmatic and sagacious presence, but he also provides a judicious and humane model of self-sufficiency for Georges. He is a thoughtful, energetic, pacifist and sceptical Greek Jewish theatrical director and an exile from the Colonels' dictatorship. His siblings died in Birkenau concentration camp. His reflective cosmopolitanism transcends incestuous and doctrinaire campus politics; and his authentic experience of displacement and war overshadows fellow students' ideological squabbles and vicarious revolts. His discourse may even be considered as the impetus which breaks down the protective fourth wall: 'la frontière du réel' (*LQM*, p. 39). His impact on Georges is centrifugal, nurtured in the 'micro' environment of the university lecture theatre, with his robust challenge to the latter's inadequate understanding of Antigone. He had produced the play in his native Greece before the dictatorship and intended to see it at a festival in southern France. Although his embodiment of Antigone's courageous and obstinate defiance of protocol, convention and authority is most evident in persuading Georges to fulfil his ambition of staging the drama in Beirut,

he also exerts a more personal influence by introducing Georges to his future wife, Aurore. Sam's transformative effect on Georges evolves through their growing friendship, but perhaps his predominant trait is his repudiation of blithely inculcated tropes, discussed above. He concludes his Socratic exposition of the offensive absurdity of sloganeering by confronting Georges with the terrible reality of the Nazis by counselling '« Protège l'intelligence »', (p. 20). His warning encapsulates his raison d'être: the preservation of humanity's highest instincts.

Sam represents the spirit of resilience and resistance for Georges in Paris, and for Imane and the diverse troupe of amateur actors in Lebanon. Given his transnational heritage, he constitutes the embodiment of 'terre et fierté', his dual motivation for selecting *Antigone* (p. 88). The context for this citation signals a blurring of the boundary between narrative and reality: it is Sam's response to a query from a *Libération* journalist regarding his decision to stage the play in Lebanon. The unnamed reporter may represent Chalandon's anonymised self-insertion into the narrative, reflecting his own principle of erasing the 'Je' from his journalism. Equally, this brief professional allusion complements instances of Chalandon's more intensely personal and psychological imprint in the novel. It is mediated through Georges's intense fear in Lebanon and his irascible alienation from family and friends on his return to Paris. His physical, psychological and aesthetic journey may be a sublimation of Chalandon's own desire to overcome the trauma of his experience of Lebanon through art.

Sam possesses the ability to strip away atavistic accretions, as in his frank self-assessment as '« un juif de Salonique »': neither a *Résistant,* a hero nor a legend, he is Greek through exodus, French by preference and a theatrical director because it enables him to invent characters when he has exhausted his ideas (p. 78). Illustrative of the tenor of his opposition to Georges's police- baiting, Sam makes history matter beyond doctrines, ideologies and slogans. He strives to articulate how his heterogenous ethnic, cultural and religious biography has shaped his conviction that violence is an index of weakness. His instincts incline towards purposeful collaboration and inclusivity, through his resolve to direct *Antigone* in a war zone. He wants to incorporate all participants' voices and make peace 'entre cour et jardin' (pp. 87-88).

One specific chapter delineates salient aspects of Sam's character and its impact on others. Chapter 8, 'Jean Anouilh,' presents several significant facets, notably his perspective on his friendship with Georges. Firstly, the hospital scene depicts Sam ravaged by an inoperable cancer, his jaundiced, gaunt appearance shocking Georges. Moreover, the latter's reference to his three- year- long neglect of Sam during his friend's sojourn in Lebanon reveals his fallacious assumption that their friendship could be maintained from Paris. Furthermore, Sam's lack of rancour illustrates his conciliatory nature and his amusing tendency to attribute roles to his visitors as a proxy director, motivated by his ambition for *Antigone*. That 'Antigone va être jouée à Beyrouth' is not in question, for Sam has spent two years assembling his cast to perform on the Beirut peace line (p. 95). His entrusting of its staging to Georges: '« Tes personnages sont prêts. Ils t'attendent »' (p. 96), marks his transfer of the 'ownership' of his vision, imbuing Georges with a sense of inviolable obligation, a mark of the sufficiency of Sam's faith in him. The chapter reaches its climax through the working of complementary realities: stoical, febrile Sam and disconsolate and helpless Georges, fuelled by Sam's fight, not for his own ebbing existence, but for the fulfilment of his theatrical aspiration. In Sam's waning presence, Georges is empowered to imagine, and to assent to, what will become the posthumous realisation of Sam's project. This moment constitutes an ontological fault line for Georges, between his status as Sam's mentee, friend and artistic legatee, and his conjugal and paternal responsibilities. As a point of contrast, Antoine does not have quite the same sense of obligation to Tyrone: it is a duty which is self-imposed rather than solicited.

It is impossible to isolate the precise psychological and intellectual processes inclining Georges to reject his settled homelife and to cleave to its antithesis of war-ravaged Beirut. From Chalandon's perspective, it may represent his attempt to comprehend his traumatic encounters with death in Lebanon. Yet it is in this cauldron of ancient hatreds that his character discovers purpose, self-sufficiency and affirmation. Shocking and brutal though his experience is, he is not living it alone but accompanied by others: the disparate members of the *Antigone* cast, local leaders, and in his last moments, a Palestinian stranger. The Phalangist adversary whom he kills has a human face. However, his most insidious foe is the psychological alienation of those returning from conflict. Although his wife

Aurore glimpses vestiges of his turmoil, his is a solitary agony. On the eve of his final departure for Beirut, ostensibly enveloped in family intimacy, his anguished reflection: 'Nous étions décimés. La guerre avait rendu ma femme comme veuve. Elle avait fait de notre fille la moitié d'une enfant' exposes the toxic 'long reach' of a distant war (p. 301). With 'J'ai quitté leur vie le lendemain' (p. 303), he is perfunctorily erasing himself from those for whom he had returned to France. He is also cerebrally spent, with no inclination even to write meaningfully to them. His attempt to leave a drawing for his daughter ends in failure. His remark, 'j'ai éteint les lumières de notre appartement' (p. 304), marks his extinction of his 'Paris' life, finding no peace in peace. This painful but necessary divesting is a prelude to his embrace of 'une nouvelle terre, et une nouvelle famille' (pp. 156, 171). It launches him on the mayhem-strewn path to a certain degree of emotional and intellectual self-sufficiency and self-knowledge. That the novel begins and ends with Georges's death signals an indissoluble connection with Chalandon's own professional destiny in Lebanon, foreshortened by his trauma in the refugee camps.

Conclusions and Reflections

The grouping of these three novels under the rubric of 'War Wounds' proceeds from their unifying elements: they are Chalandon's fictional testimonies to his experience as a foreign correspondent in Northern Ireland and Lebanon; and they explore the impact of violent conflict upon individuals' motivations, decisions and destinies. He scrutinises the 'local' dynamics provoked by the wider momentum of the Northern Irish Troubles and Lebanese Civil War. His reclamation of the geopolitical as a means of excavating the deeply personal recalls Blanchot's observation above, on the centrality of events which become the story. The narrative layers and overlap connecting *Mon Traître* and *Retour à Killybegs* reveal that the most enduring injuries are neither physical nor visible but reside in the anguish and self-reproach provoked by a panoply of betrayals: the turmoil created by the informant and the consequences for his guileless victim; mendacity by omission; and abandonment through alienation.

The ample vantage point provided by the thematic model of space, sight and self-sufficiency illuminates the intersections and points of departure accessible to a range of spectators observing the same scenes. Moreover, the three elements are

congruent with the notion of the spect-actor writing his or her own narrative within his chosen arena, inspired by and infused with, his or her own perceptions and projections. Equally, space and sight incorporate the physical arenas in which the consequences of the protagonists' decisions are exposed and examined. These sensory dimensions interrogate their psychological and emotional maturation; their self-awareness and degrees of empathy; their roles in others' lives; and their contribution to, and mitigation of, the rupture of trust. Self-preservation and self-sufficiency, a more nuanced concept, frame the quest for wholeness which, although partly achieved by Antoine and Georges, is ultimately inaccessible to Tyrone. His solitude and self- abandonment reflect the sombre dwindling of his life span among the ruins of a blighted friendship. Ben Jelloun characterises this deficiency as: 'La trahison, c'est manquer à la foi donnée à quelqu'un', the traitor as the unworthy repository of trust.[165]

Finally, Chalandon's experience of the complex pressures exerted on individuals' identities and relationships in politically volatile settings sculpts his vulnerable characters. His resolve not to write 'about' but 'because of' motivates his reconstruction of their visible and hidden war wounds. Mediated through contested space, ambiguous perception, self-delusion and self-fulfilment, his protagonists are an index of his psychological cicatrisation, rather than an unqualified and definitive catharsis. Although the geopolitical dimension of his journalism is most prominent in these narratives, it dramatically permeates the problematic family dynamics of his four 'father' novels through the reclamation and reconstitution of memory, discussed in Chapter Four.

[165] Tahar Ben Jelloun, *Éloge de l'amitié, Ombre de la trahison*, p. 128.

Chapter Four: Performative Paternity: Creativity, Curation and Missed Encounters in *Profession du père, Le Petit Bonzi, La Légende de nos pères* and *Enfant de Salaud*

'Qui va fleurir nos tombes pour se sentir plus vivant ?' *(LLP*, p. 174)

Introduction

Synopses of the Novels

Le Petit Bonzi (2005)

This novel is inspired by Chalandon's own severe childhood speech defect. Stammering twelve-year old Jacques Rougeron is guided by the eponymous imaginary Bonzi, a little boy's voice in his head and his confidant and companion. Bonzi supports him in his austere home life and his boisterous school environment, but most importantly he helps him to marshal his vocabulary. Immersed in Chalandon's own experience, the predominant dynamic is one of casual domestic cruelty, searingly reprised and amplified in *Profession du père*. Set in a council estate near Lyon in 1964, it exudes grinding poverty. The family consists of a volatile father, Lucien; an oppressed mother, Louise, who astutely 'reads' her husband's mood swings; and a timid only son, Jacques, constantly wary of offending his father, while trying to alleviate his mother's drudgery. Jacques's battle to overcome his stammer is constructed around his attempts to utter his *own* words spontaneously.

Under Bonzi's influence, Jacques learns to amass synonyms by writing a secret diary. This enables him note what he cannot easily express verbally and affords him temporary sanctuary from Lucien's rages, exacerbated by his unemployed status after falling from scaffolding. Jacques's secret reading and writing reinforce his resilience to his cold, shabby home, inadequate nourishment, his powerless mother and bullying father. However, the well-intentioned but maladroit intervention of Jacques's teacher, Monsieur Mandrieu, jolts Lucien into supporting his son. A *rapprochement* finally occurs when Jacques is encouraged to read aloud from his father's scrapbook on Russian space travel. Concluding more optimistically than it began, the novel portrays Jacques's developing engagement with his friends and parents through Bonzi's influence.

La Légende de nos pères (2009)

Set in 2003, the narrative is related from the perspective of Marcel Frémaux, a former primary school teacher from Lille and journalist who becomes a 'family biographer'. He is motivated by wanting even the most unremarkable lives to be appreciated. Responding to Lupuline Beuzaboc's request to record the exploits of her father, Tesclin Beuzaboc, ostensibly a Resistance veteran, Marcel gradually learns that the old man's story is false. His surname was Ghesquière, not Beuzaboc at the time of his supposed heroism; and he sustained his leg injury not in battle, but on the railway. Marcel's relationship with Beuzaboc/Ghesquière, now sullied by his client's falsehood, is further embittered by the fact that his own late father Pierre Frémaux had been a true *Résistant*. Pierre had never spoken about his actions in the *maquis*, nor about his subsequent ordeal as a deportee, and is depicted by Marcel as a distant figure. Beuzaboc/Ghesquière feels compelled to admit the truth. Although Marcel's first instinct is to write a truthful account of the facts, he decides to create an embellished, fictional version, motivated by conflicting reasons: to preserve the old man's credibility in the eyes of his daughter; and to incarcerate him in his own duplicity. The disclosure takes place at a family celebration to mark the publication of the 'biography', when, entrapped by Frémaux to whom he had confessed everything, Beuzaboc is resigned to telling the truth.

Profession du père (2015)

The story is narrated by twelve-year old Émile Choulans who lives with his mother Jeanne and father André in a modest apartment during the 1960s, in an unnamed city, probably Lyon. The novel begins and ends at his father's funeral, accompanied by his mother and his brother Yves, who makes a single appearance. Émile's relationship with his father develops within a progressively improbable web of fabricated heroism and derring-do, as André presents himself variously as a judo champion, a footballer, a spy and even a special adviser to Général De Gaulle. He also creates a godfather figure for his son: Ted, a former Army friend who is allegedly an American spy and whose mission is to support the right-wing Organisation Armée Secrète (OAS), committed to French rule in Algeria. However, a darker aspect of André's relationship emerges in his brutal physical training to prepare Émile for OAS activism and 'undercover' errands around the

city. More disturbingly, André incites him to 'recruit' one of his schoolmates, Luca, whose family has lived in Algeria. Luca complies with Émile's instructions, but his theft of his father's money and the family car inevitably involve the police and Luca is despatched to boarding school. Émile's capacity to emulate some of his father's 'mythologies' comes to a frightening conclusion when he threatens his father with his own handgun. The collision between his father's obsession with his own inscription into political events and his son's physical and emotional needs underpins the narrative. While taking pride in obeying his father's instructions, he is conscious of their impact on his education. His mother's reaction to almost every outlandish action of her increasingly delusional husband is: '« Tu connais ton père »'. She scopes out her own domain within the home and, with Émile's support, accommodates André's cruelty. The later chapters are voiced by Émile, as a young adult, husband and father. They follow the physical and psychological decline of his father, immured in misanthropic misery and tended by his distracted mother, who reclaims something of herself after decades of muted deference to her husband's insidiously destructive narcissism.

Enfant de Salaud (2021)

Written from the perspective of an adult narrator, this is undoubtedly Chalandon's most unalloyed autobiographical novel. The title originates in his grandfather's retort to his wife: ' « C'est un enfant de salaud, et il faut qu'il le sache »', quashing her protest about revealing the truth about his father Jean to the ten- year old boy (*ES*, p. 33). Although perturbed by his grandfather's exasperated reaction to Jean's supposed exploits: '« Ton père, je l'ai même vu habillé en Allemand»', his son has never dared to ask him directly about his wartime past (p. 32). A quarter of a century later, in March 1987, two momentous events occur. Now a journalist, the unnamed narrator discovers his father's prison record and his release papers in his grandmother's repository containing family photographs and other mementos; and he is assigned by his newspaper to cover the Klaus Barbie trial in Lyon. He learns that his father had been sentenced on 18 August 1945 to a year's imprisonment and stripped of his citizenship rights for five years for "des actes nuisibles à la défense nationale" by the Court of Justice in Lille; and that he had been taken into custody in December 1944 and released in February 1946 (p. 77). Desperate to have full disclosure of his father's arrest and incarceration and having learned from the

authorities in Lille that his father's dossier must remain closed for a century, he enlists the assistance of his friend Alain, a former fellow activist and university law lecturer. They drive from Lyon to Lille, where Alain, the son of a true *Résistant*, obtains a copy of all documentation pertaining to his father's trial and imprisonment, including detailed interview notes by several investigating officers. From this point, the narrator's perusal and processing of his father's bewildering and damning actions interweave with his reporting of the Barbie trial. He had acceded to his father's request to attend the court, hoping that the survivors' testimonies might move him to admit to the truth. This intertwining of narratives becomes increasingly excruciating. The strain of reporting the gruelling facts of the trial is exacerbated by the narrator's appalled absorption of his father's collaborationist past and his recruitment to various pro-Nazi militias, including the Charlemagne Division. Equally discomfiting is the fact that the victims of Barbie's crimes were Jewish orphans from the Lyon area over which Barbie had jurisdiction, and the home city of the Chalandon family. Moreover, records of Jean's police interviews flatly contradict the stories he had told his son. The narrator's unrelenting and meticulous quest for truth about Barbie galvanises him to confront his father with the evidence of his guilt and his lifelong lying to his son.

Section One: Principal Conceptual Frameworks for Chalandon's Idea of the Father

Analyses by Jacques Rancière and Paul Auster provide comprehensive interpretative perspectives on key thematic currents across the four novels. Pertinent to the development of the relationships between André and Émile, Marcel Frémaux and his client Beuzaboc, Lucien and Jacques and Jean and the narrator-son is Emiliano Battista's interpretation of Rancière's observation of the equality of intelligences as 'a power of power of language and thought'.[166] Equally germane to the four narratives is Rancière's postulation of 'le désir de voir ce qui se passe de l'autre côté, d'être initié à une autre vie', cited in my Introduction.[167] Moreover, the militaristic discourse prevalent in the utterances of André and Jean

[166] Emiliano Battista, ed., 'Editor's Preface', *Dissenting Words: Interviews with Jacques Rancière* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), p. xx).
[167] Jacques Rancière, *Et tant pis pour les gens fatigués,* p.38.

is integral to their assumed identities and accords with Rancière's delineation of the empowering appropriation of a form of speech, enabling the speaker to recount his own experience differently.[168]

The critiques of Rancière and Auster possess a conceptual complementarity. Rancière delineates what is necessary for the individual's emancipation: 'ce qui compte justement c'est de se désadapter, de se désidentifier par rapport à un mode d'identité, par un mode d'être'.[169] In his examination of his relationship with his late father, Auster, an American critic, novelist, poet and filmmaker, reflects upon the coalescence of solitude and memory as a catalyst for the present.[170] It is important to emphasise, however, that his approach is predominantly personal, rather than theoretical. Although formulated several decades apart and proceeding from different cultural contexts, both commentators scrutinise the necessary traversal of states of being to gain personal and artistic emancipation: Rancière in the ascension from the spectator's seat to the actor's stage, discussed above; and Auster in his working through his own thoughts 'towards the world' in his physical and intellectual preparations for writing (Auster, p. 148). Another key connection is the notion of thwarted or unrealisable promise, addressed by Rancière in relation to time, nostalgia and loss.[171] This idea also infuses Auster's perception of his father's expectations of him. The struggle against a frustrated *épanouissement* motivates all four fictional fathers in their attempts to forge and project a 'habitable' self-image. Both critics' perspectives illuminate the tension between the assumed status of André, Lucien, Beuzaboc and Jean and their potential for self-invention and resistance to 'received' and constraining categorisation. In a further parallel, Rancière's configuration of the notion of the scene as 'la rencontre la plus directe du plus particulier et du plus universel' (Rancière 2012, p. 124) resonates in Auster's objectification of himself as a writer facing infinite creative possibilities within the enclosed space of his room (Auster, pp. 145-146). The fathers' disruption of their 'normal' identity occurs in various confined spaces

[168] Jacques Rancière, *La méthode de l'égalité: Entretien avec Laurent Jeanpierre et Dork Zabunyan* (Montrouge: Bayard Éditions, 2012), p. 134.

[169] Jacques Rancière, *Et tant pis pour les gens fatigués*, p. 625.

[170] Paul Auster, *The Invention of Solitude* (London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1982), p. 149.

[171] Jacques Rancière, *La méthode de l'égalité*, p. 109.

which demonstrate their ability to 'boss their space', assisted by specific strategies: André deploys diverse *personae* and Lucien moves from his tradesman's tools to the compilation of his scrapbook.

Objectifying his authorial self, Auster dissects his physical position: he has spent the greater part of his adult life 'hunched over a small rectangle of wood, concentrating on an even smaller rectangle of paper' (p. 104). He juxtaposes the cramped dimensions of his New York apartment with the panoply of choices before him. The notion of the writer's room and his relationship to it anticipates Haïtian poet and novelist Dany Laferrière's experience of writing in his cramped room in his adopted Montreal, although in Laferrière's case his space constitutes a more positive site of deliverance.[172] Auster's amplification of the solitude of his space renders it dynamically present. His observation that 'Every book is an image of solitude…so that with each word one reads in a book one might say to oneself that he is confronting a particle of that solitude' (p. 145), recurs in the essentially solitary figures of the fathers, whose fantasies are their single conduit to the outside world.

Auster's paradoxical title of his account of his father, 'Portrait of an Invisible Man' prompts reflection on the extent to which he and Chalandon consider their fathers' *presence*. Contrasting with Chalandon's account of an overbearing and ubiquitous figure, Auster refers to the impending or actual absence of his restless father: 'His inability to sit still, to make small talk, "to relax". It made you nervous to be with him. You always felt he was on the verge of leaving' (p. 58). The sense of accumulated paternal identities preoccupies both writers. He recounts that clearing his father's house led him to discover who he 'really' was beneath the accretion of selfishness and emotional detachment. In 'The nature of his life had prepared the world for his death' (p. 6), he evokes the sombre parallel between the deceased father he did not really know, and the absence of his imprint on even his most personal possessions. His characterisation of his father as 'a perpetual outsider, a tourist of his own life' is progressively substantiated through the discovery of his considerable domestic neglect (Auster, p. 9). Chalandon's terse characterisation of

[172] Dany Laferrière, *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer* (Paris: Le Serpent à Plumes, 1985), pp. 153-154.

his father as ‘ma première trahison’ encapsulates his rancour and frustration at not knowing the essence of his father (Laurent, p.173). It could be posited that the unpredictability of Chalandon’s and Auster’s fathers, and their sons’ desire for self-validation through writing resides, in Gunn’s pertinent question, discussed in Chapter One, ‘where do I belong?’ in their quest for a sustainable identity. Aspects of Bloom’s ‘anxiety of influence’ are salient to an understanding of Chalandon’s connection with his work. Interpreting André Malraux, Harold Bloom’s observation: ‘The poet…is haunted by a voice with which words must be harmonized’ appears consonant with the characters’ search for their own expression.[173] Equally, his assertion: ‘Modern poets are necessarily dualists, because this misery, this poverty is the starting point of their art….Poetry may or may not work out its own salvation in a man, but it comes only to those in dire imaginative need of it’ (p. 35), is highly relevant to Chalandon’s own emotionally impoverished youth, and to the instincts driving the fictional fathers to reinvigorate, recover or re-imagine their sense of self.

Their capacity for self-invention emerges through autobiography, as they each scaffold and enact what purports to be their ‘life story’: André and Lucien in ‘real time’ and Beuzaboc and Jean through recollection. Indeed, their self-dramatisation is redolent of the process of ‘denteler’, the term employed by Marcel for ‘pinking’ or personalising his clients’ narratives (*LLP*, p. 28). Applicable to André, Beuzaboc and Jean, whose stories exhibit a marked ontological shift, Cowley delineates the preliminary work required by the autobiographer as ‘the trawling and dredging of memory, the exploration of 'narrative links between past and present…with a view to assembling as coherent a package as possible’ (Cowley, p. 3). André’s obsessive self-reinvention depends on his continuous sculpting of a plausible *persona,* while Beuzaboc and Jean re-formulate their past for current public consumption. Additionally, Levy's definition of autobiography as ‘self-regarding life writing’ assumes potency when viewed through the prism of the fathers’ individual priorities (Cowley, p. 157). Paula Backscheider’s observation: ‘Every biography...bears the trace of what lured the writer into the investment’ can be expanded to highlight Chalandon’s characterisation of the palimpsestic effects

[173] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 26.

of fatherhood.[174] Their stories proceed from their resolve to edit or dissent from their 'settled' and known identities.

