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### CULTURAL RESISTANCE THROUGH THE *MANUSCRIT MODERNE* Tériade's editions of Rouault's *Divertissement* and Bonnard's *Correspondances*

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Inspired by the politico-cultural significance of the French medieval manuscript, the Greek born publisher Tériade created its modernised counterpart, his *manuscrit moderne*, pushing the artists' book to new innovative heights in France during the Second World War. Tériade commissioned Georges Rouault's *Divertissement* (1943) and Pierre Bonnard's *Correspondances* (1944) during the darkest days of the Occupation, and in a historic reversal of the process, these artists created their images, embedded with codes and symbols of resistance, before they authored the text. The wartime *manuscrit moderne* with its handwritten text set the preconditions for this new genre to flourish after the Liberation.

#### **Tériade the Publisher**

The French artists' book experienced a period of aesthetic creativity in France during the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> The Occupation of France involved not only a military battle but also a cultural battle in which artists and publishers who refused to be suppressed and compromised fought to protect centuries of French heritage. This paper reveals the role of one such publisher, Tériade, who worked under difficult wartime circumstances to promote French culture and in the process created a new concept of the artists' book, the *manuscrit moderne*. Also discussed is the aesthetic link between Tériade's *manuscrit moderne* and the medieval manuscript, itself a symbol of the French cultural resistance during the Occupation. Through the *manuscrit moderne*, Tériade introduced his notion of the handwritten illustrated book in which he sought to remove the constraints of

the written word by commissioning the artist to not only create the images but also write the text.

Tériade commissioned Georges Rouault and Pierre Bonnard, two French artists declared degenerate by the Germans, to create the first two books of this new genre. As they experimented with the *manuscrit moderne*, Rouault, through his book *Divertissement*, and Bonnard, through *Correspondances*, infused their images and texts with symbols and coded messages to portray the difficult plight facing the French people. This paper analyses the association between Rouault's *Divertissement* and Bonnard's *Correspondances* with the medieval manuscript, and shows the influence of the Occupation on the creation of these two artists' books.

Medieval literature operated as a cultural code during the German Occupation of France, joining other symbolic expressions as a catalyst of national unity designed to keep alive the notion of a liberated France. The ancient words, phrases and lyrics of medieval texts took on a new meaning in the difficult circumstances many French people now faced (Davenport, 372; Rosenstein, 501-02). Artists and writers looked to the medieval period to provide a value system to oppose the Occupation (Cowan, 10). Because of its symbolic value as a unifying force, many writers and artists adopted a new sense of nationalism exemplified by medievalism. For poets like the communist Louis Aragon, the literature of the Middle Ages provided a model for a secret code that enabled him to publish his contraband poetry while circumventing the censors. As far as the Vichy regime and the censors were concerned, the medieval literature was an acceptable genre that did not threaten the aesthetic values of the occupiers: "To the eye of a busy censor, the Middle Ages constituted an acceptable reference that reflected the ethos of the Vichy regime and, in its innocence, stood in contrast to the troubling and degenerate modern world" (Brown, 326).

Tériade, the French *nom de plume* of Greek born Stratis Eleftheriades, had a lifelong passion for the medieval manuscript. Abandoning his law studies, a youthful Tériade immersed himself in the Parisian arts scene, initially working as an art critic and later as a publisher of fine art illustrated books. He established his unique journal *Verve* in November 1932, barely four months after *Entartete Kunst*, the Nazi exhibition of unacceptable art, and in a defiant protection of French aesthetic freedom, through it he honoured the very artists that Hitler had declared degenerate. *Verve* was an intellectual forum which combined art and literature, and a critical experimental test bed for his later illustrated books. Setting high standards for his writings and books, undeterred by the German

Occupation, Tériade published high quality reproductions and scholarly articles on a wide range of art movements including abstraction, baroque, cubism, dada, and medievalism, eventually dedicating nine issues of *Verve* solely to the French medieval manuscript.

It was through *Verve* that Tériade democratized one of France's most revered medieval manuscripts, *Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry*. The original, one of six high quality 'Books of Hours', was commissioned by the Duc de Berry in 1410 and was initially crafted by the Limbourg brothers, the best known illuminators of the time (Manion, 147; Schacherl, 24). These books were used for prayer services which were attended by the Duc and officiated by clerics, and were exhibited, along with other conspicuous displays of power and wealth, such as wall hangings, table decorations and art, during extravagant feasts and ceremonies at the Duc's courts (Schacherl, 14).