This Rancièresque 'désadaptation' possesses a subtle link with journalism in the lives of the principal characters in the four novels, in terms of how they 'read', incorporate or reject externally reported events. The former journalist Marcel Frémaux in *La Légende de nos Pères* is not a father but, as a 'biographe familial,' he rescues his clients' memories from oblivion. As a practising journalist, the narrator of *Enfant de Salaud* encounters an awkward tension between his courtroom reporting and his 'management' of his father who mocks his profession while bizarrely assuming some of its trappings. More fundamentally, it establishes a raw confrontation between his professional and subjective selves. André's and Lucien's responses to news stories derive from their antipathy to 'imposed' culture, an aversion shared by Chalandon's and Auster's fathers. Yet his characters' anti-intellectualism gives them the freedom to discover new purpose in their lives. André directs and produces his own fictitious part in contemporary events; Lucien schools himself in the Soviet space programme; and Beuzaboc and Jean deploy their self-aggrandising story-telling skills to entertain their children. The fathers react differently to reported current events. In his mounting agitation about the Algiers military coup, André views any news medium as mendacious provocation, knocking *France-Soir* into the vegetable peelings and swearing at De Gaulle's television broadcast (*PP*, pp. 15, 18). Mistrustful of the established press, he creates his own 'newstream,' including fabricating official responses to his letters and bogus walkie-talkie communication. Lucien, on the other hand, avidly embraces and personalises space travel developments. Through the joint compilation of his own 'book' with Jacques, he becomes his own 'journalist'. Beuzaboc's involvement with journalism is more direct. His waspish exchanges with Marcel reveal his constant need to monitor his responses, to control the interviews, and to defend an existence he never possessed. Jean dismisses not only witness testimonies (although he is clearly moved by some), but also what he perceives as erroneous preconceptions about the occupied France he knew.

[174] Paula R. Backscheider, *Reflections on Biography* (ISBN-13 978-1492260363, 2013), p. 35.

That identity is rooted in action and experience is particularly evident in *Profession du père*. Chalandon's naming of Émile recalls Jean-Jacques Rousseau's eponymous work. A parallel exists between Rousseau's philosophy -the importance of practical experiences of life during childhood- and the experience of the young Émile Choulans. By disparaging reading and culture more generally, 'recruiting' his son into an anti-De Gaulle campaign and involving him in disseminating propaganda and 'intelligence-gathering', André is unwittingly enacting an aspect of Rousseau's philosophy of exposing the child to the world, so that he learns not from books, but from his interactions with 'real' life. Equally, Rousseau's observation: 'Défiez-vous de ces cosmopolites qui vont chercher loin dans leurs livres des devoirs qu'ils dédaignent de remplir autour d'eux. Tel Philosophe aime les Tartares, pour être dispensé d'aimer ses voisins', signals his contempt for bookish, élitist hypocrisy, an instinct underpinning André's anti-cultural disposition.[175] However, it is notable that Lucien combines practical experience and 'pedagogy' as he 'translates' his tools into more comprehensible terms for Jacques in a scene examined below. Jean's identity as a patriot resembles André's, but he has much less control over it. The story he has espoused for so long -literally his 'cover' version- will be critically undermined by emerging new evidence.

Memory and temporality can be considered through a dual prism of geopolitics and transgenerational interaction. Each father discovers motivation and self-worth within a wider geopolitical context. Contemporary international politics is vividly foregrounded in *Profession du Père*. André Choulans embodies Rancière's spectator-actor transformation in his shift from an acerbic recipient of radio and press coverage of the failed Algerian *coup* to an ebullient paramilitary strategist with his apprentice son Émile as 'soldats d'appartement' (*PP*, p. 63). 'Domesticating' a colonial crisis from his apartment, André is the undisputed lead actor and director of an imaginary campaign to further the cause of the French Right in Algeria by ordering De Gaulle's assassination.

[175] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile ou De l'Éducation, Livres I-II* (Independent publisher: ISBN: 979-8503656633, 2021), p. 14.

The possibility of a connection with Albert Camus merits exploration, given that the fictional catalyst is the Algerian conflict. There is no current evidence of a conscious link, nor of any allusion by Chalandon to a *camusien* influence. However, while there is no similarity between Camus's support for a confederation of France and Algeria and André's right-wing views on French control of its colony, some parallels are discernible in Olivier Todd's biography of Camus. André's son Émile befriends Luca Biglioni, whose Italian father had owned a hardware shop in Oran. The young Camus assisted his uncle in an Italian-owned store. Émile's mother is subdued and dutiful, dominated by André, although protective of their son. Camus's mother appears mute in her interactions, yet highly solicitous of him: 'La mère d'Albert ne s'affole pas [he had suffered tubercular spitting of blood] …Le silence les unit, comme un secret'.[176] Todd describes how Camus wrote on his 'fiche' that his father had died in the war (Todd, p. 49). Although Émile's response is 'sans profession', it is evident from André's deepening immersion in the details of the Algerian war and his increasingly military self-projection that he considers himself as a combatant. There is also a similarity with the robust training routine imposed by André on Émile. Todd observes 'Camus ne peut concevoir un fils différent de lui. Il obligera Jean à jouer au foot. Jean préférera les échecs. Très algérien, Camus veut faire un homme de son fils' (pp. 742-743).

In *Enfant de Salaud*, Jean positions himself among the spectators at the Barbie war crimes trial, where the past and the present compete in the quest for truth. He is also located at the conjunction of time and space: when his criminal past surfaces contemporaneously with the trial; and where, in home city of Lyon, Barbie authorised the torture, deportation and death of hundreds of victims. The painful parallel between Jean's and Barbie's actions and their reverberating impact is concisely acknowledged by the narrator: 'Pour moi, vos sorts sont liés', referring to the initial emergence of his father's notorious past in March 1987, only weeks before Barbie's trial (*ES*, p. 209). The boundaries and 'bleed' between the interlocking dramas of the official trial and the narrator's questioning of his evasive father are examined in Section Four below.

[176] Olivier Todd, *Albert Camus: Une Vie* (Éditions Gallimard et Olivier Todd, 1996), p. 61.

While the geopolitical backdrop to *Profession du père* provides the opportunity for André to inscribe himself in history, and the 'space-race' motivates Lucien to become warmer towards Jacques, the conjunction of transgenerational engagement and geopolitics is more nuanced and tentacular in *La Légende de nos pères,* and more explicit and concentrated in *Enfant de Salaud.* The connections between Marcel and his late father Pierre, between Marcel and his biographical subject Beuzaboc, between Beuzaboc and daughter Lupuline and between Marcel, Beuzaboc and Lupuline reside in the historical significance and experience of the Resistance during the Occupation. The characters' diverse perceptions of the past define the pathway of their relationships. The revision and exploitation of legend and myth coalesce around the phenomenon of 'résistancialisme'. Several historians observe that France required a unifying narrative to counteract and rationalise the trauma of the German Occupation. Maud Anne Bracke states that the country's perspective on its wartime experience was 'characterized by nostalgia', and that 'collective memory' discloses 'a multitude of narratives…accepted in the public domain'.[177] She cites Henri Rousso's extensive analysis of the dynamics of *résistancialisme:* 'the notion of resistance was placed at the centre of France's national identity but disconnected from the actual historical phenomenon that was the resistance during World War 2' (Bracke, p. 9). The fluidity and transience of identity and its enshrining for posterity impel Chalandon's characters at different levels. Robert Gildea's framing of the perceived restorative and conciliatory power of the story of the French Resistance as 'a founding myth, that allowed the French to reinvent themselves', is congruent with Marcel's status as 'biographe familial'.[178] However, the limitations of, and strains within, the perpetuation of a national epic are trenchantly exemplified in collaborator Jean's persistent self-representation as a French patriot, ostensibly sabotaging the enemy's war effort as a Resistance partisan in German uniform. Gildea's emphasis on the centrality of the narrative of the French Resistance to French identity corroborates Bracke's observations. He delineates the obstacles to veterans' transmission of their story onto relatives: 'This "hereditary resistance" is, however, not always as

[177] Maud Anne Bracke, 'From Politics to Nostalgia: The Transformation of War Memories in France during the 1960s-1970s', *European History Quarterly* 41 (1) (2011), 5-24 (p. 6).
[178] Robert Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows: A new History of the French Resistance* (Faber and Faber, 2016), p. 2.

straightforward as it might appear. Resisters who had suffered arrest, torture and deportation were not always inclined to tell their story to their partners or children for fear of stirring up the pain or being misunderstood'. The barriers Gildea describes are perceptible in Pierre's downplaying of his wartime experiences to Marcel, while confiding more expansively in his elder son, Lucas. There is also the jeopardy of misunderstanding or even wilful misrepresentation, as in Beuzaboc's involvement in a non-Resistance related railway accident. More significantly for Marcel's role, Gildea identifies the challenge for the biographer to gain the trust of his subject in sensitive circumstances (Gildea, p. 480). In the case of the son's investigation in *Enfant de Salaud*, his reluctance arises from his fear that his suspicions about his father's wartime past will prove to be well-founded. He fears the consequences for himself of exposing his father's mendacity, culminating in the devastating realisation that his father had always lied to him.

Henry Rousso's seminal study, *Le Syndrome de Vichy*, examines the multifaceted impact of the Occupation, and the spectrum of social, political and cultural responses to the nation's trauma: 'Le syndrome de Vichy est l'ensemble hétérogène des symptômes, des manifestations….qui révèlent l'existence du traumatisme engendré par l'Occupation, particulièrement celui lié aux divisions internes'.[179] These internal conflicts are palpable, not only in the fault lines which surface between Marcel and Beuzaboc, but also between Frémaux *père et fils*, in that Marcel feels excluded from Pierre's Resistance story and hence from his trauma. Equally, Rousso's observation on 'l'*actualité* de cette période, dans son incroyable présence, tournant parfois à l'obsession…champ culturel envahi par les images d'un passé trouble et fascinant' (Rousso, p. 9), is reflected in the tension between Marcel's journalistic instinct to test Beuzaboc's narrative against the archives, and the old man's determination to adhere to his story. It is also discernible in the fascination exerted by the figure of Klaus Barbie on those present in the courtroom, including Jean: 'Il vibrait à la présence de Barbie' (*ES*, p. 215). The presence of this disturbing and fascinating past to which Rousso alludes is also dramatically articulated by Barbie's lawyer Vergès, prefacing his call for his

[179] Henry Rousso, *Le Syndrome de Vichy: de 1944 à nos jours* (Éditions du Seuil, 1990), p. 18.

client's acquittal: '«La France doit s'affranchir de ces années d'occupation et cesser d'entretenir un trouble malsain avec cette époque »' (*ES*, p. 302).

Rousso's assertion: 'même étudiée à l'échelle d'une société, la mémoire se révèle comme une organisation de l'oubli' (Rousso, p. 12), problematises the position of the 'biographe familial' and the intentions of his client: how does the biographer penetrate the memory of the subject who is 'managing' his amnesia to create false memory? It also serves to reframe Jean's exploits as a knowing concatenation of appropriated stories. Indeed, Rousso's characterisation of the Resistance in the decades after the Liberation as 'un monde de limbes où la légende se mêle à l'organisation' appears consonant with the true *Résistant* Pierre's progressive dissolution, replaced by the tenebrous figure Brumaire, and by Marcel's attempts to recover the 'man' from the 'idea'. Rousso draws this distinction between the resisters who belong to a banal and markedly unheroic reality, 'l'histoire telle qu'elle a été vécue' and 'l'histoire telle qu'elle se rêve' (p. 110). Regarding Jean's 'truths' analysed below, it appears that his refusal to endure his humdrum existence led him to concoct increasingly implausible events: 'il avait survécu parce que personne ne s'était opposé à ses rêves… Enfant, puis jeune homme, puis homme, puis père, il s'était forgé une cuirasse fantasque pour se protéger de tous' (*ES*, p. 269). It could be posited that Jean constitutes an authentically disturbing embodiment of the struggle between Rousso's 'lived' and 'imagined' experiences.

The enactment of masculinity is highly germane to Chalandon's characterisation of the fathers. Michael Kelly perceives post- Liberation reconstruction through the prism of the re-building of masculine identity.[180] In the 'maleness of the humiliation', he perceives a dual failure: that Frenchmen had been defeated in what they held in highest regard, work and war; and that they could not protect French women, most notably their nation (Kelly, p. 119). Expanding upon Kelly's observations, Luc Capodevila locates the notion of male identity through a 'virility myth', enacted through warfare. He casts the French experience of defeat, occupation and collaboration as a crisis not only of national identity, but also of

[180] Michael Kelly, 'The Reconstruction of Masculinity at the Liberation' in *The Liberation of France: Image and Event*, ed. by H. R. Kedward and Nancy Wood (Oxford and Washington: Berg publishers, 1995), pp. 117-128 (117).

masculinity and potency.[181] In these terms, Marcel is doubly sterile: unlike his father Pierre and Beuzaboc, he cannot father progeny, and neither he nor Beuzaboc can produce a personal commemorative story. Problematising the opportunities for demonstrating masculinity in a time of war, Capodevila notes: '…the constant call for mobilisation, but not the same mobilisation: the French state proclaimed a national revolution, one for the collaborators; another clarion call came from German voices in the Propaganda Abteilung…; another came from those -the Free French and the Resistance- who fought on; another came from the Allies' (Capodevila, p. 427). The diffuse nature of the call to arms reinforces the ambiguity and fluidity of the 'patriot' and his 'cause', perceptible in André's vicarious military strategising, albeit in the context of a later conflict. Equally, Capodevila refers to the dysfunctional relationships which many young men who fought for the occupying forces had with their father, either through emotional deprivation or physical absence (p. 440). This deficiency is particularly relevant to the fathers' psyche in *Profession du père* and *Enfant de Salaud.* In mitigation, Tony Le Tissier alludes to what might be considered a compensatory fraternity discernible in the young French Waffen-SS fighters, detectable in Jean's story, in their shared vision with other European soldiers of an anti-Bolshevik army.[182]

In relation to Rousso's configuration of the 'lived' and the 'imagined', a distortion of reality is perceptible in the appearance of his father Pierre's ghost during Marcel's interview with Beuzaboc in *La Légende de nos pères,* and in Émile's discovery of André's comrade Ted's cinematic status in *Profession du père.* In *Enfant de Salaud,* it is employed in the depiction of Jean's watery demise, allowing the traumatic imagination, as Arva defines it, 'to translate an unspeakable state - pain- into a readable image'.[183] This hyperreality, resonating in the 'facts' of Ted's ostensibly heroic backstory, in the apparition of the defunct Pierre and in Jean's final fluvial evasion, provides Chalandon with a range of nuances to articulate a hitherto silent and problematic story. Moreover, in relation to his

[181] Luc Capodevila, 'The Quest for Masculinity in a Defeated France, 1940-1945', *Contemporary European History* 10 3 (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 423-445 (p. 423).
[182] Tony Le Tissier, *SS-Charlemagne, The 33rd Waffen-Grenadier Division of the SS* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2010), p. 15.
[183] Eugene L. Arva, 'Writing the Vanishing Real: Hyperreality and magical realism', *Journal of Narrative Theory,* 38, 1 (Winter 2008), 60-85 (p. 74).

evolving idea of the father, he evokes an incorporeality which shapes paternal vestiges and filial reality in the present. His distortion of reality may equally perform a reparatory function to mitigate the trauma of a distant or violent father.

Section Two: Corrosive and Creative Self-Invention in *Profession du Père* and *Le Petit Bonzi*

André and Lucien are configured through an intricate combination of identity curation, spatial dominance and performance, in their attempt to defy or surpass 'officially' sanctioned truths. Commencing with *Profession du père*, the impact of André's eclectic personalities is embedded within its structure in the register he deploys.

The second chapter, 'Le Putsch' (Dimanche 23 avril 1961), heralds the launch of his adventure, shaped by a series of self-affirming experiences. Impelled by his vicarious intervention onto the geopolitical stage, his vision for France dwarfs the routine frustrations of his family relationships. Until Chapter Eight, 'Le Gardien de But', he is the undisputed key actor and strategist of a campaign to promote the cause of the French Right in Algeria by ordering De Gaulle's assassination. André's raging energy dominates, creating a 'retro' jolt from his entombment in a synthetic coffin in Chapter One. His aggressive choreography of his wife and son culminates in a darkly ingenious purloining of victimhood, presenting himself as the abused former member of her favourite musical group. His boiling dissatisfaction with what he perceives as his undeserved lot as a well-informed and assiduous French patriot is propitious to Ted's introduction. Constructing his own narrative while aggressively asserting his conjugal and paternal dominance, André requires a compelling backstory to manage his son's responses. Ted, ostensibly an American GI comrade, constitutes a fertile dramatic prop for André. This *persona* shares some similarities with Bonzi's relationship with Jacques Rougeron: Ted gives André confidence and status and imbues his drab daily life with colour, purpose and structure. However, unlike Bonzi, he has not been invented solely within the narrative: he is later revealed to be a film character. What André achieves through creative canniness is the development and *maintenance* of this figure, deployed to control his son's attitude. André has emancipated Ted from his celluloid existence to become his comrade-in-arms wielding considerable authoritative leverage. This transposition from the public to the private sphere is

analogous with André's and Lucien's broader appropriation and personalisation of international *actualité.* Ted's exotic American lineage yields an inexhaustible source of moral, psychological and narrative firepower. André's co-option of this figure as a patriotic paradigm, alert to opportunities for active service for the common good, makes Ted's opinion count. This is reflected in Émile's unquestioning acceptance of, and engagement with, his reported expectations, thus demonstrating the power of language noted above and astutely wielded by André.

The title of Chapter Four, 'L' agent secret', concisely frames emerging tensions between André as a distant spectator and his self-imposed role as 'influencer' of the Algerian conflict. His behaviour becomes more febrile as he assumes a progressively larger figure in the tiny apartment. Unlike Auster's depiction of his 'invisible' father, André is encroachingly present. His 'secret agent' status, wielded with increasingly belligerent confidence, discloses three facets of André's psyche: ontological, epistemological and pedagogical. His steadfast ambition is to confound others' perceptions and to be seen to matter to people who matter. His sporadic and spurious occupational links to parade his bravery, resourcefulness and cosmopolitan connections are diluted by his funeral in the opening chapter and finally, by his erasure from posterity by his wife. Furthermore, he manipulates political and military knowledge to secure his household leadership. Equally, his induction of his young son into petty vandalism which he vaunts as patriotic rebellion incorporates performance and punishment. As a patriot-by-proxy, André is also impelled by subjectivation, 'taking the floor,' by resuscitating, donning and discarding diverse 'selves'. His assumption of victimhood instrumentalises his domestic dominance, as he presents himself in thrall to his wife's and son's ignorance. More subtly, in displaying his mastery of military protocol and discourse, he implies that he could also incur 'official' martial sanctions through his accountability to his 'chef.

Chapter Five 'Le Danseur', and Chapter Eight 'Le Gardien de but' chart André's escalating sequestration of foreign and 'local' events. 'Le Danseur,' a strong example of press-influenced appropriation, concerns the defection of the Russian ballet dancer Rudolf Nureyev to the West in 1961. André's assertion to Émile that Ted asked him to procure a place of safety for Nureyev illuminates pivotal instincts. His reference to the defection signals his obsession for remaining abreast

of global events; it also underscores his need to be needed, although it may indicate Chalandon's sympathy for the underdog and his sense of social justice. His personalisation of sports lore in Chapter Eight constitutes a final example of André's infiltration of another's story, that of football hero Émile Veinante, after whom he supposedly named his son. André exploits Émile's poor test results to lock him in the wardrobe, instead of meeting Veinante as promised. This *mise-en-abyme* of confected suffering -André as the casualty of his son's academic failure and his own exacting standards of conduct- epitomises the interplay between André's 'hand' (his punitive reflex) and his 'eye' (his imagined narrative involving the footballer). These chapters mark the pinnacle of André's unmediated influence over his wife and son. The roots of his gradual displacement by Émile can be traced to Chapter Seven, 'Le Nouveau', through the boy's acquaintance with Luca Biglioni, an Italian pupil who had lived in Algeria. The only 'transnational' viewpoint which André now expresses is his xenophobic caricature of Luca's father as 'un vendeur de balais' (*PP*, p. 115). He appears to have lost his appetite for world events, as his ferociously imaginative hegemony recedes, increasingly sustained by insult rather than invention.

Lucien's paternal status and motivation in *Le Petit Bonzi* reveal his self-controlled and studied emancipation, contrasting with André's flamboyant and haphazard self-transformation. Both are irascible personalities who harbour longstanding grievances: each robustly chastises his young son and displays unbridled contempt towards his wife. However, André's treatment of Émile appears more callous than Lucien's of Jacques. Regarding nomenclature, the Latin etymology of 'Lucien', light, signals his potential enlightenment, whereas the Greek origin of 'André' is more laconically 'man'. André is straightforwardly 'mon père', devoid of any empathetic association; Lucien is more affectionately 'papa Rougeron'. Another distinction resides in their work, contrasting Lucien's pragmatism with André's extravagance. In 'que papa Rougeron lève ses grandes mains de plâtre en criant', Lucien's former plastering job appears indissociable from his body (*LPB*, p. 24). Contrastingly, André's links to any occupation are tenuous and fleeting.

Lucien is a contradictory figure whose dis-adaptation evokes Rancière's conceptualisation of the basis for the worker's emancipation: 'À l'origine du discours de l'émancipation ouvrière, il y a le désir de ne plus être ouvrier: ne plus

abîmer des mains et son âme'.[184] The first two references to him illuminate the mundane and the esoteric, providing the parameters within which his motivations and interactions can be examined. His introduction occurs not in person, but through Jacques's imitation of him: 'Racler sa gorge comme papa Rougeron' (*LPB*, p. 12). In a curious parallel, Auster notes that *his* father 'hemmed and hawed a lot, cleared his throat, seemed to sputter in mid- sentence' (Auster, p. 31). He attributes this to his father's social discomfort, which may also be applicable to Lucien's context. The second allusion to his transcription of difficult words in a dedicated notebook mirrors Jacques's difficulties with language: 'avec un nom compliqué comme ceux que papa Rougeron note dans son cahier à mots' (*LPB*, pp. 13-14). Lucien's hand, executing the scholarly task of recording unfamiliar vocabulary, is equally adept at administering pain. In an unremittingly violent scene, his blows assail the hapless Jacques for returning home late. Beating Jacques may also serve as catharsis for Lucien: 'Il écoutait son fils, mais pas comme d'habitude. Quelque chose de lisse éteignait son regard. Quelque chose d'apaisé' (p. 32). Auster's remark, 'Perspective is lost in favour of proportion – which is dictated not by the eye but by the demands of the mind' evokes the punitive energy wreaked by the verbally frustrated Lucien on his young son (Auster, p. 39). Yet Jacques recalls that Lucien's hands were once applied more peaceably to his occupation as plasterer. Four years earlier, he was sitting contentedly in the corridor with his father who touched him playfully on his nose, before proudly showing him the contents of his toolbox. This moment is a domestic oasis: 'Il faisait soleil dans la maison'. Tout était tranquille'. Lucien proudly enumerates and 'translates' his tools: '« Ça, c'est la berthelet à dents … Comme un râteau de fer avec un manche en bois ». « Ça, c'est le riflard. Comme une truelle. Ça, c'est la langue-de-chat. Comme une pelle à tart e»' (*LPB*, p. 104). Lucien's recourse to physical violence may emanate from his inability to articulate his feelings, a psycho-linguistic barrier which may in turn have contributed to Jacques's stammer because he lacked a coherent parental model.

Lucien confides a sacrosanct stipulation of the plasterer's trade to Jacques: 'Il disait aussi qu'un plâtrier ne devait jamais travailler avec l'instrument d'un autre.

[184] Jacques Rancière, *Et tant pis pour les gens fatigués*, p. 38.

Que cela portait malheur.' This exclusivity is arguably analogous with the stricture against the plagiarisation of another writer's work. Moreover, there is a discernible correspondence between Lucien's affinity with his own tools and fiction-writing: both entail a deeply personal engagement with one's craft, imbued with the creator's individual attribution. He corroborates the wisdom of his warning by attributing his fall from scaffolding to his use of a borrowed trowel. Along with the skin pallor associated with his former trade, the observation 'Il se relevait lourdement. Il toussait' signals its physical toll (p. 105).

The scene depicting Lucien sharing his own notebook with Jacques is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it demonstrates continuity with the spirit of 'normal' fatherliness reflected in the scene above. Secondly, Lucien strikes determinedly *beyond* his expected mode of identification. Surprising Jacques as he pronounces anatomical words from his 'word book', Lucien returns with his own work. He reads aloud, revealing various facts about the recent launches of the Sputnik and Ranger missions in 1963 and 1964. His apolitical engagement with these technologically exciting developments is not limited to his painstaking transcription of dates and events. His unspoken quest for a *complicité* with Jacques infuses the scene, enabling him to transcend the parameters of his unemployed status.

A final perspective on Lucien's fulfilment is his request for Jacques's help to curate his space travel photographs. Jacques is wary, since his father's sudden appearance in his bedroom usually precedes a beating. His urging: '« Fais-moi une petite place »', signals his desire to find a niche in Jacques's life. His pride is evident, as he shows Jacques a completed page, filled with underlined words, exclamation marks and small cut-out pictures: '« Ça m'a pris du temps, mais j'ai eu leurs photos »' (*LPB*, p. 243). He exhibits uncharacteristic patience in researching and mounting the photos. Moreover, his resolve to garner similar pictures of Russian cosmonauts for his collection demonstrates his resolve to pursue this new learning. Unlike his plastering, he is doing this entirely for himself His imagination moves beyond the realm of his manual work to the international and scientific arena of space exploration.

Lucien also displays self-awareness in recognising that his trade has impaired his fine motor skills required to embellish the photographs. Importantly, he can

appreciate his son's artistic talent as a potential enhancement not only of his own project, but also of his daily mood. The most noteworthy aspect of the scene is Lucien's respect as he watches his son, appreciating his meticulous artistry. Jacques has imbued his father's collection with dignity and beauty. Lucien's admiring exclamation: '« Ça, c'est du travail! »' contrasts sharply with his earlier dismissal of non- manual work. He carefully displays the finished album like a priceless artefact, bringing it to the window 'pour jouer avec les restants de lumière' (p. 246). This detail conveys two simultaneous impressions: his desire to see their collaborative work literally in the best possible light; and his unspoken acknowledgement of the ephemerality of the daylight and of this moment. Inspired by a guileless desire to learn and unfettered by any political or ideological affiliation, he displays the emancipating power of creativity and the recognition of its potential in others.

Section Three: Memory and the Momentum of Mendacity in *La Légende de nos pères*

Contrasting with André's and Lucien's presence and impact, Beuzaboc's absence from his own story in *La Légende de nos pères* emerges through a dearth of authentic detail about his purported active resistance during the Occupation. His initial vehement rejection of a biography signals his intended disengagement from the process. His eventual acquiescence to the interview stems from his curiosity, elucidated later in the novel, rather than a change of heart. In contrast to his daughter's gregarious cordiality, he appears morosely vigilant over his own discourse, recalling Pierre Laborie's observation on the 'confiscation' of personal language during the Occupation, when only the voice of officialdom was tolerated.[185] Beuzaboc reserves the right to terminate the entire interview with Marcel, and he refuses to be recorded or filmed. In refusing to relinquish control of his own words, he retains the ability to blend his story into the more generalised Resistance epic.

[185] Pierre Laborie, 'Opinion et Représentations: la Libération et l'Image de la Résistance', *Revue d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et des conflits contemporains*, 131 (1983), 65-91 (p.71).

Like *Profession du père* and *Enfant de Salaud*, *La Légende de nos pères* discloses ambitious temporal choreography through recovered memories intertwined with contemporary life and retrospective 'loops' towards past events. The incidence and intensity of the flashbacks and apparitions experienced by Marcel and Beuzaboc seem to crush the already oppressive present of the 2003 extreme heatwave, recalling Bakhtin's observation of the 'thickening' of time in its fusion with space in the literary chronotope, the relationship between the two phenomena (Bakhtin, p. 84). These disconcerting chronological transpositions project the unresolved and the ephemeral, impelling both characters to 'pin down' the story: Marcel, through methodical questioning and research; and Beuzaboc through obdurate verbal parrying. Indeed, the spatially confined domestic interior amplifies Bakhtin's concept of the 'chronotope of encounter…marked by a higher degree of intensity in emotions and values' (p. 243).

Beuzaboc's manipulation of time can be traced to the notion of *Nachlässigkeit* which he introduces in his third interview with Marcel. In the novel, it signifies the idea of deliberate carelessness to disrupt the enemy's activities during the Occupation. Contrary to visually dramatic incidents, such as the bombing of military trains, Beuzaboc indulged in what he terms 'Une résistance de nonchalance' (*LLP*, p. 148). This comprised premeditated acts of inattention which created disproportionate financial and logistical problems for the Germans: pouring sand into gearboxes; mixing oil with grease; and undertaking deliberately shoddy repairs. His disclosure is prompted by his exasperation at what he calls the celebrated mythology of railway sabotage, thereby debunking the process of *résistancialisme*. Without denying the occurrence of these 'spectacular' events nor the existence of underground resistance networks, Beuzaboc's emphasis is on the solitary worker committing his personal acts of vengeful neglect: '« C'était le gars tout seul. Lui, sa conscience et c'était tout. Personne n'a fait de livre ou de film là-dessus, personne »' (p. 149). His insight into the unrecognised and unrecorded resistance of individuals recalls the shift in historical biography from the lives of the 'great' to the experiences of 'ordinary people'.[186] More subtly, *Nachlässigkeit* also dictates his approach to divulging his experiences to Marcel. His insistence on

[186] François Dosse, *Le Pari biographique* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2005), p. 327.

proceeding at his own pace gains him time to align his account with the exigencies of his biographer. Problematically, however, he has restricted himself to the *sequencing* of his narrative, having previously recounted it in nightly 'instalments' to the young Lupuline. What he has *neglected* to consider are the indispensable psychological and emotional nuances which would enable him to *inhabit* the story and not merely to *recount* it. Barbie Zelizer's and Keren Tenenboim-Weinblatt's observation on 'the ways in which journalism and shared memory mutually support, undermine, repair and challenge each other' reflects the dynamics between Beuzaboc and Marcel. Their conceptualisation of trajectories and domains, signalling the respective temporal and spatial aspects of memory, elucidates the characters' perspectives.[187] Trajectories provide a chronological unspooling of events between points in time. Beuzaboc's tendency towards this dimension of memory is discernible in his tetchy adherence to linearity. Conversely, Marcel's journalistic instinct inclines to the aspect of the 'domain', with its focus on the narrative and the visual, concentrated upon 'a coherent plane of activity at any one point in time' (Zelizer and Teneboim-Weinblatt, p. 3). Despite the complementarity perceived by the commentators between these temporal and spatial constructs, an inevitable conflict arises in the novel when Beuzaboc's tenuous engagement with his narrative cannot withstand Marcel's insistent and incisive probing. Moreover, drawing on Casamayor's view of the interdependence of the duplicitous betrayer and the credulous victim, noted in Chapter Three, the progressive symbiosis explored below further problematises Marcel's and Beuzaboc's interaction.

The timing of Beuzaboc's disclosure of the unofficial tactic of *Nachlässigkeit* is noteworthy because it occurs immediately after Marcel's questions about the explosive used in the derailment of a military train at the level crossing at Ascq, which led to the SS massacre of eighty-six local men. Beuzaboc's disarray emanates from his realisation that Marcel has read Lupuline's childhood stories about him. His concern that 'Ce qu'elle avait écrit enfant prenait la commande de nos entretiens' is well-founded because he knows that, in her enthusiastic

[187]Barbie Zelizer and Keren Tenenboim-Weinblatt, eds., 'Journalism's Memory Work', in *Journalism and Memory*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 1- 14 (p. 1).

exaltation of her father, Lupuline has invented his involvement in the Ascq attack, unwittingly trapping him within the parameters of an historical event (*LLP*, p. 148). Another striking impact of *Nachlässigkeit* is Beuzaboc's dramatic exemplification of its ramifications:

> Vous résistiez seul? -Plus ou moins. Avec des copains. -Trompette? Fives? C'est ça? - C'est ça. Eux et d'autres. – Des cheminots ? -Des cheminots. -Vous avez des noms? - *Nein*! J'ai sursauté. J'ai porté un doigt à ma bouche et me suis excusé. Cette réponse en allemand était une violence. (p. 155)

Beuzaboc's response denotes his self-projection into an imagined or cinematically influenced Gestapo interrogation scene, with him as the victim and Marcel as the hostile questioner. Disorientated by the volley of questions, his persistently adversarial mindset causes him to neglect the maintenance of his *persona* as a Resistance veteran. His reaction contrasts starkly with that of André, who attempts to out-run time and potential discovery by constantly shedding his borrowed *personae*. He can do so because, unlike Beuzaboc, he has no inquisitive biographer- journalist with whom to contend. Beuzaboc's strategy and Marcel's dogged resolve to reveal his deception could be viewed through an extension of the notion of 'reversed memory': the working of temporality from the present to the past (Zelizer and Tenenboim-Weinblatt, p. 8). Although this concerns commemoration, it could be posited that Beuzaboc's *present* determines his representation of his past. The unevenness of his account of his Resistance involvement emanates from his wariness at exposing what was originally a child's bedtime story to Marcel's increasingly exacting questioning. More broadly, citing Shoshana Felman in an earlier analysis by Zelizer, what Marcel compels Beuzaboc to do is 'not merely to narrate but to commit [himself] and the narrative to others, to take responsibility for history or for the truth of the occurrence'.[188]

Nachlässigkeit also constitutes an appropriate prism through which to consider the workings of deception in this novel. It does not carry the deadly risk inherent in Tyrone's failure to admit his accidental killing of Danny Finley in *Retour à*

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[188] Shoshana Felman, 'The Return of the Voice: Claude Lanzmann's Shoah', *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Pyschoanalysis and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 204 in Barbie Zelizer, 'Finding aids to the past: bearing personal witness to traumatic public events', *Media, Culture & Society* 24 5 (2002), 697-714 (p. 698).

Killybegs, although Beuzaboc's self-justification attempts to minimise his sin of omission: '« Je n'ai trahi personne, je ne me suis pas engagé non plus. J'ai détourné les yeux »' (*LLP*, p. 196). However, Beuzaboc's and Tyrone Meehan's acts of deception share commonalities. Each man (actively in Beuzaboc's case, passively in Meehan's) shapes the factually untrue memory of an event during a time of conflict, burnishing an image of himself within the contours of a dominant national or local narrative. For Beuzaboc, it is a non-existent act of anti-Nazi resistance; for Meehan it is the defence of his district against Loyalist incursion. Both characters have ignited the long fuse of regret and guilt tethering them to a decades-old pyre of combustible memory, forged in a period of political and moral ambiguity. Equally, they are both forced to contend with the dubious morality of their actions. However, they choreograph their treachery differently. Meehan's covert strategy could be termed 'inter and defer': he psychologically buries his accidental shooting of his comrade Danny; and he fends off his day of reckoning by acceding to the demands of his blackmailing Secret Service 'handlers'. Beuzaboc's mode, on the contrary, is to 'fabulate and formalise': he entertains his young daughter with wartime stories in which he portrays himself as a *Résistant*, and decades later in his interviews with Marcel, he imparts a 'received' account of his experiences from which the true 'Je' is absent.

Beuzaboc's evasive attitude towards the truth is congruent with the figure of the 'absent' actor detached from his own account. This is sensed by Marcel whose neglect of his own father's memory stiffens his determination to ensnare Beuzaboc, underscoring the transgressive interdependence of the two characters, discussed below. Inevitably, Beuzaboc's guile disperses its toxicity to Lupuline. When her father admits at the celebratory gathering that he had never been a *Résistant*, save for laying flowers on an English grave, 'Lupuline était blanche et molle, tête baissée. Elle savait tout cela et j'en étais certain' (*LLP*, p. 251). Her response is a contained mourning, for his confession bleakly confirms the disintegration of a long-cherished narrative. For Marcel, the incremental unravelling of Beuzaboc's story becomes a slow-burning malignancy. Beuzaboc's pretext: '« J'ai eu envie de quelque chose qui emporte ailleurs »' concretises the eponymous *Délivrances* of his biography, releasing him from the story within which he had entrapped himself as a necessary legend for him and Lupuline (p.

194). Moreover, he seeks a reprieve from what he considered the banality of anti-German resistance by emulating the exploits of true *Résistants*, like Pierre Frémaux whose commemoration ceremony he and Lupuline had attended, and those of the unlikely fictional hero of René Clément's film. His leg injury, wrongly attributed to the conflict, is pre-figured in the attested accounts of charlatans such as 'M.S'., cited by Capodevila, who was lame after having broken a leg in an accident and excused military service, although he claimed he had been wounded on the Russian Front (Capodevila, p. 442). Beuzaboc's self-imposed predicament and its implications for Marcel recall Prieur's concept of the traitor as 'un faiseur d'histoires', discussed in Chapter Three. This configuration of the traitor contains a palimpsestic dimension, connecting with Backscheider's assertion above that every biography reflects elements of the writer's original motivation, discernible here in the evolution of the subject-biographer relationship. For Beuzaboc, disclosing the truth about his Occupation activities at his birthday dinner constitutes his public unmasking, while also signalling the start of a more candid bond with his daughter.

The intermeshing of memory and betrayal is sustained by a collective culpability. Marcel, Lupuline and Beuzaboc are individually and severally committed to the articulation, maintenance and propagation of family-based narratives. The commonality of their mission is paternal, in their need to accommodate their family's past and present. The plural in Marcel's question: '« Notre mensonge? » and in his reflection: '« Le mien, le sien, le nôtre, je ne savais plus bien »', demonstrates their interrelated interests (*LLP*, p. 232). In seeking his own father, Marcel's attempts to believe Beuzaboc induce him to conceal his misgivings about discrepancies in the account by Lupuline, whose advocacy of her father's already tainted narrative is compromised by her childhood embellishments. Finally, it is notable that the occasion of a birthday connects the fate of the two fathers: for Marcel's father Pierre, it was marked by his physical death; for Beuzaboc, by his reputational demise.

The malleability of 'légende' provides the nexus between autobiography, biography and treachery. Connoting a blend of myth, epic and historical fact, it lends potency and legitimation to the motivation for self-serving and self-perpetuating narratives which dilute, erase or ignore inconvenient or deleterious truths. The versions developed and adopted by Marcel and Beuzaboc do not

proceed on entirely parallel narrative tracks. In presenting the two characters as the victim (Marcel) and the betrayer (Beuzaboc), I have previously posited this arguably symbiotic relationship as a transgressive reciprocity: 'Concevoir la mutualité de leur trahison comme hélice double permet d'en talonner les enchevêtrements, les parallèles et les divergences' (Harris 2015, p. 19). My helix-like conceptualisation illuminates another facet of the novel: Chalandon's problematisation of the individual's right to his own reality, brutally manifest in *Enfant de Salaud*. The tension between sought-after 'truths' and consciously constructed invention can be seen through the wider lens of imposture, credulity and the management of mendacity.

The family as a locus for betrayal is discussed extensively by Prieur, whose observations are apposite to the impact of Beuzaboc's lies: 'Elle [la trahison] peut être aussi bien mensonge que révélation d'un secret, d'une vérité. Elle est rupture de pacte mais aussi création d'une nouvelle alliance'.[189] The notion of a new alliance is also congruent with the idea of deliverance from the snare of mendacity to a more settled mindset. Beuzaboc's lie violates the accepted convention of trust between the biographer and his subject. Prieur's depiction of treachery as a means of simultaneous self-expression and self-realisation is also consonant with Beuzaboc's communication to Marcel of his re-imagined exploits. Her comment on the story-maker as 'un accélérateur de mutations' (p. 152), is particularly salient to Beuzaboc's audacity in distorting 'official history' through the insertion of his own fallacious story. That he is also precipitating relational changes can be deduced from the impact of his account on Marcel, who, suspecting discrepancies in his subject's testimony, subsequently treats Beuzaboc more inquisitorially. Prieur discerns the variegated origins of, and tendencies to, betrayal and victimhood in 'nos rêves, nos désirs, nos idéaux, nos limites, nos peurs' (p. 180), a spectrum of motivations inhabiting Marcel as the son of a genuine *Résistant*, Beuzaboc as a *faux-Résistant* and Lupuline as his devoted daughter. In considering the true nature of Beuzaboc's transgression, Derrida's observation is useful. Citing Rousseau, he states: 'Il rappelle qu'un "mensonge" qui ne nuit ni à soi ni à autrui, un mensonge innocent ne mérite pas le nom "mensonge" c'est, dit-il, "une

[189] Nicole Prieur, *Nous nous sommes tant trahis,* p.15.

fiction"'.[190] The issue is the extent to which Beuzaboc's 'fiction' impinges on his role as a father and, vicariously, on Marcel's memories and assessment of his own father.

Sébastien Schehr, discussing the nuances of betrayal, cites Gilles Deleuze's definition of the trickster, who, unlike the traitor, only knows how to imitate what others have already done, said or accomplished.[191] Deleuze distinguishes this 'imitation' from what might be considered a more powerful 'grade' of treachery, which entails inventive ingenuity. Schehr's allusion to the traitor as an outsider is applicable to Beuzaboc, in that he is physically, socially and historically 'external' to the Resistance movement: in physically standing beyond the circle of veterans commemorating fallen comrades-in-arms like Pierre Frémaux; and in his absence from the original events memorialised at these annual ceremonies. Although from Deleuze's perspective, Beuzaboc's deception may lack the creativity of thoroughgoing treachery, he possesses an omnipotence by virtue of his knowledge of what is true and what is false about his own life (Schehr, p. 127). Schehr's assertion: 'vivre, devenir, ce n'est pas seulement trahir et assumer sa ou ses trahisons, c'est aussi assumer d'être trahi…', posits the mutuality of deception (p. 131). Marcel has been duped, but he has also attempted to 'outsmart' Beuzaboc by surreptitiously checking his story in the museum archives. Perhaps more in the spirit of Schehr's observation, the very ambiguity of Marcel's role as 'biographe familial' renders him vulnerable to clients' self-interested exaggerations. He should have been alert to the possibility of being misled by them, particularly as his stated professional mission was 'denteler la vie des autres', referenced above. The intersections of biography and duplicity are arguably located in 'legend', and in the willingness and collusion of the narrator and the public to be duped by it. Auster's observation: 'The trick is not really to deceive them [the audience], but to delight them into wanting to be deceived' (Auster, p. 128), encapsulates the

[190] Jacques Derrida, *Histoire du mensonge, Prolégomènes* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 2012), pp. 16-17.

[191] Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues* (Paris: Flammarion, 1977), pp. 52-53 in Sébastien Schehr, *Traîtres et trahisons: de l'Antiquité* à nos jours (Paris: Berg International Éditeurs, 2008), p. 125.

interlocking of Marcel's professional position, personal disposition and the receptivity of his own clientèle.

Chalandon has verbally and textually acknowledged the connection between *La Légende de nos pères* and *Enfant de Salaud.* Moreover, as cited in Chapter One, he has alluded to his fruitless endeavour to spark his father's self-recognition in Beuzaboc during his televised discussion of *Enfant de Salaud*. As well as the irony inherent in his intention to force his self-engrossed father to disclose the truth about himself through the fictional *La Légende,* a more discernible emancipatory or cathartic dimension to Chalandon's writing emerges in his most recent novel. Located at the extreme point of Lejeune's spectrum of similitude (Lejeune 1975, p. 25), the degree of resemblance between the biographic subject and the 'real' personality, it permits him to construct his most candid posthumous portrait of his father. With 'Moi, fils d'un collabo dont je ne savais rien, j'applaudissais comme les autres à la légende de nos pères', he inscribes the title of the earlier work to expose his own delusional deference to the national resistance epic dishonoured by his father (*ES,* p. 114).

Section 4 'Plusieurs vies et plusieurs guerres': the Odyssey towards the Father in *Enfant de Salaud*

This heading incorporates two linked facets of *Enfant de Salaud.* The quotation is Jean's habitual sally, ostensibly conveying his extensive knowledge about the war, concluding with his non-committal phrase: '« Un jour je t'expliquerai tout ça »' (*ES,* p. 37). A more significant element derives from Chalandon's note to his editor: 'À Martine Boutang, mon éditrice, qui m'a accompagné depuis 2005, de roman en roman, sur la route épouvante qui menait à mon père, le premier de mes traîtres' (p. 7). Two findings cited in Chapter One corroborate this. He had previously asserted to Françoise Laurent in February 2020 that his father was his first traitor after his discovery of his father's past in January 2020. More recently, his observation that his fictional work constituted a gruelling pathway to his father re-emerged in his statement to television host François Busnel in September 2021, cited in Chapter One, that he tried to reach him through ten novels. My preposition 'towards' conveys the arduous and ultimately unsuccessful outcome of his quest, portrayed in their final encounter in *Enfant de Salaud.* It also reflects Chalandon's

doleful observation to me about his attitude to his father as 'le sentiment d'un rendez-vous manqué avec un père' (Annex 1).

The father's irresistible pull is filtered through the interplay of journalism and personal evocation, delineated in Chalandon's 1987 report of the Klaus Barbie Trial. In the novel this dynamic is discernible in *paroles* (verbalised speech), *mots* (official records and written statements) and silence. The latter is germane to the narrator's reticence to confront his father directly; to familial silence about Jean's wartime actions, broken only by the narrator's frustrated paternal grandfather; and to the silences of Holocaust survivors in the courtroom, as potent as their oral testimony. An irony arises in the narrator's capacity to report facts as a journalist, while seemingly powerless to elicit the truth from his own father. The journalistic dimension counterbalances the father's presence, illuminating the son's application of his professional research skills to a profoundly personal assignment: navigating the labyrinth of his father's lies and 'lives' to recover his own identity. The complex intermeshing of the narrator's discovery of his father's documented life during the Occupation and the concurrent progress and *dénouement* of the Barbie trial reveals the *paroles-mots-silence* dynamic. The matter of legitimacy also arises, recalling Chalandon's sense of responsibility to victims and survivors of true events in his fiction evoked in the Laurent interview. In *Enfant de Salaud*, the narrator re-frames the problem by questioning his right as the son of a traitor to cover the Klaus Barbie trial. His disquiet could be engendered by the notion of what Rothberg terms 'the implicated subject': he is neither victim nor perpetrator, but 'in a position that we occupy in particular, dynamic, and at times clashing structures and histories of power'.[192] The narrator is caught between colliding epistemological priorities. He knows that crimes such as Barbie's committed during the Occupation were facilitated by collaborators such as his father. However, while permitted to publicise the facts of the former, he is constrained to a gruelling, internalised processing of the veracity of the latter. Moreover, his father's rancorous challenge to the validity of the trial, and to others' right to judge his own wartime actions, heightens the tension between past and present imperatives. The analysis below reflects two pivotal vectors: the progressive

[192] Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Stanford University Press, 2019), p. 8.

exposure of Jean Chalandon and its impact on the narrator as a journalist and a son.

Jean's extensive manipulation of fact and falsehood crystallises in his craftily self-deprecating message to the judge and described by the narrator as 'cette phrase immense: « Excusez Monsieur le juge mon pauvre style, mais je suis un soldat et non un romancier »' *(ES*, p. 152). The opposite is the case, given his predilection for fantasy. However, unlike André's consistent support of pro-OAS activism, Jean's multiple military adherences stem not from political conviction, but from what his son describes as the fear of anonymity which dictated his whole life (p. 144). They are also rooted in the search for what Philippe Carrard terms 'une vie qui ait un sens' and the aspiration to fashion 'un nouvel homme', in his study of the motives of men who joined the Légion des Volontaires français contre le bolchévisme (LVF), a German Army unit comprising French volunteers.[193] It is perhaps instructive to contrast Jean's ideological agnosticism with the deeply personal commitment of a contemporary, Jean-Marie Croisile, who, with his father, fought in the LVF under direct German military command: 'Pour lui comme pour moi, même si nous n'avions à l'époque aucune notion de la doctrine national-socialiste, l'ennemi le plus redoutable était l'Armée rouge'.[194] Furthermore, an anonymous French LVF soldier advances points which have some relevance to Jean's experience. Recounting his time fighting for Germany in present-day Belarus, he mentions a training base in Poland which Jean had also attended: 'Krushina, mon purgatoire, où j'expie le droit d'être inhumain plus tard'.[195] Jean left the Eastern Front from Kruszyna, from where he was repatriated because of illness *(ES*, pp. 147, 149). Since volunteers received the same inhumane treatment which they would later inflict on enemy forces, Jean's departure may have been more pragmatic than medical. A further deterrent may have been the nature of warfare itself. This nameless Légionnaire alludes to 'une embuscade perpétuelle et sans merci qui se soldait par le massacre de petits groupes' (Anonymous, p.23). Perhaps the most pertinent connection is with the catalyst for Jean's father's wrath: wearing the enemy's uniform. This soldier states that the

[193] Philippe Carrard, *Nous avons combattu pour Hitler* (Armand Colin, 2011), p. 168.
[194] Jean-Marie Croisile, *Sous Uniforme allemand* (Paris : Nimrod, 2018), p. 80.
[195] Anonymous, *Vae Victis ou Deux Ans Dans La LVF*, (Paris: La Jeune Parque, 1948), p. 11.

French had to wear German uniform in Russia because France and the Soviet Union were not enemies (p. 14).

Jean's obsession with seeing 'the other side' in his fatal determination to drift across the Saône constitutes a uniquely graphic appropriation of his own destiny. A further distinguishing feature is his ability to articulate the reason for his fabricated stories, telling a policeman who challenges the reliability of a previous confession: '« Je croyais me faire valoir davantage »' (*ES*, p. 142). Unlike the young Émile who believes André's stories, the adult narrator in *Enfant de Salaud* cogently evaluates his father's pathological mendacity, reflecting Chalandon's own belated recognition of the sheer scale of his father's treachery: 'Plus je lisais tes dispositions, plus j'en étais convaincu: tu t'étais enivré d'aventures…Tu as enfilé des uniformes comme des costumes de théâtre, t'inventant chaque fois un nouveau personnage, écrivant chaque matin un nouveau scénario' (pp. 176-177). Consonant with Jean's experience of other lives and other wars is paternal plurality: he encompasses a gamut of fathers.

Actual and fictional chronology shape Jean's development from André. Notwithstanding similarities of characterisation, the six years separating *Profession du père* in 2015 from *Enfant de Salaud* in 2021 constitute a psychological and aesthetic gulf for Chalandon who initially reimagined his fantasising father through a child's eyes, still unaware of irrefutable recorded evidence of his father's criminal past and knowing only his grandfather's oblique reference to his father's life 'du mauvais côté'. His palpably hardened and intensified portrait illuminates the *adult* son's distraught grappling with the knowledge of his father's shocking past and sustained subterfuge and his own gullibility. Furthermore, 'Enfant' refers not only to the son; it also alludes to the father who behaves like a child. The title could be further problematised through the notion of the simultaneous elision and separation of the son's and the father's narratives through the narrator's proxy self-placement as the son who finally challenges his father, only to lose him forever.

Jean's feistiness emerges during the Trial in his admiration for 'gueule' or audacity, notably from Barbie's defence lawyer Jacques Vergès. Just as André disparaged his young son's passion for drawing and reading, Jean constantly

mocks his adult son's profession and politics: '« Ton journal de gauche est d'accord avec les émeutes, j'imagine? »' referring to the riots in Lyon in 1983 between young people and the police (*ES,* p. 47). He later taunts him about his impending report on the Barbie trial: '« Tu vas mettre quoi dans ton journal? La morale de ce procès, c'est le triomphe de la démocratie face à la barbarie »'. He is essentially contesting the legal basis for prosecuting Barbie, an attitude reflecting social and political divisions associated with the trauma of the Occupation (Rousso, pp. 18-19). Typically misconstruing his son's shocked silence for acquiescence, he reprises his wordly-wise manner: '« Heureusement que ton père t'aide à y voir plus clair, non?…Un jour tu me remercieras »' (*ES,* p. 138). There is currently no evidence that such exchanges actually occurred between Chalandon and his own father.

Jean acquires his subjectivisation through his manipulative and acidic disposition which provokes his own familial self-expulsion. This instinct emerges in his conscious severance of family ties. The narrator's assertion: 'Mon père avait passé son existence à faire le vide autour de lui' pithily summarises Jean's relationship with his own father, whom he 'expelled' from his life because the latter knew inconvenient truths about him; with his immediate family, whom he emotionally exploits in feigning or exaggerating illness; and most egregiously, with his son, to whom he shamelessly lied about his past (p. 43). He shares André's alienating reflex, but its more overt iteration is discernible in his xenophobia: '« C'est pas des Lyonnais, ceux-là »', about two other (Maghrébin) customers, and in his cynical attitude to deportation survivors' testimonies (p. 48). His sardonic commentaries and goading barbs are uttered in public spaces: in local cafés, in the courtroom, in the street and fatally, by the Saône. Unlike André's increasingly incoherent mutterings while confined in his armchair, Jean vehemently declares his *credo* over a beer: '« Comprends-moi bien, ce que les gens pensent, je m'en fous. Ce que tu penses, je m'en fous aussi…Et j'interdis que qui que ce soit me fasse la morale. Tu pourras dire que ton père pendant la guerre, il a fait ça. Et qu'il vit très bien avec »' *(*p. 49). His recounting of his confident riposte to his own father's original sighting of him in German uniform fails to assuage his son's astonishment on learning that he was a member of the Charlemagne Division. His defiant endorsement of his past recalls the spirit of Jean-Marie Croisile's testimony, cited

above. It also echoes the generally unrepentant tenor of veterans' accounts in a documentary on the Charlemagne regiments.[196] Carrard identifies a similarly defiant attitude among the subjects of his study (Carrard, p. 203).

The diverse facets of Jean's temperament surface in his account:'« J'étais un soldat, bonhomme! Pas une petite frappe! »'(*ES*, p. 50) The narrator notes his use of 'bonhomme', an epithet from his childhood, as though Jean is trying to re-kindle the unconditional trust his son once had in him. In 'taking the floor', he is not merely relating events but enacting them with visibly mounting passion:

Il a bu en aspirant bruyamment. « Quand ces ordures [la Milice] voyaient l'écusson FRANCE sur nos manches, je peux te dire qu'ils couraient... ». La violence de son regard. « Les Boches méprisaient ces minables ». La chaleur lui montait au visage. Des plaques rouges striaient son cou.

Asserting that his efforts were to render France glorious again, that he never touched the hair on a Frenchman's head and that he never killed members of the Resistance, his reply to his son's nervous inquiry about the Jews presages his breezy disdain for the testimonies he will hear during the Barbie trial: '« Les Juifs? Mais on s'en foutait, des Juifs! C'était pas notre boulot, les Juifs »', employing de-humanising insouciance to delimit the parameters of his perceived patriotic duty (p. 51).

Chalandon's depiction of the Klaus Barbie trial illuminates the cleavage and the fusion of his journalistic and fictional selves. His reporting approach reveals three phases, two of which might be termed his 'professional presencing' and the third as his 'panoramic presencing'. His 'professional presencing' in his official report of the 1987 trial was extensively analysed in Chapter Two, characterised by his respectful pedagogical accompaniment as he guides and urges his readers to listen to Barbie's victims and survivors' words. Detailed below, the second exemplification of his tenacious journalistic presence is his narrator's exploratory visit at the beginning of *Enfant de Salaud* to the Maison d'Izieu Museum, the former orphanage from which forty-six children were deported to Auschwitz under Barbie's orders. Contrastingly, the 'panoramic presencing' in the novel extends the

[196] Phoenix Digital, 'De l'autre côté/ From the other side' (French Waffen SS- Second World War),<www.youtube.com>, [accessed 30 December 2021].

narrator's perspective beyond the trial to the unfolding chronicle of his father's criminal past and his struggle to assimilate it. The journalist-narrator's attention is frequently interspersed with his awareness of his father's presence behind him in the public gallery; with his concern about Jean's reactions; and with the emerging information on his father's imprisonment which he brings, literally and metaphorically, into the courtroom.

Discernible in the narrator's professional inquiries at Izieu, *Enfant de Salaud* conveys the protocols of investigative journalism more vividly than any earlier novel. He provides his readers with a unique connection to his journalist, 'taking them to work with him', as he absorbs the atmosphere of the Maison and elicits details from the wary caretaker, Madame Thibaudet. Chalandon imbues his narrator with his own habitual concern for others' understanding by including salient facts about the orphanage and some key witnesses: he does not presume their familiarity with his official report.

His visit to the classroom discloses paradoxically oppositional and interrelating undercurrents pertinent to his journalism. Madame Thibaudet's jaded demeanour towards 'le journaliste' is reflected in his observation: 'Je dérangeais sa journée paisible' (p. 13). He is determined not only to unearth facts, but to reconstruct the daily lives of the young victims. Unfortunately, only three desks remain, hidden in a dark corner. He is incredulous at Madame Thibaudet's defensive explanation that everything else had been burned because of rain damage. However, he discovers a slate in one of the desks on which 'pomme' is written in a child's handwriting: 'J'ai levé les yeux vers la femme. Elle était indifférente. Comme repartie ailleurs…Je me suis tourné, visage contre le mur. Un instant. Presque rien. Un sanglot privé de larmes. Le temps de graver pour toujours ces cinq lettres en moi' (p. 18). Like Chalandon's retention of the image of a dead child's tee shirt in Chatila, the narrator recovers the fragments of an Izieu victim's presence from oblivion. It is the visual which overwhelms him, and which forms the link between his factual right- hand and his affective left-hand pages: 'L'ardoise et le mot *pomme* à droite, mon ventre noué à gauche'. His recollection of his colleague's advice in Beirut: « Change tes larmes en encre » constitutes another echo of Chalandon's period in Lebanon, motivating him to write about what he has seen in Izieu (p. 26). A further observation concerns Chalandon's projection of his

journalist's status. Madame Thibaudet's question « Ça passe quand à la télé? », despite the absence of a film crew or microphones, amuses him. She asks: '« Mais j'ai cru que vous étiez journaliste? ». « Je le suis, mais pour un journal ». Regard vaguement déçu. « Ah oui, Un journal… » ' (p. 28). Her disappointment indicates her narrow conception of his work and a prevailing predilection for the televisual medium. This indifference to, or disengagement from, the written press, renders his mission even more imperative.

In the courtroom, the figure of the narrator- journalist assumes a different *persona* to Chalandon, the award-winning trial journalist. As the latter, he is the reader's gentle and confident guide. In the narrative, although still attentive to the witnesses, he is buffeted by other anxieties: his father's demeanour and intentions, and the reactions of fellow journalists. The objective journalist is now complemented by the subjective son, with Chalandon's choreography of the journalist-narrator's reactions in the courtroom interlocking the two. He dramatises his colleagues, ranging from individual reporters' irritation at the narrator's edginess to their concern with their own priorities on learning of Barbie's refusal to attend his trial. Their professional investment in Barbie elevates him above the victims. '«Démonétisé », avait lancé un journaliste français'. Foreign correspondents gloomily contemplate being recalled by their bosses: '« Du coup, c'est une histoire pourrie »' (p. 100). Echoing Zelizer's and Tenenboim-Weinblatt's observation on the complex dynamic between journalism and memory, a hierarchy of voices evolves, palpable in the perceived negative impact of Barbie's absence on the trial's public interest value and its concomitant denigration of witnesses' testimony.

Chalandon's fictional portrayal of the trial can be productively explored through the father's and the narrator's interlinked perspectives. Jean's reason for attending: '« Ce n'est pas tous les jours que la France juge un Oberstürmführer-SS »' exemplifies the flippancy which he maintains throughout most of the proceedings, but it also conveys the uniqueness of this first trial for crimes against humanity on French soil (p. 81). Like André, he uses props to stake his presence and parade his credibility: his walking stick and his veteran's badge. The exchange between him and his son: '« Tu n'as pas dit que ton fils était journaliste? » Mon père a haussé les épaules. « Tu me prends pour qui? »' highlights the irony of Jean's self-

projection as one who would not take advantage of his son's occupation, although his presence is entirely reliant on it (p. 92). His consciousness of this dependence impels him to distance himself disdainfully from his son's journalism. Paradoxically, as he becomes increasingly engrossed in the proceedings, he has his own notepad on his portable writing desk and holds a pen. The narrator's remark: 'On aurait dit un journaliste égaré au milieu du public' pithily captures his unwittingly incongruous emulation (*ES*, p. 129). While it is an obviously self-serving act, it may also emanate from a latent desire to acquire a recognisable and respected status through his son.

Jean is transfixed by the impassive Barbie: 'Mon père ne quittait pas l'accusé des yeux' (p. 96). When Barbie refuses to appear before the court, his father appears entranced by the theatricality of Altmann the Bolivian fugitive speaking German. The narrator tracks Jean's reactions: he nods at interventions by the defence, grimaces at those of the prosecution and dozes during an obscure legal argument. During adjournments, he chats to police officers as though he was inspecting the troops. His admiration is reserved for Vergès and his derision of the prosecution: 'l'avocat de la défense avait fait rire mon père. Et lui avait donné un moyen de rester au procès' (p. 122). This refers to his father's earlier rejection of the idea of the trial without Barbie, and like some court reporters, his implicit dismissal of the importance of the survivors' testimonies. Later, Jean's noisy assertion that the trial is driven by vengeance impugns its legitimacy: '« Ce n'est pas un procès, c'est un lynchage » ' (p. 102). His outburst: '« C'est un vaincu jugé par les vainqueurs. Si Barbie avait gagné la guerre, vous seriez tous à sa place »' encompasses a personal and universal dimension (p.103). Jean is undoubtedly exercised by his own wartime involvement, but he also expresses the tension to which Robert Badinter alludes in his preface to Chalandon's 1987 account: 'Cette rupture entre le temps des faits et le temps du jugement apparaissent (*sic*) à certains comme incompatible avec l'exigence d'un procès équitable' (*PKB*, p. ii). Jean figures indisputably among those 'certains'. Concerned exclusively with Barbie, he does not mention the victims. He becomes increasingly attracted to Vergès's flamboyant court performance, the cynosure of his attention since Barbie's departure. Yet there are testimonies which impress him, *malgré lui*. He is fascinated by Léa Katz's account of her narrow escapes from arrest by the Gestapo, when fate was excruciatingly

finely balanced in her favour through the benevolence of local police. As the narrator is surprised by his own tears on hearing her story, his father is writing notes, absorbed in Lise Lesèvre's account. Tortured by Barbie, deported to Ravensbrück concentration camp and armaments factory, she systematically sabotaged the shells. Jean, who had claimed to have undermined the German war effort, is now confronted by a real saboteur (p. 194). However, it is Fortunée Chouraki's experience, reported in Chalandon's 1987 account, which most appeals to Jean for its ostensible cinematic potential.

Before being deported to Auschwitz, she had left her three children at the Izieu orphanage. She had knitted a red pullover for her eldest son, but not having enough wool to finish it, she had to knit one multicoloured sleeve. In the Camp, she thought she recognised her son in his oddly coloured jumper among the children in Auschwitz, wanting to believe that her sons were still alive. They had died, although she was haunted years after the war by Jacques's survival, even imagining that he had been liberated by the Russians and had become a famous singer named Ivan Rebroff. The narrator notes that his father had cried and he allowed him to experience this moment in peace. Although he wanted him to learn what he and his fellow collaborators had done, that evening he recognises that: 'Tu étais mon père qui avait pleuré'. However, when the narrator attempts to probe him about Fortunée's testimony, he remarks: '« L'histoire du pull, ça ferait un bon film, non? Ça a vraiment de la gueule, cette histoire de pull! »' (p. 230).

External and local events permeate the courtroom more extensively in *Enfant de Salaud* than in Chalandon's 1987 account. Two critical consequences are that the fictionalised version reveals as much about the narrator as his father; and that, as signalled below, Chalandon incorporates detail which would not, or could not, appear in his press report. The dynamic connecting the trial and its wider context may be framed as the intensification of the tension between *paroles* and *mots.* The narrator understands the professional responsibility he has assumed: 'J'ai été petrifié par l'importance de l'événement' (p .75). His reactions in the courtroom resemble Chalandon's during the trial, particularly his stipulation that the victims must be heard: 'Aucune voix ne devait recouvrir la parole des victimes' (p 86). The testimonies he presents appear in his original report, but in the novel, as with Fortunée's story, they appear decelerated and concentrated. This instinct towards

magnification is equally discernible in the movement from summarised depictions in his 1987 report to dramatisation in his narrative. In the former, Vergès's flamboyant confidence during the trial, his subsequent aggressive treatment and the public's growing malevolence are portrayed, but they are amplified in the novel through an almost filmic sequence: 'Lorsque je suis revenu au palais de justice, la ville montrait une sale gueule. Elle hurlait au lynchage. Jacques Vergès avait fait fausse sortie …Vergès a été assailli...Ça a été le vacarme. La colère s'est ruée en hurlant sur le groupe. Avocat, policiers, journalistes, tous pourris. « À mort! », « Vergès SS » ont scandé des inconnus' (p. 316). A noteworthy detail that is absent from Chalandon's 1987 text but included here is the racist taunting of one of Vergès's African colleagues by a young girl: 'Au passage de l'avocat africain, une gamine a imité le piaillement du singe' (p. 317). As an imaginative device, it highlights the divergence between scrupulous courtroom constraints and mindless public mockery. Possible reasons for its original omission may be that it was incompatible with the criteria of his professional brief, or that he had initially included it and it had been rejected by his editor.

The narrator's reactions to, and management of, his father's courtroom presence may be considered through his attempts to compel his father to align his 'paroles' with the written 'mots' in the official dossier on his collaboration through exposure to the testimony of authentic *Résistants*. He envisages that, forty-two years after his conviction, Jean will be obliged to acknowledge his past to his son. The narrator's progressive intermingling of verbal courtroom evidence and his father's written record reaches its climax when he states that he deliberately brought his father's letter to the judge into court 'pour provoquer une collision entre le passé et le présent' (p. 155). This is epitomised by his realisation that he is witnessing Barbie being compelled to listen to the truth, while Jean continues to evade his questions. The connection the narrator seeks between Jean's self-serving account and incontrovertible archive evidence proves elusive, due to his reluctance to tackle his father's bluster and confected ailments. Regarding the wider context of the trial, there is arguably a parallel between Barbie's decades-long flight from justice and his father's sustained attempts, like Beuzaboc and many former collaborators, to elude emerging truths through rickety, *ad hoc* anecdotes.

Irrevocably, the Saône finally engulfs him in his resolute and definitive evasion of paternal accountability, as his son watches helplessly from the riverbank.

Conclusions and Reflections

Chalandon's allusion in his dedication in *Enfant de Salaud* to 'la route éprouvante' which led him to his father, crystallises the gruelling quest explored in this chapter (p. 7). It is potently exemplified in Gunn's autobiographically charged challenge: 'Where do I belong?'. Each father shapes his belonging through a freshly constructed or refurbished image. In *Profession du père*, an ontological and psychological geometry connects the irascible *militant manqué* André with the source of his frustration: his ambiguous reserve of creativity straining for realisation and validation. The autobiographical dimension persists in Chalandon's references to the paternal violence and psychological abuse he experienced from his own father. The parallel with Auster's work surfaces at the levels of autobiography and art, as he confronts him through his writing. Rancière's notion of the spectator's transformation into actor is congruent with André's movement from a frustrated consumer of press coverage of the Algerian *coup* to an enthusiastic tactician. This metamorphosis in turn engenders Émile's journey from a timorous, solitary youngster to an energetic young 'activist', executing his father's instructions. André's rambunctious breakout from his impotent domesticity bolsters his empowerment, while diminishing his fragile grip on reality.

Le Petit Bonzi marks Chalandon's transition from the time-dependent, factual exigencies of journalism to the boundless world of fiction. However, to posit a direct transposition from reporting to fictional writing underplays the increasing prevalence in his journalism of the 'shape and soul' discerned by photographer Marie Dorigny in his delicate and often lyrical empathy with his 'subjects', discussed in Chapters One and Two. His stricture, 'laisser parler les autres', is particularly palpable in his stammering protagonist, Jacques. The incontestable parallel with Chalandon's own speech difficulty demonstrates his deployment of hyperreality through the imaginary Bonzi as a process of defamiliarisation and stylistic experimentation, as well as a possible coping strategy. In his response to me: 'En écrivant *Une Promesse*, j'ai appris la trahison de Denis Donaldson', he corroborates its role in assuaging the anguish of Donaldson's treachery (Annex 2).

His depoliticisation of Lucien's interest in space travel distinguishes this father figure from Beuzaboc and Jean, entrapped in their respective Resistance narratives, and from André, entrammelled in his own paramilitary fantasy. While Lucien's disillusionment clings to him like the material of his former trade, Jacques's stirring perception of him transcends his physical infirmity and his disgruntled sense of unfulfillment. Chalandon's imperative to liberate his 'Je' from journalistic restrictions accords with Lucien's drive to create his own story and with Jacques's urge to forge his verbal fluency. Lucien emerges as a basically honest man, whose frankness contrasts markedly with the mendacity and duplicity of the other fathers.

La Légende de nos pères and *Enfant de Salaud* differ from the other novels in their diffusion of self-invention through the 'téléscopage' of personal and public memory and oral and recorded testimony, a term attributed by Guillaume Erner, a podcast presenter, to the clash and overlap between the Barbie Trial and the narrator's inquiries into his father's past in the later novel.[197] In the earlier work, Beuzaboc, Lupuline and Marcel seek to re-imagine, honour, validate and perpetuate their portion of a story of local resistance during the Occupation. Their attempts to recover paternal identity for posterity through an amalgam of eclectic legend, fervent wish-fulfilment and journalistic scrutiny find analogies in the multifaceted process of *résistancialisme*, a reconfiguration of a national response to the trauma of the Occupation. Marcel's memories of his father Pierre, the nebulous *Brumaire*, appear more concrete than Beuzaboc's personal account. Lupuline's ambition to immortalise her conception of her father's feats of resistance culminates not in his 'crowning' through her commissioned biography, but in his self-inflicted 'downing' through his admission of his banal truth. Each character is caught between the Scylla and Charybdis of Paul Ricœur's image of biography, 'mixte instable entre fabulation et expérience vive'.[198] In contending with the light and shade of verifiable truth and fluid fantasy, they gain a resigned acceptance of a past and deliverance from the burden of myth. The narratives'

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[197] 'Goncourt 2021: les quatre finalistes sont les invités des Matins', 2 November 2021 <www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/l'invite-e-des-matins/goncourt-2021-les-quatre-finalistes-sont-les-invites-des-matins-2040930>, [accessed 2 November 2021].

[198] Paul Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Seuil, 1990), p. 191 in François Dosse, *Le Pari biographique*, p. 57.

tortuous pursuit of an insubstantial and legendary 'truth' is consonant with Chalandon's long paternal pursuit, but also with his attraction to subtlety and shadow: 'Ce qui m'intéresse, c'est toutes les nuances de gris entre le blanc et le noir. C'est ça qui me touche' (Hees). The paradox of honouring the dead to feel alive implicit in Beuzaboc's question 'Qui va fleurir nos tombes pour se sentir vivant?' finds resonance in three novels. Intransitively fleurir' is experienced by the adults Émile, Jacques and Marcel as an emancipation to nurture their own artistic or professional interests. 'Fleurir' also entails liberation from the thrall of paternal dominance, entrenched by spurious narrative, endemic vainglory and maternal powerlessness. This release could be described as 'fleurir du mal' (a re-working of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*), as a relational renewal salvaged from paternal abuse and deception.

Despite the autobiographical and intertextual connections with *La Légende de nos pères*, no regeneration is possible in *Enfant de Salaud*, a narrative proceeding from the resolute mining of a shocking family secret and propelled by rancorous confrontation and the long shadow of 'un rendez-vous manqué avec un père'. It exemplifies Chalandon's most unequivocal of his 'masques transparents' (Annex 1). Moreover, it acquires an epic dimension through the devastatingly astute 'nesting' of Jean's past within the overarching occurrence of the Klaus Barbie war crimes trial, the first of its kind in France. Several examples of 'téléscopage' accentuate inherent tensions: the collision between Jean's consciously misleading *paroles* and the official *mots* of the indictments and judgement in his criminal records; between the verifiable testimonies of Barbie's victims and Jean's protean explanations; between the narrator's journalistic acumen and his inability to prise the truth from his father; between his professional credentials and his sense of a compromised legitimacy; and between the received legend of heroic national resistance and the controversial reality of patriotic ambiguity. However, Chalandon ultimately rejects an unremittingly oppositional perspective. He refuses to judge his father, yearning only to hear him confess as proof of his love, as explained to François Busnel. Among the most salient indicators of his endeavour to understand his father are his allusion to the latter's child-like need to fantasise, cited above, and his narrator's doomed attempts to reach Jean as he deliberately drowns in the Saône. His resolve to induce paternal self-recognition and disclosure through his

characters sustains his frustrating and frustrated odyssey towards his father. His contestation of the inevitability of dysfunctional fatherhood in his drive to apprehend it through his fiction recalls Malraux's observation: 'Art is a revolt against fate'.[199]

The undertow of largely subservient, incurious wifeliness and disempowered motherhood in these four novels contrasts markedly with Chalandon's increasingly self-assured and complex women characters portrayed in *Une joie féroce.* The concluding chapter interrogates their role and significance, not only within individual novels, but also in shaping the tenor and direction of his more recent fiction.

[199] André Malraux, *Les Voix du Silence* (1951) *The Times*, 3 October 2019, 31.

Chapter Five: From Docility to Luminosity: The Psychological and Social Development of Chalandon's Female Characters

'"*C'est l'histoire de quatre femmes. Elles se sont aventurées au plus loin. Jusqu'au plus obscure, au plus dangereux, au plus dément. Ensemble, elles ont détruit le pavillon des cancéreuses pour élever une joyeuse citadelle*"' (*JF*, p. 286).

Synopsis of *Une joie féroce* (2019)

Reflecting the women's defiantly optimistic battle against cancer, the novel's title originates from Georges's euphoric rage in Beirut, as noted in Chapter Three, although Chalandon has not specifically referred to this connection. His paean to female empowerment, resilience and self-reinvention is narrated by Jeanne Hervineau, a well-liked bookshop assistant, who has been diagnosed with breast cancer, entailing gruelling chemotherapy sessions. Her relationship with her husband Matt, already strained by the death of their young son Jules, crumbles under Matt's inability or unwillingness to accept Jeanne's illness and the effects of her chemotherapy, particularly her impending alopecia. She is befriended at her hospital appointments by Brigitte and Assia (who are partners) and Mélody who are all cancer patients. These women are suffering various stages of the disease, but each has developed her own accommodation with it to enjoy as normal a life as possible. Forming a tight, sisterly bond and sharing an apartment, they style themselves 'le Club K', 'K' being the medical shorthand for cancer on patients' records. Each has her own complex history of largely abusive and failed relationships. They take the fearful and self-effacing Jeanne under their wing (nicknaming her Jeanne 'Pardon' because of her constant apologising), and eventually into their home after Matt's departure. In the early stages of the friendship, Jeanne draws sustenance from their seemingly indomitable confidence and solidarity. They even accompany her to the hairdressers to buy her a bandana to cover her now bald head. Importantly, Jeanne can observe their selfless mutual support, protection and understanding, and their constant vigilance to mitigate the debilitating and demoralising side- effects of chemo- or radiotherapy. Now a voluntary 'tondue', she associates her shorn head with the fate of the humiliated targets of the post-war *épuration,* the summary punishment meted out to alleged collaborators. For women suspected of having had sexual relationships with German soldiers, public vengeance entailed stripping and head-shaving. Her

familial connection with this practice emanates from a faded photograph of her grandfather shaving a young woman's head in Lyon in September 1944.

Jeanne's inextricable bond with the irrepressible trio is sealed by her involvement in the heist of a jeweller's premises to secure the funds to 'buy back' Mélody's young daughter Éva. They cannot borrow from a bank, because, as cancer sufferers, they are regarded as unviable. The child had apparently been abducted by her father, Mélody's ex-partner, and taken back to his native Russia. Although successful in stealing the jewellery, they receive less money for it than expected from a fraudulent dealer. A more devastating outcome is the revelation, through an associate of the 'receiver,' that Mélody's story is false. She had invented the nefarious Russian boyfriend; she had taken a child's photograph from the internet; and her identity 'Mélody Frampin' was one of many she assumed during her money-making deceptions across Europe. Only Brigitte and Jeanne know of Mélody's fraud, and Brigitte's decision to remain silent stems from her desire to protect her partner, Assia. Mélody herself also remains unaware that Brigitte and Jeanne know the truth. Caught in her own lie, in possession of the money they stole for her, and physically encumbered with her friends' extravagant gifts for her imaginary child, they wave her off on the train to Berlin, where she is supposedly meeting the (fictional) Arseni with the money in exchange for 'Éva'. With Mélody gone, and the indefatigable Brigitte dying of terminal cancer, the bond between the three women becomes more protectively enveloping and mutually affirming than ever.

Section One Key Interpretative Frameworks for *Une joie féroce*

A useful starting point to consider Chalandon's own perspectives on the genesis of the novel is his insistence on its fundamental optimism, evident in an interview in July 2019: 'J'ai décidé de faire une fiction qui soit une fiction lumineuse et pas une fiction sombre'. [200] He adds wryly that had it been a 'dark book,' he would have entitled it *Au fond du trou*. For him, *Une joie féroce* embodies the relief of emerging from the turmoil and trauma of cancer with one's head held high.

[200] Sorj Chalandon, 'Sorj Chalandon présente *Une joie féroce*', Hachette France, 24 juillet 2019, <www.youtube.com>, [accessed 18 June 2020].

However, his observation holds particular significance for his conception of his female characters across his fictional works. He states that he is often reproached for having few women in his novels, 'peut-être par manque de mère'. This statement may relate to the fact, extrapolating from my second interview (Annex 2), that his mother always worked and therefore could naturally not always be with him at home. He maintained a relationship with her, according to his interview with Hees, where he states that he informed his mother of the impending publication of *Profession du père* in 2014. Although he has spoken very little about her (with no current evidence to the contrary, she is presumably still alive), his depiction of the narrator's mother in *Enfant de Salaud* is of a self-effacing and unworldly woman, who shrinks from confronting her husband and is pathetically grateful for her perfunctory retirement *apéritif* after forty years with her firm (*ES*, pp. 165-168). More broadly, from his assertion: 'En tout cas, les femmes ont toujours un rôle qui est moyen, faible, qui est effacé, qui est ailleurs, en tout cas qui n'est pas le rôle principal', it is difficult to ascertain whether he *personally* accepts this representation of his women characters, or if he is simply citing adverse commentary. Their relatively muted presence may also have been shaped by his encounters as a journalist with women's powerlessness in the culturally conservative communities from which he reported, particularly in the Middle East. It is equally possible that his father's tyrannical character and problematic past so dominate his psyche that his mother is 'crowded out', analogous with André's physical encroachment noted in Chapter Four.

Chalandon's 'licence' to write directly as the female narrator from deeply personal and stylistic perspectives proceeds from the near- concurrent onset of his own cancer with that of his wife. His artistic decisions can therefore be considered through the prism of identity, as discussed by Judith Kegan Gardiner in her critique of women writers. Her assertion: 'The word "identity" is paradoxical, meaning both sameness and distinctiveness' is highly pertinent to Chalandon's position.[201] The novel constitutes his perspective as the closest spectator to his wife's trauma *and* as the principal actor in his own pathological and psychological

[201] Judith Kegan Gardiner, 'On Female Identity and Writing by Women' in *Critical Inquiry*, 8, 'Writing and Sexual Difference' (1981), 347-361 (p. 347).

ordeal. While 'sharing' the same illness, Chalandon's distinction, 'cancer de fille, cancer de garçon' in his July 2019 interview illuminates their diverse physical symptoms and chemotherapeutic after-effects. *Une joie féroce* could therefore be considered as a potent example of his 'recul par rapport à ma réalité' (Annex 1), in which he intermingles female and male morbidity with attendant vulnerabilities. His intimate knowledge of the progress of cancer determines his characterisation of the 'cancer women' in their experience of diminished femininity, bodily betrayal and denial, emancipatory solidarity and transitory but valued respite. Kegan Gardiner's view of female identity as a *process* is also congruent with a sense of a cumulative sculpting of their personalities and presence (Kegan Gardiner, p.349). In her review of four feminist critiques of male authors writing about women, Karen Hornick cites the challenge posed by author Margaret R. Higgonet: '"Can a man implicated in patriarchy speak for a woman constrained by it?"'[202] In his October 2019 interview at Librairie Mollat, Chalandon demonstrates sensitivity to the issue of speaking for his wife, declaring that he would not have attempted the novel had he also not been a cancer sufferer: 'La première chose qui me vient à l'esprit c'est, ça y est, je peux l'écrire maintenant'. His adoption of the female perspective derives, therefore, from an empathy born out of his own experience. Hornick also observes that the more reflective feminist scholars 'are more prone to treat gender as a style or narrative mode…not sexual politics as it is lived' (p. 229). Chalandon's 'narrative mode', blending observed reality and sentient experience, can be construed as an intention to combine conviction, authenticity and the moral purpose of listening to the victim's voice, pivotal to his journalistic mission.

Other commentators censure the perceived dearth of these attributes in the work of some modern male writers. Prasanna Sawant excoriates the damaging effect of 'the highly unrealistic portrayal of the female body'.[203] Her article responded to the claim of an (unnamed) male author that he is 'the living proof that it's possible for

[202] Margaret R. Higgonet, 'A Woman's Story: Tess and the Problem of Voice', *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 14-31(15) in Karen Hornick, 'Male writers and Feminist Criticism', *NWSA Journal*, Vol. 4, 2 (1992), 228-237 (p. 228).

[203] Prasanna Sawant, 'The Bizarre Ways Some Male Authors Describe Women', 8 March 2019, <www.thecuriousreader.in/essays/male-authors-describe-women>, [accessed 21 June 2020].

a male author to write an authentic female protagonist'. His contentious assertion provoked an adverse reaction, prompting author Whitney Reynolds to ask her social media 'followers' to portray themselves in the manner of a bad male author. Sawant reports the response: 'there were over 2,000 comments where multiple women posted hilarious examples of the very likely way men might describe them in books. The common thread…was the blatant (and cringeworthy) sexualisation of women. They depicted the stark and bleak reality of how female characters are portrayed in books'. Sawant includes examples of (for her) gratuitously crude descriptions, including Paul Auster in *Brooklyn Follies*, endowing one of his women characters with 'ample, poignant breasts'. She directs her indignation more forcefully at women readers than towards the offending male authors: 'Why has this happened? And more importantly, why have we allowed it to go on for so long?' In an earlier and more critically incisive article, Michelle Willens examines literary commentators' perspectives on the differential success of male authors in creating convincing female characters. The opinions she presents include the denial that most contemporary [American] writers can create realistic women characters, in contrast to nineteenth-century authors such as Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and that conversely, 'evergreen female characters like Jane Austen and the Brontës managed to give us fine portraits of men alongside their memorable heroines'[204]. Equally, the women writers Georges Sand and George Eliot adopted male pseudonyms, and more recently the author Lionel Shriver reportedly changed her name from Margaret Ann because she felt the name would be more in keeping with her 'tomboy' nature.[205] Perhaps the most compelling and problematised aspects of Willens's piece reside in her (unattributed) citation of authors Sally Koslow and Eli Gottlieb. Koslow advances the view that women writers find it 'easier' to create male characters because they have been exposed to male-authored literature throughout their lives. The corollary, Willens suggests, is that it is more challenging for male writers 'trying to navigate the evolving battles of the sexes'. The problem may lie not in any reticence to portray female characters, but

[204] Michele Willens, 'The Mixed Results of Male Authors Writing Female Characters', March 2, 2013 <,www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/03/the-mixed-results-of-male-authors-writing-female-characters> ,[accessed 21 June 2020].
[205] <www.abc.net.au> 'Lionel Shriver', [accessed 9 October 2020].

rather in their capacity to understand them. Gottlieb's contribution is bracingly frank: "I don't necessarily find women difficult to write about in the third person…but to write them in the first person is to make a hubristic leap. It can be done -*Madame Bovary* comes to mind- but the reader will often begin from a suspicious wariness".[206]

As evidenced above, it is Chalandon's sensitivity to the potential charge of hubris for writing his novel based upon, and arguably appropriating, his wife's suffering that restrains him before his own illness. Two other voices in Willens's article merit attention. Psychologist Vivian Diller suggests that authors writing about their own gender draw upon their internal experience and 'speak from the inside out'. He notes that authors writing about the opposite sex need to inverse their perspective: 'from the outside in'. His point is not that either is better, but that writers try different viewpoints. His observation on authors' experimental and fluid approach to characterisation is also reflected in Chalandon's preliminary considerations of his protagonists' vantage point. His aesthetic and psychological pathway and its attendant challenges are cogently framed in Sarah Seltzer's comment in Willens's conclusion: "Writing across gender may be harder, require more research and humility. We may fail or get 'called out' for letting our biases show or being ignorant. But the attempt at understanding, empathy and inhabiting the soul of someone whose life experience is not ours, helps us grow as writers and people too". Chalandon's own experience of cancer, his position as principal 'actor' in the drama of his own pathology, has undoubtedly honed his understanding of his wife's trauma. Seltzer's formulation of attempting to inhabit the soul of another problematises the aspiration, recalling Auster's observation on the impossibility of entering 'another's solitude', or another's suffering (Auster, p. 20).

It is through the adoption of a martial metaphor, expressed in his October 2019 interview as 'être en guerre', that the mutuality of their illness becomes his personal battleground on which *Une joie féroce* is conducted. His creation of Brigitte, Assia and Mélody, whose development, motivation and impact are

[206] No other version of Willens's online article is currently available, and therefore details of the original sources for her citations cannot be identified.

examined below, is permeated by an undercurrent of maternal and clinical stress, intermittently assuaged by tender manifestations of friendship, affectionate joshing, sororal *complicité* and love. Although there is currently no evidence of any link between the specific fictional traits of his female characters and his wife's personality, Chalandon presents an enigmatic portrayal of his relationship with his characters in his interview with Laurent. He explains that they all embody his contradictions in different ways : 'Je suis évidemment Jeanne, je suis Brigitte, je suis Assia and je suis Mélody, bien sûr…C'est comme j'étais acteur, mais avec des rôles différents qui se répondent' (Laurent, p. 181). It is redolent of 'Madame Bovary, c'est moi', Flaubert's allusion to this self-identification with his character.[207]

Alan Williamson's discussion of male writers' perspective on, and engagement with, the feminine is a highly apposite analysis. He reviews cultural tropes of femininity: 'narcissistic display, intense awareness of one's own body, tender self-surrender, vulnerability', arguing that a man who discovers these traits within himself may face an identity crisis. He also introduces the term 'psychic pregnancy' for the process of creativity, even in men.[208] Regarding Chalandon's protagonist Jeanne, Williamson's metaphor could be reconfigured as an affirming counterbalance to the notion of cancer as a destructive, demonic gestation. He confronts what he considers the reluctance of feminist criticism to accept that some men may experience culturally defined 'female' feelings. He asserts: 'It has been quick to smell pre-emption rather than legitimate empathy, whenever male writers attempt to represent a female point of view'. It could be posited that Chalandon's claim to empathy is uniquely valid, given his almost simultaneous cancer diagnosis with that of his wife. It would therefore be misplaced to apply Williamson's reference to Adrienne Rich's critique of Rilke by accusing him of treating a female subject of a poem 'like a guest who comes on the wrong day' (p .2). Cited by Williamson, Jessica Benjamin's theory framing male writers' inhabitation of female characters 'not as wish fulfilment or pre-emptive strategy, but as the recovery of an 'attunement' (p. 6) could connote a conjugal convergence in

[207] Rebecca A. Demarest, 'C'est moi: Gustave Flaubert's "Madame Bovary", *Inquiries Journal*, 2011, 3 (p. 1).
[208] Alan Williamson, *Almost a Girl* (The University Press of Virginia, 2001), p. 1.

Chalandon's motivation for writing *Une joie féroce*.[209] Its creation is a consequence of the couple's emotional and pathological synchronicity, each battling a gendered version of the same illness. Discussing Williamson's critique, Cheryl Lange's observation: 'Writing from the female perspective allows male authors to achieve re-identification' correlates with Chalandon's impetus, in seeking to make his wife's combat his own, to wrest an uplifting narrative from an objectively tragic event.[210]

His portrayal of the women's physical, psychological and relational struggles is projected through this lens of attrition, tempered by small but precious victories. It is notable that Chalandon's women characters are often at their most compelling, revealing and vulnerable in their discourse on their own physical health, emotional wellbeing and that of those close to them, often articulated in brief outbursts and furtive gestures. Mary DeShazer provides a comprehensive critique of writers' depiction of women with cancer. She notes that 'living with cancer has become the topic of our times after decades -some would say centuries- of evasion and misrepresentation by many physicians, researchers and sometimes patients.'[211] Writing in 2005, she observes what she terms 'an intriguing cultural shift' over two decades towards the disease, so that what was once the "silent epidemic" has acquired a much higher public profile in the United States and Britain. She charts an associated socio-linguistic evolution, the now contested epithet of 'survivor' ceding to 'cured', 'living with cancer' or 'cancer-free.' She notes a life-changing moment experienced by most cancer patients on receipt of their diagnosis. She perceives writers' instinct to seize their own agency by breaking the taboo of silence hitherto surrounding the disease. In so doing, they challenge its (and their) stigmatisation and reclaim their own vulnerabilities. Equally, through the representation of cancer in popular culture, she discerns what she cites as 'the "pink kitsch" of the US "cancer marketplace"'. She identifies autopathography - life writing about illness- as an emerging literary genre. However, she also

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[209] Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), p.162 in Alan Williamson, *Almost a Girl*, p. 6.

[210] Cheryl Lange, 'Men and Women writing Women: The Female Perspective and Feminism in U.S. Novels and African Novels in French by Manel and Female Authors', *UW-L Journal of Undergraduate Research XI*, 2008, 1-6, p. 2.

[211] Mary K. DeShazer, *Fractured Borders: Reading Women's Cancer Literature* (University of Michigan, 2005) ISBN13 978-0-472-02468-1 (electronic).

delineates opposition to 'the equation of illness with femininity…the pathologizing of cancerous bodies…and the politics of mastectomy, reconstructive surgeries and prosthesis'.[212]

Cited by DeShazer, one of the most robust critics of the medicalisation of women's experience and of the metaphorical frame of reference deployed to embed and perpetuate cancer mythology is Susan Sontag, who tragically died from leukaemia. She prefaces her critique with this assertion: 'illness is *not* a metaphor and… the most truthful way of regarding illness…is one most purified of, most resistant to, metaphoric thinking'.[213] She repudiates what she terms 'anti-intellectual pieties and a facile compassion all too triumphant in contemporary medicine and psychiatry' (Sontag, p. 6). Paradoxically, in order to demolish established tropes associated with the disease, she engages with them by superimposing her own conceptualisation. In a penetrating comparison with another major public health scourge, she finds that whereas 'TB is understood as the disease of one organ, the lungs…cancer is understood as a disease that can turn up in any organ and whose outreach is the whole body' (p. 12). Moreover, illustrating her notion of cancerous expansion, she considers that, rather than time-related, it is 'a disease or pathology of space', inspiring topographical metaphors exemplifying its capacity for proliferation (p. 15). The 'site' of a cancer is also a common surgical analogy. Her observation that, excepting death, the most feared consequence is mutilation or amputation, can be extended to encompass the excision of identity, connecting with Kegan Gardiner's comments above on identity signifying both sameness and distinctiveness. Building upon this insight, for a cancer sufferer undergoing treatment, both forms of being could arguably co-exist, collide with or neutralise one another. The patient is physically altered although she may (or may not) feel that she is a different person. Indeed, a (con)fusion of sameness and difference may ensue.

Furthermore, if, as Sontag argues, it is the tumour that possesses the energy rather than the patient (p. 64), cancer compromises the sufferer's agency. It could even be

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[212] M. K. DeShazer, *Fractured Borders*: *Reading Women's Cancer Literature*.
[213] Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor & Aids and its Metaphors* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978, Penguin Classics, 2002), p.3.

posited that if cancer- and chemo-induced lethargy is an increasingly obvious index of a patient's passivity, the disease itself could be considered as 'anti-Rancièresque': its disempowering physical and mental effects supplant motivation and action with the passivity of the 'unemancipatable' spectator. The mutation of identity –its fragmentation, re-creation and consolidation- constitutes a pertinent catalyst for Chalandon's characterisation of his protagonists' vulnerability. Sontag's statement: 'As TB was the disease of the sick self, cancer is the disease of the Other' suggests a manifold significance for victims' sense of identity (p. 69). Firstly, for Sontag it is an alien invasion of 'non-intelligent cells…and you are replaced by the nonyou' (p. 68). Secondly, 'otherness' is the outcome of a sufferer's sensation of feeling the same and yet different. Thirdly, cancer separates the sufferer from those who retain their original 'wholeness'. Academic and cancer patient Susan Gubar, cited by Jane Schultz, observes that 'the cancer patient's impermanent condition often constitutes a radical break from her earlier identity'.[214]

It is specifically in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer that Sontag discerns the deployment of the metaphor of war, corresponding to Chalandon's military register in his portrayal of the ordeal he and his wife endured. Sontag notes that since the body is 'under attack' and being invaded by cancer cells, the only remedy is a counterattack. She describes the treatment as chemical warfare, as 'patients are "bombarded" with toxic rays', in order to 'kill' the cancer, while hopefully sparing the patient (p. 66). By extension, cancers are considered as 'aggressive', and news media celebrate or lament individuals winning or losing their 'battle' with cancer, 'fighting' until the end, or 'beating' it as 'survivors'. Indeed, expanding upon Sontag's martial register, the progress of the disease is conceived of as one of 'stages' like enemy troop movements, against which surgeons launch targeted chemical counterattacks. The treatment's debilitating side-effects are the collateral damage inflicted on the patient.

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[214] Susan Gubar, *Memoir of a Debulked Woman*: *Enduring Ovarian Cancer* (New York: Norton, 2012), p.170 in Jane E. Schultz, 'Valid/Invalid: Women's Cancer Narratives and the Phenomenology of Body Alteration, Theorizing Breast Cancer: Narrative Politics, Memory', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, Vol.32/33, 2/1 (2013/2014), 71-87 (p. 76).

Sontag's configuration of cancer as 'unregulated, abnormal, incoherent growth' (p. 64), reveals three further aspects relevant to the novel. Firstly, as discussed above, the mere fact of 'hosting' an unpredictable, teratological predator sets the cancer sufferer firmly apart from 'normal' society. Schultz discusses the case of feminist writer Audre Lorde who fears that she might be "expelled" from the "social body" by those who considered her *their* cancer (Schultz, p. 75). Equally, it engenders terror in the sufferer and those closest to her. Moreover, her apparent passivity in the face of the onslaught of the disease provokes 'victim-blaming'. This malign instinct corrodes the already fraught relationship between sufferer Jeanne and her husband Matt, who becomes increasingly unable to mask his distaste for the physical manifestations of her disease. Sontag bases her observation that 'Psychological theories of illness are a powerful means of placing the blame on the ill' on her scrutiny of the evolution of medical theories that advance the view that because diseases stem from dysfunctional mental attitudes, they can be cured by willpower (p. 58). It is therefore rational to assume that if an individual continues to be ill, it is because she is failing to exercise sufficient self-discipline. This baffled impatience with the patient, articulated through the commonplace urging 'Pull yourself together,' imbues Matt's interactions with Jeanne. However, like Jeanne, Matt continues to suffer the loss of their young son; but as a bereaved father, he has no supportive fraternity from which to draw solace.

The corollary of the victim-blaming signalled by Sontag is the phenomenon of self-blaming. This instinct connects with treachery and illness through Ben Jelloun's foregrounding of self- reproach as a salient constituent of personal betrayal, discussed in Chapter Three. Cancer exhibits two major traits of treachery: stealth and abandonment. From a clinical viewpoint, Andrew Ivy, an American physiologist who testified at the Nuremburg Medical Trial in 1946, details its most pernicious pathological characteristic: 'It is unique among diseases because the host is consumed by its own flesh. The thought of this fact, the frequently associated pain, and the insidiousness and treachery of its attack place cancer first amongst the most dreaded diseases'.[215] From her personal perspective, Grubar

[215] A.C. Ivy, *Science*, 'Biology of Cancer', Vol.106. No. 2759 (November 14, 1947) 455-460 (p. 455).

notes the bodily ‘treachery’ and ‘tyranny’ of ovarian cancer, observing: “I no longer ‘have’ or ‘relate to’ a body. This injured body rules me” (Schultz, p. 74). Two observations by Ben Jelloun on the toxic impact of betrayal on a formerly close friendship are relevant to the ‘relationship’ between the cancer patient and her disease. His reference to ‘l’autre soi-même rêvé’ in Chapter Three could be sombrely re-worked as 'l’autre soi-même redouté’ in reference to the victim’s post-diagnosis self. Additionally, his configuration of the insidiousness of the duplicitous friend: ‘On tue à l’intérieur, sans verser du sang’ is analogous to an unseen but fatal cancerous growth (p. 135). The capacity of a cancer diagnosis to cause physical and emotional destruction is comparable to the psychological and social impact of the unmasked traitor as ‘vecteur de discontinuité et de changement’ graphically illustrated in Chalandon’s characterisation of Mélody's hitherto unsuspected duplicity.[216]

There is a discernible intersection of two further facets of the evolution of betrayal in *Une joie féroce*. The first is the notion of abandonment by the traitor of his victim. In proportion to the emergence, invasiveness and internalisation of her illness, Jeanne experiences Matt’s progressive emotional and ultimately physical desertion. This deeply traumatic event is addressed by Chalandon in his interview in September 2019: ‘Les hommes partent. Quand la femme est malade, l’homme s’en va. Quand l’homme est malade, la femme reste.’ The implications of this gendered response are examined in the Section Two below. Secondly, a synthesis of the possibility advanced by Schehr and Prieur of a post-betrayal life noted in Chapter Three, comprising new alliances and opportunities, is arguably consonant with the tenacity and exuberance exhibited by Jeanne and her companions in the post-operative stages of their individual and collective ordeal.

[216] Sébastien Schehr, *Traîtres et trahisons: de l’Antiquité à nos jours* (Paris: Berg International Éditeurs, 2008), p. 123.

Section Two: Anchors and Errants: Gendered Profiles of Presence and Absence in *Une joie féroce*

The burgeoning of the women's influence and confidence in proportion to their psycho-spatial dominance can be discerned, enabling them to be present in ways in which his male characters are not. If, as Chalandon asserts in his July 2019 interview, 'Je veux que Matt soit le concentré de tous ces hommes' (who abandon their female partners when illness strikes), the women in *Une joie féroce* embody his female characters' aspirations for agency, solidarity and transformation. 'Errant' in the title is borrowed from its adjectival form to designate 'wanderers', like Matt and the ultimately uncommitted Mélody.

It is useful to preface the discussion of the protagonist Jeanne Hervineau with Chalandon's depiction of her. In his September 2019 interview he declares: 'Jeanne est ma narratrice…elle est libraire. Et Jeanne est une femme plutôt efficace, plutôt tranquille, plutôt soumise…soumise par la vie'. In his characterisation of her 'pre-diagnosis' self, she resembles her fictional female antecedents in her placidity and meekness. Although Chalandon does not comment on the significance of her occupation as a bookseller, she is surrounded by the enriching output of the literary world which she recommends to her appreciative clientèle. Her work provides empathy and sustenance, reflected in her colleagues' solicitous and sensitive interactions with her. It also fortifies her intellectually in the early stages of her illness. She becomes a reviewer for an elderly widowed primary school teacher, who kindly tricks her into reading *Fugitive parce que reine.* Published in January 2018, it is Violaine Huismain's autobiographical account of her and her sister's love for their bipolar mother. With '« on s'en sort très bien, Jeanne. Vous verrez »', Madame Gérard imparts hope and the importance of maintaining the joyful pursuits of reading and discussing literature (*JF*, p.62). This occurrence also illustrates the esteem in which Jeanne is held by another educated woman, to whom her opinion matters. She then observes her recently diagnosed cancer through a literary prism. Her reflections: 'Quel nom lui donner? J'ai pensé au camélia. Un bouton de rouge sang. Une fleur de décembre, le mois le plus éloignée du soleil' (p. 24), are incorporated within the chapter title 'Une dame au camélia', an intertextual reference to Dumas's *La Dame aux Camélias*. Its connection is the eponymous character Marguerite Gautier's

suffering from consumption or TB, noted by Sontag in the context of pathological metaphor (Sontag, p. 15). Another possible association with prostitute Marguerite, is that her nickname derives from her custom of wearing a red camellia when menstruating, and a white one when she is available for her clients. Although Jeanne's association with the flower appears to be seasonably mournful, her naming of her cancer indicates her intention to own and formalise her condition by creating a diary, like male protagonists Jacques and Émile.

Jeanne's first, literally, life-changing contact with her cancer has naturally occurred within a medical setting. However, even within the clinic she confronts two contrasting attitudes: from the brisk and formal male doctor, and her empathetic and attentive female nurse, aptly named Agathe, or 'good' in Greek. She embodies a reassuring, stable 'presence' for Jeanne in the aftershock of her diagnosis. Her inability to reach Matt on his phone and her bleak message: 'Mauvaise nouvelle. J'ai peut-être un cancer. Rappelle-moi, s'il te plaît' combines with the necessity of having to await his return, exacerbating her tension. The sense of a 'parallel' existence is palpable in her observation that: 'Tout empestait Noël. Les vitrines. Les rues. Les visages' (*JF*, p. 20). When leaving the temporary oasis of the clinic, she experiences the festive as fetid.

Matt's absence from his phone is counterbalanced by his stolid presence in the apartment. His exclamatory '« Merde »' paradoxically constitutes the right and the wrong response, redolent of the social awkwardness which cancer seeds in human interaction (Schultz, p. 76). Cancer *is* 'merde' and all its connotations, evoking Chalandon's alternative suggested title for his novel *Au fond du trou*, aired in July 2019. Hitherto unspeakable, it is filthy and indecent. Matt's outburst is born of the frustration of one suddenly encumbered with inconvenient information. Indeed, his accompanying action: 'Matt s'est assis lourdement dans son fauteuil' suggests that it is *he* who has received the devastating diagnosis. Moreover (recalling Auster's profile of his present-yet-absent father), Matt is indubitably physically there, but he has withdrawn into his own pain. Jeanne's tearless reaction: 'Je n'avais plus de larmes. Seulement les mots du radiologue, les gestes de mon assistante, mon désarroi' suggests she has diluted her grief through the pathologised discourse of her doctor and the sensitive gestures of her nurse. Matt's reminder that he is on a business trip next day and therefore unable to accompany her for an urgent

meeting with her doctor signals his psychological distancing, reinforced by his reluctance to re-organise his schedule: 'Une grimace qui disait non'. His obstructive and self-focused demeanour develops an accusatory edge: '« Tu ne te doutais de rien? »' (*JF*, p. 21) His question reflects the victim-blaming instinct discussed by Sontag. More egregiously, his second remark: '« On les sent, ces choses-là, non? »' (p. 22), recalls two dimensions of the interpretative framework above. It finds resonance in a certain kind of presumptuous and maladroit empathy expressed by friends of cancer sufferers, approximating to Sontag's term 'facile compassion'. His pseudo-question also echoes the insouciant arrogance of some male authors, perceived by female critics above, which entitles them to know what women should feel, implicitly questioning their vigilance and 'reading' of their own bodies.

The erosion of their 'couple' and Matt's physical and psychological evanescence become more dramatically pronounced as the scene progresses. Jeanne's observation : 'Il m'a observée, comme s'il me découvrait au milieu de son appartement' exemplifies Chalandon's rich concision. In Matt's eyes, Jeanne has been reduced to an unexpected object that he came across in *his* apartment. He feels no affinity with her; his gaze has literally become estranged from her. She remarks that he has not held her since the death of their son, tracing the pathway from a physical to a marital bereavement, with chilly moribundity reflected in his cold palm when he hesitantly touches her arm. However, Matt's reserves of empathy and solicitude have been exhausted by the emotional toll of their son's death; he has little to offer Jeanne in her plight. His eventual departure is prefigured by his suitcase packed for his imminent business trip. For Jeanne he is a retreating figure. Unable to feel his hurt, she can only perceive a man indulging in what might be termed a 'victim-martyr' reflex, when he gripes at having to 'nibble' on something because she feels too unwell to dine out.

Matt's absorption in what is most acceptable to him impels him towards another assumption: '« Tu sais que c'est un cancer qui se guérit très bien »'. His medical ignorance and scant emotional intelligence are as starkly revealed as is his clumsy surprise that Jeanne had not suspected her illness. His depersonalising reflexive formulation demonstrates his meagre investment in Jeanne's welfare, beyond its impact on him. His falsely authoritative assertion is also a diminution and denial,

from Jeanne's perspective. If it is a cancer with a high recovery rate, there would logically cease to be a problem. Perversely, she is not permitted *her* fear while he imposes a reality which is tolerable for *him*. The deconstruction of his final verbal remark and of his only written communication to her, preceding his renunciation and flight, reveals not only his own impotent turmoil, but also highlights a nexus with the notion of insufficiency examined in Chapter Three: the sense of not having the capacity to be a good enough friend or spouse. Matt's outburst: '« Toi, ta maladie, nous. Je ne sais pas. Je ne peux plus »' embodies several intertwined psychological responses (p. 107). The second and third sentences clearly voice his disorientation and powerlessness in confronting the unknown progress of Jeanne's disease. They evoke his feeling of a mutual marital lack. He cannot console her as her husband, and she holds no allure for him as his wife. The distinctiveness and sequencing reflected in Matt's triple subject configuration underscore his almost insular detachment from their relationship, with her illness as the barrier between them. In the first sentence, the fulcrum of 'ta maladie' emphasises its centrality to the disintegration of their relationship. It implies that Jeanne is responsible for the malignancy which has tainted their marriage, already rocked by their son's death. Matt's tacitly accusatory stance contrasts starkly with Chalandon's own reported determination to share his wife's ordeal, her 'war', which he assumes as his own. As well as the 'victim-blaming' cited by Sontag, her characterisation of the othering of cancer is equally pertinent in illuminating its potentially alienating effects on the emotions of the victim's family. Later, Matt's laconic valedictory note, '*Prends soin de toi*' bleakly complements his final spoken remark (p. 108). Having articulated the direct association between Jeanne and her cancer, he now passes the responsibility of its ownership to her. His absence signifies that she must be proportionately more present for herself; his abandonment represents *his* vulnerability to her vulnerability and his profound and unspoken suffering for the loss of their son.

Jeanne's unvoiced rejoinder to Matt's first reaction is ironic: 'Je sais! J'ai toujours eu de la chance' (p. 22). It signals the beginning of her internalised articulation of the meaning of her cancer. Contrasting with Matt's brusque, superficial assurance and his seeming imperviousness to the implications of the illness for *them*, Jeanne engages with its overt and covert meanings. Equally, her mining of her emotions at

this pivotal juncture could be considered a determination to remain anchored in the present. In contrast, Matt is in 'flight mode': hovering nervously before departing, his faux reassurance masking his fear and incomprehension. Recalling DeShazer's observation, Jeanne reflects on the social, literary and media manifestations of the disease. The pink ribbon symbol of solidarity, a fictional tragedy, the sad demise of a soap-opera heroine had, until her own diagnosis that morning, constituted her sole points of reference for cancer (p. 23). She must now chart her own pathway, from an unexpected entrance to an unknowable exit.

While Matt is eating his solitary meal in the café below, Jeanne has begun committing her thoughts to her notebook, impelled by two imperatives. The first, discernible in Chalandon's decision to write the novel to keep his cancer at bay, articulated in September 2019, is her need to name it. Her assertion: 'Pour mieux la combattre, j'ai aussi décidé de donner un nom à cette ordure' evokes a similar objectifying yet personalising instinct which leads her to name it 'camélia', as discussed above. She also needs the emancipatory white space of the first page of her journal to dispel the claustrophobia and emotional chill of the apartment. Chalandon does not depict a woman fleeing from her sombre reality, but rather engaging bravely and even brazenly with it, manifest in her stark and startling question: "*Suis-je en train de vivre le début de ma propre mort?*" (p. 23). She grapples with the term 'cancer', excavating it for its clandestine malevolence: 'Dans le mot cancer, il y a de l' injustice. De la traîtrise. C'est le corps qui renonce. Qui cesse de vous défendre. C'est une écharde mortelle.' Jeanne's personalisation of the disease as a stealthy visitor launches her self-reproach, distilled from Matt's earlier accusatory query: 'Je me suis demandé si le mal était entré en moi par l'effraction ou si je lui avais offert l'hospitalité.' Is her cancer a burglar or a guest? This question reflects the self-blaming instinct identified by Sontag. Jeanne's conscious decision to name her nemesis after the flower and the process which guided her choice, exhibit her resolve to forge a weapon from her vulnerability: 'Je suis entrée en brouillard comme on part au combat, en me rêvant avril' (p. 24). The paradox of seeking to sustain spring-like hope on the brink of a pathological and psychological winter becomes a key component of Jeanne's dilemma: how to deploy weakness as strength? Her unflinching engagement with her spectrum of emotions recalls Denise's resilience in *Profession du père,* when, locked out by her

angry husband, she makes the best of her solitary night on the porch (*PP*, p. 23). It also resonates with Chalandon's own instinct to embrace his anguish, voiced in his discussion with Laurent.

As a context for the notion of presence in his female protagonists, it is helpful to recall Chalandon's characterisation of the novel in his interview of October 2019: 'Ce n'est pas un livre sur le cancer, c'est un livre sur ce que ce monstre peut faire de vous'.[217] His observation is embodied in his portrayal of Matt's sorrowful and impotent alienation, where the existing marital fault line emanating from the loss of their son has been irrevocably exacerbated by Jeanne's cancer. The boy's death merits comment. It can be related to the similarly unseen demise of another Lucas, Pierre Frémaux's son and protagonist Marcel's elder brother in *La Légende de nos pères*. The passing of each Lucas ('bringer of light') brings deleterious consequences for Pierre and the Hervineau couple. More broadly, the impact of the 'monstre' of cancer on the four women in *Une joie féroce* can be scrutinised through a collective and individualised prism, focusing on the most salient questions: what does vulnerability look like for each woman? And what truths does each embrace, modify or discard to secure her survival?

Chalandon's dramatisation of the solidarity binding the four women introduces and concludes his narrative. The first paragraph of the first chapter entitled 'Une vraie connerie' depicts Jeanne, Brigitte, Assia and Mélody in a parked car. This scene is reprised fifteen chapters later, after an extensive portrayal of the characters' motivations and inhibitions. An example of Chalandon's adroit pithiness in conveying accumulated anxiety and his 'inhabiting' of Jeanne from the beginning of the novel justifies its full citation:

> J'ai imaginé renoncer. La voiture était à l'arrêt. Brigitte au volant. Mélody à sa droite. Assia et moi assises sur la banquette arrière. Je les ai implorées. S'il vous plaît. On arrête là. On enlève nos lunettes ridicules, nos cheveux synthéthiques, Toi, Assia, tu te libères de ton voile. On range nos armes de farces et attrapes. On rentre à la maison. Tout aurait été si simple, tranquille. Quatre femmes dans un véhicule mal garé, qui reprendrait sa route après une halte sur le trottoir. Mais je n'ai rien dit. C'était trop tard. Et puis je voulais être là. (*JF*, p. 9)

A salient aspect is the projection of Jeanne's unease about the intended bank robbery. The scene is parenthesised by reluctance and desire, and it is the latter

[217] 'Sorj Chalandon-Une joie féroce', Librairie Mollat, 11 October 2019 <www.youtube.com>, [accessed 18 June 2020].

which triumphs. Yet it is paradoxically her cancer which fuels her audacity. With nothing to lose, it is possible that she would not have contemplated the robbery had she been healthy. Equally, her attraction to it may be attributable to Chalandon's narrative hybridity in his creation of a female character about to commit a traditionally 'male' crime. There is an irrefutably 'pantomime' dimension of absurdly confected appearance, underpinned by a deadly and immoveable resolve. Equally, the women's physical positioning in the car reflects the relational geometry which manifests itself through the differential stages of pain and regained strength experienced by each character. Brigitte is literally and metaphorically 'in the driving seat' regarding her dominance of the group; and Jeanne is behind her, inspired by her story and forging a firm friendship with Assia beside her. Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of this introduction of the 'Club K' is the absence of any reference to their medical condition. The only hint of the reality of their chemically induced alopecia is the allusion to 'cheveux synthétiques', although this detail is compatible with the women's generally outlandish disguises. Moreover, Jeanne's unease stems not from any pathological cause, but from her perception of the riskiness of their situation, expressed through her silent pleas but assuaged by her conviction that she is in the right place and in the right 'present'.

Contrasting with this brash and unexpected opening scene is the soft and cocooned intimacy of Jeanne's final depiction of the women. With Mélody's return to her former life of fraud and extortion, and Brigitte now terminally ill with secondary cancer, the three friends go back to the lake. Here Jeanne has found solace observing the doughty 'Gavroche,' the duck who asserts his place among the elegant swans. 'Gavroche' is also Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* street urchin, reinforcing the sense of determined survival against adversity:

> Assia a enveloppé son amie dans une couverture. Et moi avec. Nous étions trois, protégées par le lourd tissu beige. Au loin, le canard prenait ses distances avec les cygnes. Il plongeait la tête dans l'eau, s'ébrouait brusquement, ne se retournait pas. Il filait seul vers le large. (p. 312)

Brigitte is no longer named, as she and Jeanne are wrapped protectively in a heavy blanket by Assia, Brigitte's stalwart partner and now Jeanne's firm friend. The scene simultaneously evokes sharing and separation: unshakeable solidarity under the reassuringly soft refuge which partitions them physically from the external

world. Yet it is the natural environment which still consoles and energises them in its seasonal constancy and imperviousness to human joy or tragedy. The women are present for each other but, in tandem with the inexorable brutality of cancer's progress, the dynamics of their relationship have shifted again. They are now tending to the hitherto invincible Brigitte. While her identity as the former 'strong woman' is eroded by her advancing cancer, those of Assia and Jeanne remain intact and even reinforced. The sole indication of vulnerability is Brigitte's enveloping, mediated through the lens of the natural world.

Chalandon's assessment of his narrative in September 2019: 'Donc, c'est une fable en fait, s'en sortir par les moyens les plus illégaux…Elles brisent tout' provides a fruitful *entrée* into the motivations and interactions within the group of women who befriend and ultimately 'adopt' Jeanne. His reference to 'fable' suggests his intention to impart a moral message, an aim supported by his comments on the capacity of cancer to become a spur to surmount an emotionally devastating and socially stigmatising disease. The fable's universality is diffused through its symbolism, especially pertinent to Chalandon's characterisation of Brigitte and her relationship with Jeanne. A mythological *timbre* is discernible in Brigitte's name and origins: it originates from the Celtic goddess of fire and poetry, and Brigitte's birthplace and early life are rooted in Brittany. Her surname Le Meneur felicitously blends the article prefixing a Breton patronymic with the nominative typification of 'the Leader'. It is also noteworthy that her childhood friend, whose amorous attentions remain unrequited, is Pierre (Perig) Le Gwenn, or the white or luminous one, an etymology recalling Lucas, Jeanne's dead son. Crucially, it reflects Chalandon's declared artistic purpose in July 2019 to create a story full of light, not darkness, cited above, with the direction of his novel as 'Un acheminement vers la lumière'.

Like Jeanne, Brigitte has experienced selfishness and abandonment by those she loved, although in more convoluted and ambiguous ways. Her relationship with the mendacious 'Argentinian' Tiziano, in reality Mont-de-Marsan petty criminal, Hervé (an approximate echo of Matt Hervineau), produces their son Matias who disowns her when he is eighteen. Hervé earns her a two- year prison term, commuted to sixteen months, as an accomplice to his failed bank heist. In prison, she learns the extent of Hervé's deceit; her parents and uncle drown in a fishing

accident; and after belatedly agreeing to be tested, she learns that she has vaginal cancer, the epitome of the 'cancer de fille'. This accretion of tragedy culminates in her son's adoption and subsequent estrangement. Her identity mutates continuously during this period. While acknowledging their markedly different contexts, the diminution of Brigitte's maternal role and her attendant emotional frustration echo Chalandon's other mother figures. Although Denise (Émile's mother in *Profession du père*) and Louise (Jacques's mother in *Le Petit Bonzi*) are physically present for their sons, their husbands' domineering influence impedes their capacity to discharge their maternal role.

Brigitte begins her psychological recovery through her relationship with Assia Belouane, a waitress she meets in Saint-Denis after her release from prison. Although she temporarily conceals her newly discovered sexual identity from officialdom in the doomed hope that she will regain custody of her son, it becomes evident that Assia brings joy and stability to her life. Brigitte's pathway to her newly found sexual orientation recalls Kegan Gardiner's configuration of female identity as a process. Assia enriches Brigitte's presence as a woman, counteracting her ruinous liaison with the treacherous Tiziano/Hervé. They also share a 'marginal' status, given Assia's Maghrébin heritage. Although her rewarding female relationship cannot cure her illness, Brigitte's feisty presence enables her to reacquire her self-belief and reassert her new self in the face of the 'nonyou' of cancer (Sontag, p. 68). Despite Hervé's abandonment, her male relationships have not been entirely dysfunctional, unlike those of Jeanne and Assia. She maintains a lifelong friendship with the devoted Perig Le Gwenn. He originates from the same rugged region; both are indelibly imbued with a bracing Breton resilience and their fondness quickly resurfaces when they meet again in Paris. Perig, now police chief, emulates his surname in his clear loyalty to Brigitte, by ensuring that she and her 'gang' are not incriminated in their failed jewellery robbery. The complexity and durability of their relationship, and that of Brigitte and Assia, reflect Chalandon's thoughtful and delicate approach to the psychology of his female characters. In keeping with his ambitions for his suffering but unbowed women characters, he resists 'obvious' resolutions. He could have 'matched' Brigitte and Perig, although the latter's senior position in law enforcement may have precluded her involvement with, and leadership of, her 'bande de filles', thereby attenuating

the power of this feisty female protagonist. Chalandon's exposition of same-sex female love appears not as a 'flight' from dysfunctional heterosexuality, but as a positive choice, enabling Brigitte to become an 'actor' in her own right, neither defined nor overshadowed, either by an albeit well-meaning male presence such as Perig or by the devious Hervé.

Assia's narrative complements Brigitte's in two key aspects. Firstly, her experience of a heterosexual relationship is that of macho domination by the casually racist military obsessive, Frank, 'un petit homme', whose name may signal his penchant for a particular kind of Gaulish proto- nationalism (*JF,* p. 163). She accompanies him on his monthly war games and tolerates his nickname for her, 'l'Arabe', despite her explanation that her name means 'she who cares for'. She persists in interpreting his obtuseness as tenderness, even donning the legionnaire-style military cap worn by French troops in Algeria which he gives her. Like Brigitte, Assia's identity has been insidiously subsumed by 'son héros de pain d'épices' (p.164). Secondly, and more poignantly, aware that the immature and narcissistic Frank has emphatically rejected any future which includes children, she has a secret abortion: 'En quelques heures, elle est passée de mère à rien' (p. 164). To accommodate Frank's priorities, she has effaced her own. She eventually realises the depth of her contempt for him, aggravated by her shame for having tolerated the abusive relationship. His desultory presence means nothing more to her than the sound of teeth-brushing, a toilet flushing or alien footsteps on a grubby carpet (p. 165). Freed from his influence and noise, she nevertheless keeps his air pistol, a weapon which will play a significant role in the heist months later. Assia's steely appropriation of the 'prise de guerre' and the awakening of her courage to leave her emotionally destructive relationship find their roots in the turmoil of her childhood in France. Her parents were Algerian immigrants, but her mother eventually left her father. He had become disillusioned with life in France, angry with what he considered his wife's liberal upbringing of their elder daughter and with her job as a nurse. She refused to go back with him and, having threatened to bring his brother-in-law to France to bring his sister and daughters back home, he abducted the young Assia from her childminder, keeping her clandestinely for a week at his friends' house. His subsequent arrest, trial, divorce and loss of child custody led to his inglorious return to Algeria. Assia's experience

discloses both the process and triumph of a resistant female presence, confronting and confounding the nefarious impact of her father and her partner. She has also short-circuited Frank's narrative of paramilitary domination by making her own story significant and enduring. Regarding my earlier attribution of the relative powerlessness and invisibility of Chalandon's female characters to his observation of their subordinate position as a foreign correspondent, it is possible to consider Assia as a composite of women he may have encountered during his overseas reporting assignments. Equally, Frank's chauvinism may reflect macho attitudes he witnessed among soldiers deployed in the Middle East and Northern Ireland.

Mélody was formerly Eva in the criminal underworld in which she became progressively implicated from an early age. She attracted the soubriquet 'la poupée' because of her white skin and fine features, although it also carries the connotation of a gangster's 'moll' (p. 275). Her reinvented personage Mélody Frampin, by which she was always known by the three women (and continued to be so by Assia, whose friends shielded her from the truth of Mélody's identity), is noteworthy. Her first name belies the disharmony she introduced into the circle, while Frampin, echoing 'fripon', retains a sense of insouciant roguishness. However, her duplicity is not confined to the re-imagining of her own identity. She bestows the name Eva upon the fictitious child she is ostensibly desperate to ransom from the clutches of her nefarious partner Arseni in Ukraine. By fashioning her 'daughter's' existence through the purloined internet photo of 'Anastasia', a Russian child model, Mélody seals herself into a luridly perilous transnational fiction (p. 279). Her readiness to refer to her (invented) daughter contrasts with her friends' reluctance to discuss their 'lost' children: Jeanne's dead son; Assia's aborted baby; and Brigitte's alienated son. Her mythomania may originate from her chaotic past and splintered identity which she rationalises by wielding the power of story. Yet, perhaps the most intriguing dimension which ultimately destabilises her entire account is that no-one, including herself, knows her 'real' name, so comprehensively buried is it beneath an accretion of fabulation, assumed lives and dubious accomplices encountered inside and beyond prison walls.

Mélody's self-imposed or externally inflicted misfortunes reveal Chalandon's instinct to engage fully with psychological trauma. No cathartic moment emerges in her relationship with the other women. Even the 'relief' of having gained her

financial goal of a hundred thousand euros, and the prospect of seeing her abducted daughter Eva, are of course chimeras. Her impulse for flight is reflected in her geographical transmutations and increasingly tortuous pattern of malfeasance. Her ostensibly Eastern European backstory and her involvement with criminal activity across several jurisdictions emphasise Chalandon's abiding attention to humanitarian problems, evidenced in his concerns as a journalist about forced or trafficked child labour, discussed in Chapter Two. His portrayal of Mélody's shadowy criminal background also echoes aspects of *Le Quatrième Mur*, in that her characterisation is shaped by labyrinthine networks, spawned by geopolitical volatility. Her life is a maelstrom of violent fictions and flights, culminating in a mythic motherhood. Paradoxically, the only part of her that is tragically authentic is her cancer.

Mélody's dysfunctional, chaotic lifestyle and her extreme cynicism in abusing and profiting from the efforts and risks of other female cancer sufferers reflect Chalandon's assertion above that having the illness does not automatically induce goodness or altruism. In her case, her friends' generosity induces flickers of regret, particularly when they are seeing her off on her journey to recover her daughter with the money from their 'heist'. However, the additional stratum of complexity is Brigitte's and Jeanne's foreknowledge of her deceit. Any conciliatory or confessional instinct upon which she might have acted would have been roundly rejected, given Brigitte's determination that she assumes responsibility for the consequences of her lie.

Chalandon's statement: 'Cette histoire ne tient que parce qu'il y a une trahison,' and his observation: 'S'il n'y a pas de trahison, il n'y a pas d'histoire', unambiguously highlight Mélody's duplicity as a *sine qua non*. He states that he does not resent her, an attitude consistent with his repudiation of judgement. The second part of his sentence: 'et les filles ne lui en veulent pas' (Laurent, p. 180), is not strictly accurate. There is arguably a vengeful reflex in Brigitte's insistence that Mélody must undertake her journey to reclaim her 'daughter': as discussed above, she is (literally and figuratively) penned into her fictitious life. Brigitte's mindset recalls Marcel Frémaux's punitive reaction to his discovery of Beuzaboc's mendacity. Yet, her betrayal is unusual in that Chalandon's traitors have all hitherto been male. Mélody's disruption of this pattern produces an unnerving

effect, like the recognition that a woman can also be a child abuser or killer. His framing of her as the transgressor necessary to his narrative recalls another facet of the function of the traitor, discussed in Chapter Three. It is possible to conceive of Mélody's abuse of her friends' trust as indispensable to the illumination of *their* indefatigable altruism, as well as providing the rationale for the heist.

Further aspects distinguish her from the other women. She does not possess Brigitte's or Assia's resilience. She does not appear to 'learn' from experience, however harrowing, nor possess a modicum of emotional intelligence. In that respect, she is not dissimilar to Frank, Assia's ex-partner. Her rootlessness contributes to her ultimate intangibility: 'Aide sociale, psychologues, personne n'en était jamais venu à bout' (p. 275). Her transient life provides her with no grounding. She is an orphan and the mother of the imaginary child. Rather than a victim, she is a vector, ultimately weightless and formless, possessing no substance other than that which her constantly shifting, identities and narratives provisionally lend her. Her liminal position between transnational borders, adolescence and womanhood contrasts strikingly with the increasingly settled presence of her former companions in *Une joie féroce* and, more broadly, with the domestically focused women in his other novels. The section below posits that the evolving characterisation of these female figures across his fiction emanates from his progressive problematisation of their role and impact.

Section Three: From Women's Lot to Luminosity: Chalandon's Personal and Artistic Emancipation

The foregoing discussion of the differential proportions of gendered presence and absence in *Une joie féroce* contextualises this exploration of autobiographical and fictional antecedents in Chalandon's earlier novels and their relationship to his depiction of the lives of Jeanne, Brigitte, Assia and Mélody. There are two principal aspects to this scrutiny: Chalandon's autobiography rooted in political conflict, focusing on Sheila Meehan and Imane in the 'Irish' novels and *Le Quatrième Mur;* and the nature and effects of motherhood in *Le Petit Bonzi*, *Profession du père* and *Une joie féroce.*

Prior to *Une joie féroce*, Chalandon has not required permission to write about men. Yet, as recalled in his interviews with Jean-Luc Hees and Françoise Laurent,

he displayed sensitivity to his mother and brother before the publication of *Profession du père*, and to the victims' families of the Liévin mining disaster in researching *Le Jour d'avant*. This instinct reflects his balanced management of the competing imperatives of his narrative and respect for his sources. There is currently no evidence of any pre-publication 'alert' on his part about *Mon Traître* or *Retour à Killybegs* to Denis Donaldson's family, although these novels engage with issues of public exposure and paramilitary retaliation. Chalandon's acknowledgement of the potential ramifications of his fiction discloses a noteworthy paradox. In those interviews, he alludes to the cleansing impact of fiction writing and the sullying effect of journalism respectively. Yet in his tactful approach to his family and to the deceased miners' relatives, and in his refusal to use his wife's illness as the basis for a novel, he reveals his consciousness of the potentially pernicious bleed of the real into the fictional.

From an autobiographical perspective, Chalandon's evolving portrayal of women carves a distinct pathway within his own consciousness. It could be posited that a spectrum of personal and aesthetic enlightenment for Chalandon is perceptible between his creation of Sheila Meehan in the early 'Irish' novels, and the four female protagonists in *Une joie féroce.* These characters assume greater authenticity commensurate with his increased engagement with the psychology of the key female figures in his own life, notably his mother and his wife. Although conjectural, this interpretation could account for the relative passivity and opacity of his representation of Sheila Meehan, Louise Rougeron and Denise Choulans: the first as his projection of Donaldson's wife, and the other two as maternal iterations. Chalandon's distance from Alice Donaldson and from his mother shares a common origin: the dominance of Denis Donaldson and of his own father which 'drowns out' the female presence. However, in the context of *Une joie féroce*, it could be posited that the near- coinciding cancer diagnoses of Chalandon and his wife within the conjugal balance of their relationship affect his fictional writing in two ways. The first and most evident, elucidated in his 2019 interviews, is his intimate contact with the story by virtue of his wife's experience and his capacity to inscribe the narrative from the inside; as a sufferer himself, he is perforce an active participant. Secondly, his understanding of his wife's ordeal through his own prevents the attenuation of the female experience by male priorities.

It could be contended that Sheila Meehan does not possess the same narrative 'heft' as Jeanne or Brigitte because Chalandon's primary motive is to understand and engage with the pain of Denis Donaldson's betrayal. *Mon Traître* and *Retour à Killybegs* are therefore in that sense 'male' novels and 'womenless' domains. Not only are the principal characters men, but their interactions are forged by paramilitary decisions and operations initiated solely by them. Indeed, Kelly's notion of the 'masculine identity of war' discussed in Chapter Four in relation to *La Légende de nos pères* describes the muscular ethic impelling Republican resistance to the British presence. The mission of Irish Republican volunteers is to defend the defenceless –women and children- and more abstractly, Mother Ireland, analogous with the Gallic Marianne. Chalandon provides no further information about Donaldson's wife, and her name Alice is mentioned once to Hees, in Chalandon's explanation of the impossibility of conducting a professional interview with the recently widowed wife of his close friend because of his personal involvement, noted in Chapter One. Sheila's role and status, like those of Alice and other working-class women, are shaped by deeply entrenched traditional social and religious codes governing gender stereotypes. In that respect, it could be considered that Assia was also subjected to the social and moral constraints imposed upon her by her Maghrébin heritage, culminating in her attempted abduction by her father. However, Sheila cannot attain the psychological and social autonomy of the 'bande des filles'. Unlike them, she is a lone participant and a collateral victim in, rather than the instigator of, Chalandon's narrative, mirroring Alice Donaldson's position. Moreover, a significant element in the process of what might be termed his progressive sensitivity to the complexity of the female psyche is his problematisation of the notion of victimhood. The protagonists of *Une joie féroce* are objectively the victims of their cancer but they respond like conquerors in their spirited attempts to protect one another from its physical and emotional ravages. There is no discernible equivalent in the 'Irish' novels of the sororal solicitude infusing *Une joie féroce*. Unlike Jeanne, Sheila does not work outside the home and has therefore few opportunities to build female friendships, still less a supportive network to sustain her in the aftermath of her husband's treachery. Her life with Tyrone and their son Jack has been sufficient for her until the turmoil of his unmasking. This may also have been

Chalandon's perception of the relationship between Denis and Alice Donaldson. Perhaps the ultimate distinction between Sheila Meehan and the 'K Club' women resides in the profundity of his personal investment in the cancer sufferers' characterisation.

Sheila shares the attribute of loyalty with the careworn wives and mothers Louise Rougeron and Denise Choulans, and the *Une joie féroce* protagonists. Yet her constancy is more complex than the mere inverse of Tyrone's treachery. Functioning at the dual levels of personal and Republican interest, it emanates from an ingrained imperative of resistance to British occupation, as well as from her own reserved nature and her confidence in the predictability of familial and communal routines and rituals. Her resolute support for Tyrone, for her community and for her received Republican tradition permits little space for the kind of spontaneous joy exhibited by, for example, the old lady Grainne who befriends Antoine. An exception to Sheila's level-headedness which is more closely, if fleetingly, akin to the light-hearted moments of the 'Filles' of *Une joie féroce*, is her delight at 'winning' a weekend for two to Paris in a raffle organised by a department store, which transpires as a cover for Tyrone's spying activities abroad for his British 'handlers'. Although this utterly unimaginable event could be considered fertile terrain for a new direction in her life, it cannot secure her *épanouissement* because it is ultimately specious, founded on Tyrone's coerced collusion. Despite its illumination of hitherto unknown facets of her personality - her joy, her readiness to befriend another couple on the flight (Tyrone's 'handlers'), and her relaxed manner in the Paris hotel- the episode remains hermetically sealed in the amber of illusion (*RK*, pp. 190- 191, 200). Moreover, it harbours a cruel prodigality, in Sheila's unwitting squandering of genuine happiness on a chimera: it is a pseudo- emancipation. In contrast, the comparatively modest pleasures of favourite foods and walks for the characters in *Une joie féroce* are poignantly real and inclusive, so that they can each participate as fully as the differential stages of their cancer permit.

In *Le Quatrième Mur*, Imane shares two interconnected contextual features with Sheila Meehan. From a narrative viewpoint, both women contend with the pressures and dangers of living in a city racked by sectarian conflict. From an autobiographical perspective, Imane and Sheila are arguably fictional

representations which Chalandon has shaped from his reporting assignments in Beirut and Belfast. Extending the journalistic dimension, it could be posited that their characterisation was facilitated by Chalandon's status as a foreign correspondent: it allowed him to observe and absorb the lives of 'hidden' women from impoverished, violent enclaves, policed and guarded by prevailing local social mores and male militias. However, unlike Sheila, Imane possesses a potent presence and influence. This is illustrated in her observation to Georges: '« Tu m'as donné la force d'Antigone »' (*LQM*, p. 243). She appears at one with her Greek character through her unshakeable sense of belonging, reinforced by her indefatigable self- belief and possibly by the nominative determinism of her name meanings 'faith'. Moreover, her sense of belonging also incorporates transcendence, in her negotiation with the world *beyond* Beirut through Georges. She is imbued with an ironic insight belying her youth: 'Une gamine de 20 ans m'expliquait que pour monter sur scene, je devais pactiser avec les forces en guerre… « ma parole suffit ou tu veux déranger Arafat? »' (p. 142). Uniquely among Chalandon's female characters, her universality emanates from her steadfast adherence to her own values. She has the capacity to immerse herself in an 'imported' drama, in terms of its classical genesis and its direction by the Frenchman Georges, without committing herself to a closer bond with him. Her resolve to shape their interaction and her performance of Antigone on her own terms is an incontestable index of her social, moral and cultural self-sufficiency. Unlike other women characters, no male figure dominates, impedes, undermines or otherwise overshadows her. Even while dying in the Chatila camp, she had fought back, still grasping a tuft of her killer's hair in her fist. Chalandon's unsparing depiction of her murder: 'Une partie de son visage avait été arrachée…Sa joue, son front, sa tempe, une bouillie bourdonnante de mouches. Un bâillon était enfoncé dans sa bouche. Son cou était tranché…Ses seins avaient été tailladés…Une tache verte dévorait son abdomen… Son ventre forcé' (p. 267), prompts three observations. Her multiple but separately depicted mutilations constitute a totality of those inflicted upon victims of the Civil War. More personally, it evokes his primary journalistic mission to impart the facts from an intimate vantage point; and he pursues his instinct to 'Donner non pas à comprendre, mais donner à voir' (Laurent, p. 184).

In assessing the salient features of motherhood in the autobiographically-inspired *Le Petit Bonzi* and *Profession du père,* it may be instructive to note Chalandon's comments on his mother to Laurent, because they highlight elements infusing his depiction of Louise and Denise. 'Ma mère, sa vie entière, et même lorsque j'étais enfant, c'était : « Ah, j'espère qu'il ne va pas pleuvoir ». Et c'est tout'. His recollection reveals something of the banal predictability of his mother's outlook. However, Chalandon's reference includes her unexpected outburst: 'Une seule fois, un éclair, une phrase de ma mère, qui m'a bouleversé, elle avait lu *La Légende de nos pères* et je l'ai entendu dire: « J'espère que ton père ne comprendra pas ». « Comment, Maman, qu'est-ce que tu voulais dire? » « Non, non, rien ». Un seul éclat, tout d'un coup, d'intelligence, de lucidité, d'humanité' (Laurent, pp. 187-188). For a single moment, his mother conveyed a scintilla of understanding of his father's possible reaction to the novel. The profile of behaviour which Chalandon's allusion reveals –long periods of quotidian mundaneness suddenly dislocated by a momentary epiphany- is discernible in the characterisation of Louise and Denise, although more fatefully in the latter. That both women's lives are guided by unswerving compliance to their domestic routine is unremarkable because they embody the figure of the traditional 1960s housekeeping mother, although, as previously noted, Chalandon declared in my second interview that his mother had always worked, unlike his father (Annex 2). Louise and Denise are the epitome of domesticated female presence, the corollary of which is that their husbands can initiate and maintain external social contacts and influences in ways which are impossible for them. They are therefore not exposed to, or conscious of, the potential fluidity of relationships, as experienced by the women in *Une joie féroce*. Proceeding from the domiciliary confinement experienced by Louise and Denise in the exploration of the father in Chapter Four, the discussion below focuses upon their '*éclats*': moments of spontaneity sparked by maternal indignation and a sense of justice.

Kegan Gardiner's conception of the processual dimension of women's identity highlights key facets of Louise Rougeron's character in *Le Petit Bonzi*. It is discernible through her subtle protection of her stammering son Jacques, which dislodges her from her silence in the presence of his testy father, Lucien. Her communication with him, although whispered, monosyllabic and timorous, still

endows her with a presence mediated through a miscellany of domesticity: ‘ Il [papa Rougeron, her husband] entendait ses mots à elle: le bruit de l’eau dans l’évier, le froissé de son tablier vert, sa petite toux sèche, la porte du placard, deux verres qui se choquent, une cuiller reposée’ (*LPB,* p. 30). However, polite acknowledgement of her status as a *woman* by someone outside the family is significant for the single mention of her first name: ‘Madame’, sourit Tranchant, en tendant la main à Louise Rougeron’, concluding the family’s meeting with Jacques’s headmaster (p. 217). Chalandon’s conjunction of the formal and the personal in a single sentence indicates two contrasting and hitherto occluded aspects of her characterisation. Firstly, she is unaccustomed to being ‘Madame’ because her housewifely and maternal roles remove her from broader social interaction. Secondly, the unexpected articulation of her full name evokes her individuality: she is not (only) Lucien’s wife or Jacques’s mother. Louise’s vocalised ‘break-out’ moment from her habitual acquiescence occurs when she is confronted by Jacques’s stolid insistence that a plague at the school killed a classmate. She is stung to exclaim: ‘« Jacques! Mon Dieu, Jacques, tu mens! ...Tu vas nous tuer »’. Her shock at the egregiousness of her son’s fantasies is accompanied by an emphatic attempt to shield him from the redoubtable consequences of his mendacity: ‘Elle le tient comme un oiseau blessé’ (p. 162). Her capacity to understand his story as the symptom of a more profound malaise associates her with the hapless M. Mandrieu in his sincere compassion for Jacques’s condition.

Although Denise Choulans appears a more clearly defined character in *Profession du père* and more closely aligned with the biographical contours of Chalandon’s mother, she shares some notable traits with Louise. Both need to manage their husbands’ volatility and to pre-empt potential violence towards their sons and themselves. Both immerse themselves in their chores which represent *their* realm. In common with Louise, one of Denise’s defining traits is her silence, foregrounded in an early description at the crematorium before the service for her late husband: ‘Pas un éclat, pas une lumière. Ses yeux très bleus ne disaient que le silence’ (*PP*, p. 10). Her life is largely conjugated through the verbs *chuchoter, murmurer* and *ne pas oser*. It is also shaped by recognisably traditional milestones, inscribed in a song which has a special resonance for her: ‘Cette chanson lui disait

les trois choses les plus importantes de la vie: la naissance, le mariage et la mort' (p. 22). In contrasting Denise's fatalistic outlook with the experience of Jeanne, Brigitte, Assia and Mélody, it is possible to argue that *their* lives derive their intensity from what occurs *between* these existential staging posts. Indeed, marriage has no formal institutional or affective meaning for three of them and Jeanne's ends in divorce.

There are two salient instances of sudden enlightenment when Denise emerges from her psychological confinement to assert her motherly responsibilities and, more personally, her self-belief. Firstly, she displays presence of mind and courage in removing André's pistol from the catatonic Émile, while her husband cowers in the background. Having averted tragedy, the range of her emotional intelligence emerges in her effusion of rage and affection for Émile, weeping with him in the trauma of the moment (pp. 217- 218). This extraordinary amalgam of anger and love echoes Louise's response to Jacques's extravagant story of the school plague. Importantly, both signal Chalandon's capacity to discern the fine imbrication of powerfully conflicting emotions which permeates his interlocking of the brutality of cancer and the tenderness of female intimacy in *Une joie féroce*. In contrast to her turmoil, the second stage reflects Denise's growth in self- confidence, countering André's ebbing sanity. On one of Émile's rare visits to his parents as a young adult, his mother insists that he stays with them: 'D'abord mon père n'avait pas voulu me recevoir. « Il repart d'où il vient ». Ma mère a insisté. C'était la première fois que je la voyais lui tenir tête' (pp. 242-243). Like Jeanne and Assia, although in different circumstances, she has discovered a language of opposition, a way of enforcing her voice and her choice. Furthermore, she deploys her new assertiveness to inform hospital staff that she does not want André to return to their home. Foreshadowing the protagonists of *Une joie féroce*, Denise realises that she is not compelled to accept her 'lot' by challenging the apparent inexorability of the birth-marriage-death paradigm.

Chalandon's growing artistic sensibility to the multifaceted nature of women's lives is disclosed in his portrayal of motherhood. His increased foregrounding of, and engagement with, his female characters constitute a transition from the periphery in *Le Petit Bonzi*, to a more concentrated focus in *Profession du père* and to the epicentre of *Une joie féroce.* The more forensically Chalandon mines their

personal, social and sexual experiences as women, the more fragmented and problematic motherhood appears. Jeanne is a bereaved mother; Brigitte is an estranged mother; Mélody is a fantasy mother; and Assia terminates her pregnancy under duress. In decoupling their femaleness from their maternal status, he confronts the received belief that motherhood is the apogée of womanhood. However, the idea that they are not defined by it does not mean that they are not affected by its impact on their lives. Far from being the source of relative stability in *Le Petit Bonzi* and *Profession du père*, remembered motherhood entails anguish, frustration and regret for Jeanne, Brigitte and Assia respectively, while Mélody's spurious maternity ultimately destroys her relationship with them. Crucially, through his narrator Jeanne Hervineau, Chalandon exposes the raw granularity of the characters' emotions as they are reported and witnessed 'from the inside'. It also facilitates the exploration of the diversity of their dysfunctional or truncated maternal experiences within individual chapters, thereby locating their aspiring, extinguished or disordered motherhood within a broader social context. Equally, their sororal intimacy emerges from their conversations within the safe and nurturing space of their apartment. Indeed, this cathartic collectivity contrasts strikingly with the solitary domesticity in which the mothers Louise Rougeron and Denise Choulans attempt to balance the needs of their irascible spouses and their bullied sons. Chalandon's representation of motherhood in *Une joie féroce* reveals further aspects of his uncompromising and intricate perspective. He depicts its often unpromising and bleak origins, but he also illuminates lost fatherhood. In the dissonance between Matt's outwardly stony demeanour and his silent suffering, he counters the assumption that a child's death is felt more keenly by the mother. Perhaps the most arresting marker of Chalandon's creativity is his merging of maternity and fraudulence in Mélody's story. This fusion demonstrates that not even the traditionally sacrosanct state of motherhood within the context of cancer suffering is immune from manipulation. This is starkly exemplified in Chalandon's problematisation of Mélody's motherhood as a commodity. The instrumentalisation of a 'virtual' child to extort money derives its contemporary vigour from his incorporation of trans-European criminality into her labyrinthine, cyber-inspired narrative.

Conclusions and Reflections

This exploration of Chalandon's principal female characters has been informed by evidence garnered from his interview with Françoise Laurent in February 2020, the publication of *Enfant de Salaud* in August 2021 and his interview responses to me in October 2021 and February 2022. These have necessitated further evaluation of the significance of autobiography. Emergent perspectives support conclusions in Chapter One on the construction of his self-image, reinforcing the profound connection between his personal life and his fiction which he also elicits in his televised observations on *Une joie féroce* in 2019. The novel signals a transformational movement in his narrative perspective from the male third- and first- person voices of all earlier works to the voice of a female protagonist. The hybridity of his characterisation evolves from his immersion in, and distancing from, his reality, where his determined pursuit of his 'ghosts' intersects with his need to understand, and co-exist with, his pain. What is equally pivotal is that the cancer diagnoses of his wife and himself not only provided him with his raw material, but they also granted him permission to mine his personal experience, while showing due sensitivity to his wife and, by extension, to other female cancer sufferers. Importantly, his decision to create *Une joie féroce* was not prompted by a 'their-turn-now' reflex.

Chalandon's women characters exhibit an invigorating diversity in terms of context and psychological perspective: under-valued, self-effacing wives and mothers; and faithful, voluble, earnest and duplicitous friends. They inhabit diverse social, geographical and geopolitical spaces professionally and personally familiar to him: the Northern Ireland Troubles; war-scarred Beirut in the early Eighties; a modest Lyon housing estate in the early Sixties; and the impact of cancer in contemporary suburban Paris, problematised by cross-cultural migration, domestic abuse and exploitation. Such heterogeneity is unsurprising, in the light of Chalandon's personal inscription in the construction of his protagonists: 'Aucun n'est moi, mais ces divers personnages vont incarner mes propres contradictions' (Laurent, p. 181). Excepting Imane, who appears paradoxically self-sufficient within a heavily patriarchal culture, the lives of his female characters are moulded in varying degrees by the men with whom they have the most frequent interaction. However, they each find a means to counter the adverse effects of dysfunctional

relationships. Their continuous presence, strategic loyalty and discreet resistance constitute Chalandon's multifaceted 'write-back' to reported criticisms of his female characters' banal and attenuated fictional roles. They manifest a significant psychological and artistic counterweight to his father's toxic behaviour and to the ravages of cancer he and his wife endured. His repertoire of responses and his resolve to 'résister à' (Laurent, p. 186), are mediated through the mosaic of his characters' self-reliant, amused and barbed optimism. The women's capacity to override stereotypical female paradigms finds its apotheosis in *Une joie féroce*, through their mutual compassion and their differentially complex experiences of motherhood, with its accompanying frustration, deception and trauma. Yet almost all these characters experience a moment of *éclat*, however ephemeral. Binding Chalandon's début *Le Petit Bonzi* with this novel is a line of succession of hard-won female fortitude. His observation: 'Je me suis autorisé à écrire, parce que je vis de l'intérieur de quelque chose. Mais en écrivant, je m'en extrais' (Laurent, p. 182), illuminates his drive to harrow his emotions through raw writing by embracing and redefining vulnerability.

Conclusion and Potential Future Pathways

'We can now look back over the route we've traveled and see that, after all, it made sense…A direct journey but also a circular one. It is origins, we learned, that all progress leads to'.[218]

In the spirit of Tanenhaus's observation, I present my conclusion not as an end, but rather as an essential juncture at which to reflect on where my research has taken me and how it will shape my continued investigation of Sorj Chalandon's work. I consider that I have fulfilled my aim to give prominence to the importance of an understudied novelist and journalist, and in so doing, my research may attract the interest of other scholars. My progressively refined interpretations of his personal, professional and aesthetic imprint, supported by the strategies of exhaustive listening, looking, reading and questioning, have assisted me considerably in gaining an incisive and holistic understanding of his journalism, fiction and their interrelation. Commencing with the tripartite configuration of auto-bio-graphy to distinguish Chalandon's self-projection, objective collegial and academic evaluation and his 'pre-fictional' writing, I distilled the profile of his movement from journalism to fiction through the processes of declamation, description and debriding in order to contextualise his professional trajectory. I have elicited imagery and structure which most potently evoke the spirit of his novels. His narratives set in Ireland and Lebanon emerge from his confrontation with, and gradual apprehension of, deeply embedded psychological conflict-related trauma, originating in, and perpetuated by, dysfunctional perception and the imperative of physical and emotional self-preservation. The dynamics infusing his idea of 'the father' demanded a multifaceted and intellectually coherent design which integrated gesture, self-invention, missed opportunity and the deracination of betrayal and irretrievable loss. My scrutiny of his account of four women's individual and collective responses to their cancer and the concomitant disintegration of their male relationships convincingly illuminates critiques of female disempowerment and disidentification through his enlightening and affirming reimagination of vulnerability.

[218] Sam Tanenhaus, *Literature Unbound* (Nelson Doubleday, 1984), p. 131.

The range of evidence I have provided corroborates my postulation of the intermeshing of Chalandon's personal, journalistic and literary 'selves'. My conceptualisation has framed and supported their manifold and accumulating discrete, imbricated and dissonant constituent elements. Foundational among these has been my challenge to the idea of any direct and permanent transmutation between his journalism and his novels, by recognising his inclination to step back, embrace, seek to heal and to share. His commitment to social equality and natural justice in his listening to the stories of others, for him the *sine que non* of his vocation as a reporter, connects with the capacity originally discernible in his photo- textual work, and subsequently in his fiction, to invest unconsidered scenes and 'forgotten' people with visual and lyrical power, and in so doing, emancipate them from their marginality. My focus on the spatial, visual and affective dimensions of his reclamation of the geopolitical graphically illuminates his protagonists' attempts to excavate and surmount their psychological struggles within cynically initiated and jettisoned friendships and alliances in Northern Ireland and in the witnessing of civilian-targeted atrocities in Lebanon. Whether in West Belfast, Beirut or the Chatila refugee camp, the faculty of sight inevitably sears tension, warfare and carnage onto Antoine's and Georges's shocked consciousness and energises their hitherto untested resolve. Moreover, it also awakens and sharpens their perceptivity and, paradoxically, frees them to develop self-reliance through their progressive involvement with, and navigation through, their unstable and often dangerous 'adopted' city.

My dissection of the paternal 'masques transparents' applied to Lucien, Beuzaboc, André and Jean reveals Chalandon's conjointly overt and insidious experience of dysfunctional fatherhood. These characters' enactment of their nefariously unbridled imaginations and their agility in moulding and marshalling their fabricated *personae* culminate in the deleterious impasse differentially pervading the four novels. The frustrating missteps in the mostly calamitous misalignment between the needs and interests of fathers and sons embody the tragic sense of 'un rendez-vous manqué', Chalandon's disconsolate concluding observation to me (Annex 1). Yet he also contests the inevitability of disordered paternity through his depiction of potential relational recovery. This orientation towards the restorative resurfaces in his perspective on his own cancer, citing *Une joie féroce* as the

expression of his priority to survive it. Through his transformation of the four cancer sufferers into a sisterly sodality of audacious heisters, he trains his vigorous riposte on clichéd paradigms of gendered roles. Female perseverance robustly counterpoints men's inconstancy, pusillanimity and puzzled powerlessness manifest in forms of rejected maleness. Equally, I maintain that, notwithstanding the domestic, social and cultural subordination of women's status in his earlier work, Chalandon has imbued them with an inchoate resistance to received notions of women's innate and immutable defenselessness.

Crucially, his profound understanding of vulnerability in its many forms is articulated through his capability in, and advocacy of, the visual, the incontestable epicentre of his aesthetic. Encapsulated in his exhortation 'donner à voir,' its priority for him resonates in the drawings which brought him solace during his harsh and turbulent childhood; in his first socially and politically inspired sketches and cartoons in *Libération* and later, in his always insightful and often poignant textual collaborations with photographers. Located within the interstices of journalism and fiction and spanning personal, social and political engagement, Chalandon's contributions to photojournalism constitute an intermingling of 'la page droite', his direct reportage, and 'la page gauche', his private reflections. His attraction to, and talent for, visual art may have originated in his search for self-worth to compensate for a bleak home life, and as a means of countering the practical and psychological turmoil wreaked by his speech disorder. Yet it is now incontrovertible that the early fruit of his enduring rapport with the visual, and what may be posited as the immediate stylistic threshold to his fictional writing, is his previously unknown collection of prose-poetry personalising his colleague Joël Robine's photographs of feet in urban streets. A unifying aspect of these photographic collaborations is Chalandon's acknowledgement of the primacy of the images over his writing. He describes his text accompanying Marie Dorigny's compilation of child labour photographs and Robine's photographs respectively as 'un support', and as a means of guaranteeing their publication. He deploys his art to serve, complement and validate theirs, while experimenting with his own authorial voice.

My thoughtful and thorough scholarship amply compensates for the limitations of previous commentaries. It comprises several elements which proceed from my

initial radical questioning: Why is it important? How does it enhance knowledge? How does it fit into the realm of academic study? And why is it distinct? My research began as soon as I had read *Mon Traître* and *Retour à Killybegs* in August 2014. It became my mission to ascertain more about the Chalandon behind these expositions of an unlikely, near-contemporary, transnational friendship, crushed by personal betrayal and the greater forces driving the endemic sectarian struggle in which I had grown up. It was naturally only through my wider reading that I learned of his respected status as an acclaimed *Libération* and *Le Canard enchaîné* journalist. The issues of his significance and my distinctive contribution to scholarly understanding appear to me to be connected. Commentators in their reviews have appraised his newly published novels with varying degrees of perspicacity, but they have not articulated the links *between* them, nor do they take account of the role of his journalism, except as a biographical detail, as indicated in my Introduction. Therefore, what distinguishes my work from theirs is my substantial and sustained endeavour to establish a critical frame of reference for examining the influence of Chalandon, the foreign correspondent. This has entailed the mining of literary, artistic, cultural, political, historical, military, physiological and psychiatric contexts; the poetics of autobiography, photo-textuality and forms of journalism; the physical and psychological impact of exposure to war and terrorism; the geneses and effects of personal, political and paramilitary treachery and abandonment, partially mitigated by nascent renewal; and the pathology and social and emotional repercussions of cancer and speech disorders. Impelled by the burgeoning volume and diversity of my evidence, I have constantly needed to review and adjust my analytical 'viewfinder.'

Regarding future independent research based upon my thesis findings, I envisage my post-doctoral interests proceeding along three pathways. Firstly, Chalandon's 'fiction pure', discussed in Chapter One and which he indicated to me as his intended literary direction away from journalism and his father, needs to be properly interrogated. This could occur relatively soon: his biennial publication pattern since 2007 would suggest the appearance of a new novel in August 2023. As well as being scrutinised on its own merits, such a work could constitute a bellwether to identify any previously undetected traces of 'fiction pure', in order to determine how innovative his putative new orientation really is. My second line of

inquiry would be to focus more minutely on the sequencing of his cartoon contributions to *Libération* and his first 'faits divers' articles, thus determining more forensically the junction between his illustrations and his prose. This would also entail the exploration of other instances of this 'tableau- to- text' trajectory, deepening my understanding not only of Chalandon's own journey, but also contributing more broadly to the sociology of journalism by charting the motivation and effects of artists becoming reporters. Thirdly, in response to more current developments, I believe it could be productive to explore the multimedia treatment of some of his narratives, notably cartoonist Pierre Alary's pictorial versions of *Mon Traître* and *Retour à Killybegs,* and Jean-Pierre Améris's cinematic interpretation of *Profession du père*. Such a study would incorporate the rationale and processes driving similar kinds of adaptations in other contexts, but with a particular emphasis on the reimagination of narrative through the form of the illustrated novel, because of its relative originality and modernity.

Finally, what have I learned about myself during the preparation of my thesis? On a 'professional' level, approaching the unexplored terrain of my subject as noted above, I have been acutely conscious of the need to balance meticulous and appropriately structured research design with my instinct to 'follow the evidence trail': in short, to manage my probing and my parameters to ensure rigour and relevance. This helped me to deploy my conceptual frameworks as *instruments*, and not as ends in themselves. Importantly, to enhance my critical acumen, I have been able to move with increasing confidence from superficial to more complex and sophisticated levels of reading, as reflected in my conceptualisation and in the multidisciplinary nature of my source material. More personally, I rediscovered a wealth of tenacity in my attempts to secure an interview with Sorj Chalandon and to acquire his original press-related artwork and prose poetry, as well as to trace rare documentation related to military strategy. I also learned to place greater faith in the significance of my own direct knowledge and experience of the Troubles, in order to gain an authentic perspective on Chalandon's personal and journalistic challenges in Northern Ireland. This enabled me to reach the 'heart' of the man himself in a justifiably subjective manner, and to empathise intelligently with his perceptions. I have become so attuned to, and continually fascinated by, the widening horizons I have encountered in my study that I have a sense of constantly

'living with' my research. Perhaps self-evidently but most valuably, I can attest to the congruity between my research subject and my intellectual enrichment.

It is apposite to conclude with Chalandon's words which complement those at the beginning of my Introduction, namely his right to lament and to reclaim his anguish; not to complain but to disclose. His statement to journalist Béatrice Kammerer on what incites people to become an assassin, a traitor, a violent father, and what prevents them resisting this fate, includes the following: 'Ma plus belle revanche, ce sont mes filles, c'est la famille que j'ai construite' (BK, p. 11). Possibly appropriating hunger striker Bobby Sands's declaration: 'Our revenge will be the laughter of our children,' he subtly blends his journalism, his fiction and his family life.[219] He refers to his biological family, but he is associated with other 'families': his *Libération* and *Le Canard enchaîné* colleagues; the civilians whom he befriended during his assignments; and the characters bearing his 'masques transparents': the Rougerons, the Chalons, the diverse Lebanese amateur actors and 'la bande des filles'. Calmly and knowingly, perhaps as an emancipated *entrée* to a new kind of writing, he continues: 'Mais c'est une revanche douce, le sucre après le sel'.

[219] Philip Metres, 'Our Revenge will be the Laughter of our Children', *World Literature Today*, University of Oklahoma, 95 1 Winter 2021, pp. 22-29.

Annex 1: Questions submitted to Sorj Chalandon on 2 September 2021 and his responses received on 11 October 2021

Autobiographie

1. Je crois que vous êtes né à Tunis. Pourquoi vos parents habitaient-ils en Tunisie à cette époque? Quand vous êtes-vous installés en France?

Dans mon dernier roman, *Enfant de salaud*, je raconte comment mon père a, notamment, collaboré avec l'ennemi pendant la guerre, puis a été condamné à la prison et à l'indignité nationale. Obligé de quitter la France après la prison, il est allé « refaire sa vie » à Tunis, alors protectorat français. Ma mère vivait en Tunisie avec ses parents. Ils se sont rencontrés là. Je suis donc né là, mais n'y suis resté que quelques mois, avant de rentrer en France.

2. D'après votre collègue, Jean Guisnel (source: *Libération: la Biographie*), votre première contribution au journal était un dessin animé 'Derrière les murs de l'asile', et que vous connaissiez cet univers parce que vous aviez été infirmier psychiatrique. Pourriez-vous décrire les circonstances de votre embauche?

Pas un dessin animé mais un strip de quatre dessins quotidiens, pendant plusieurs mois. Je n'ai pas été infirmier psychiatrique mais "aide-soignant" occasionnel dans des structures qui militaient pour l'antipsychiatrie, à une époque où la psychiatrie traditionnelle –isolement, médication lourde, chocs électriques– était contestée. C'était un engagement militant.

Journalisme

1. Pourquoi avez-vous quitté *Libération* pour devenir journaliste au *Canard?*

Parce que *Libération* a été vendu au Baron Rothschild. À des fonds privés. Et que Serge July, fondateur et directeur de *Libération* a été licencié. Après 34 ans, mon journal ne me ressemblait plus.

2. Comment avez-vous vécu la transition de *Libé* au *Canard*, à l'égard de votre approche et de votre style?

Je n'ai pas de style. *Le Canard* n'impose aucun style. Il a juste fallu que je m'adapte, faisant entrer l'humour, la satire et le commentaire dans mon territoire journalistique. Je suis un reporter. J'ai été reporter de guerre pendant 22 ans. *Le Canard* ne fait pas de reportage. Alors il m'a fallu repenser ma façon d'aborder les sujets.

3. Qu'est-ce qui vous a inspiré à travailler avec des photographes, tels que Marie Dorigny et Daniel Hérard? Que signifient ces collaborations pour vous?

Lorsqu'un photographe me demande de contribuer à son travail, je le fais, par amitié. La photo est le seul propos du livre. Seules les photos de Marie sur le travail des enfants ou celles de Daniel sur Belfast, comptent. Mon texte n'est qu'un mince apport cosmétique.

Fiction

1. Le réalisme magique de votre deuxième roman, *Une Promesse*, me fascine. Pourquoi n'avez-vous pas repris ce genre?

Ecrivant *Une Promesse*, j'ai appris la trahison de Denis Donaldson. Depuis, je cours après mes fantômes. Les trahisons, la guerre, l'enfance, le cancer, le père. Avec mon dernier roman, je referme le livre du père. Peut-être vais-je pouvoir revenir à la fiction pure.

2. Vous avez souvent fait allusion à 'la page droite' pour noter les faits et 'la page gauche' pour capter vos pensées (votre personnage Marcel Frémaux s'est servi de cette même pratique!). Cela suggère une séparation très nette entre l'actualité et les sentiments. Pourtant, dans un entretien pour RTL Info, le 30 août 2021, vous dites

être la somme de toutes les pages (que vous ne voulez pas tourner). À ce point donc, comment voyez-vous la relation entre votre journalisme et votre fiction: en opposition ou enchevêtrés?

Je fais une différence absolue entre fiction et actualité, roman et journalisme, heureusement. Ni opposition ni enchevêtrement. Le journalisme m'a permis d'aller sur des fronts de guerre, notamment, où j'ai puisé le matériel humain de certains romans. De la réalité, je m'évade vers la fiction, pour me permettre de dire "je". Même si ce "je" est metteur en scène de théâtre, biographe, luthier, libraire. Ces masques transparents me permettent seulement de prendre du recul par rapport à ma réalité. Les pages que je refuse de tourner sont les blessures de ma vie. Je vis avec. Elles sont mon socle.

3. À l'égard de votre roman le plus récent, *Enfant de Salaud*, j'ai bien suivi et apprécié votre exposition sur 'La Grande Librairie' hier soir. Je voudrais juste demander si vous avez d'autres réflexions à ajouter, comme par exemple, des défis quelconques (d'ordre psychologique, affectif) en affrontant l'histoire de votre père à la 'grande' histoire du procès Barbie.

Aucun défi à relever. Seulement le sentiment d'un rendez-vous manqué avec un père. Une grande tristesse.

Annex 2: Follow-up Questions submitted to M. Chalandon and his responses received on 8 February 2022

Que faisait votre père comme travail en Tunisie?

Rien. Aucun travail. Attentive à mes romans, vous avez pu lire qu'il n'avait jamais exercé aucune activité et, grâce à *Enfant de salaud*, j'ai compris que, libéré de prison à 22 ans, il n'avait d'autre choix que de "refaire sa vie" loin de la France métropolitaine, en Tunisie, qui était alors un protectorat français. Seule ma mère, sa femme, a toujours travaillé.

2. Vous avez dit à Jean-Luc Hees lors de votre entretien en 2016: 'Je ne me sens pas journaliste de roman'. Pourriez-vous approfondir cette réflexion?

Chacun de mes romans -à part *Une Promesse*- étant né d'une blessure intime ou d'un accident de la vie, je me suis peu aventuré sur les chemins de la fiction pure. Et, à part *Enfant de salaud*, parce que c'était nécessaire, jamais je ne mettrais plus un journaliste en scène dans un roman.

3. À l'égard de votre transition de *Libé* au *Canard* vous m'avez dit: 'Il m'a fallu repenser ma façon d'aborder les sujets'. Qu'est-ce que vous avez dû repenser/modifier?

Simplement le fait que *Le Canard* est un journal satirique, pas *Libération*. Que j'étais reporter à *Libération*, mais que *Le Canard* ne fait pas de reportage. Il m'a donc fallu réfléchir à traiter avec humour, y compris des sujets graves.

4. Votre poésie en prose qui accompagne les photos de Joël Robine dans *Rue de la Pompe* me semble dépasser un 'mince apport cosmétique', d'autant plus qu'elle se distingue de façon frappante de votre prose ailleurs dans votre œuvre. Qu'est-ce qui vous avait inspiré cette forme d'expression?

Rien. C’est un ami qui m’a demandé d’écrire quelques lignes. Ses photos seules n’auraient pas été publiées. C’était un jeu avec l’image, sans conséquences.

5. Qu’entendiez-vous par ‘la fiction pure’ à laquelle vous souhaitez revenir? Quelles en seraient les marques distinctives?

Je n’y serais pas. Et la première personne du singulier ne me désignerait pas. Pure fiction, c’est écrire que je suis astronaute, ou paysan grec, ou fleur des champs.

6. Question difficile, je reconnais, mais, à votre avis, quel genre d’écrivain seriez-vous devenu si vous n’aviez pas été journaliste?

Sans ce père je ne serais pas devenu journaliste et sans ce métier de journaliste, je ne serais pas devenu écrivain. Tout est lié.

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