Michael Camille, a scholar and specialist of *Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* explains that it is one of France's best known medieval scripts and is regarded by many scholars as one of the nation's foremost national treasures—a beacon of French cultural heritage and artistic superiority (Camille, 86). Adrienne Monnier describes the manuscript in nostalgic terms:

Before The Very Rich Hours of the Duke of Berry I seemed to perceive, as through a magic emerald the very nature of France; our land and its people dressed in bold colours; gestures of work as pure as those of the Mass; women in flowerlike dresses; fanfares of leisure; living water, branches; desires and loves; beautiful castles in the distance; a comforting sky; our animals near us; our days coloured with hope and finely woven. (Monnier, 421)

By reproducing its calendars in his wartime issue of *Verve* number 7 in March 1940, the first issue of the journal dedicated to the medieval manuscript, Tériade stressed the longevity and survival of French cultural heritage. He saw parallels between the horrendous plight of the present-day French, under siege by the Germans, and the difficult socio-political conditions during the Duc de Berry's life time (1340–1416).

In those days, Paris, just as in the years leading up to the Occupation, was the centre of the art world. Artists from all over the world came to the thriving capital. It was also a difficult period for France, for its people suffered considerable turmoil and conflict that eventually destroyed its ascendancy in

Europe. Externally France endured the Hundred Years' War with England and internally it suffered from the Black Death. Coupled with this was the peasants' revolt due to the taxation impositions created by the Duc de Berry himself. France faced the ignominy of defeat at the hands of the English at the Battle of Agincourt and the Duke's relation, Charles d'Orléans, was taken prisoner by the British and held captive for twenty-five years (Schacherl, 9, 21, 26). Yet the France of the middle ages survived this turmoil and eventually regained its cultural leadership.

### **Tériade's vision**

Not satisfied with the mere reproduction of medieval manuscripts in his journal *Verve*, now adopting the medievalist idiom and emulating the leadership of the Duc de Berry, Tériade created his own modernised version of the medieval manuscript, the *manuscrit moderne*. Both Tériade and the Duc de Berry lived through difficult times for France, and they both sought to inspire the French with remarkable-looking books that captured the heritage of their nation. In the same way that the Duc de Berry of the fourteenth century commissioned the best artists and printers to create his medieval manuscripts, so too did Tériade in the twentieth century.

Much later Tériade confirmed that the inspiration for his *manuscrit moderne* came from the medieval manuscript:

If I have insisted on making these artists' books with the actual collaboration of those artists (covers, texts etc), it's from a taste I have for 15th century illuminated manuscripts and miniatures. In those times, the most frequent practice was for one hand to design both the texts and the pictures in a book [...] *Verve* was the source for my publishing house, the review was a way to bring people together. (Di Crescenzo, 52)

Tériade revealed his vision to Henri Matisse during the war on 10 June 1941, "Et encore cette vieille idée m'empêche de dormir: le 'manuscrit à peintures' moderne. Cela n'a jamais été fait. Cela correspond si bien aux possibilités d'aujourd'hui. Et ce serait magnifique" [And yet there is an old idea which prevents me from sleeping: the modern 'painting manuscript'. It has never been done. But it corresponds to today's possibilities. And it would be magnificent] (Duthuit, 162, 445). The term 'manuscrit à peintures moderne' has been abbreviated by the author of this paper to 'manuscrit moderne' as a short hand reference for this new genre.

Tériade did not specify a format for his *manuscrit moderne*, rather it evolved over time, aided by the interpretive and creative freedom he gave his artists. As the *manuscrit moderne* evolved, it embraced many forms, emulating the diversity and richness of its precursor, the medieval manuscript. Through this new genre, Tériade transformed the notion of the French artists' book, giving the artists complete aesthetic freedom to illustrate their books with no constraint on their creativity. To this extent, he did not even want the text to limit the artist's imagination.

He progressively established the unique character of his *manuscrit moderne* through the first two works he commissioned during the Occupation, Georges Rouault's *Divertissement* and Pierre Bonnard's *Correspondances*. In a historic reversal of the creative process, Tériade encouraged Rouault and Bonnard to create their images first, and to author and handwrite their own texts after that. Many scholars refer to the process of constructing a text around an image as *ekphrasis*. In other words, it is "the reconstruction of a work of visual art into words". Ekphrasis can help the text enhance the work of art with a separate but matching voice; it is a translation of an image into a textual form (Scott, 215-16). Heffernan asserts that ekphrasis is a mode and a verbal representation of a visual depiction (298, 301).

Thus, Tériade's artists not only created the images and authored the texts, but emulating the medieval scribes, they also hand copied their texts, so the role of the writer, artist, scribe and illustrator became one. Although Tériade was the first publisher to systematically incorporate handwritten text into his illustrated books, there were other instances where the concept fleetingly emerged in the years prior to the Occupation. It was artist Émile Bernard who first experimented with handwritten text when, unhappy with the available fonts, he decided "to write the pages of the text in a style that harmonised with his drawings, after which they were engraved" for his illustrations of *Les Amours de Pierre de Ronsard*, which Ambroise Vollard published in 1915 (Bernard and Ronsard; Johnson 255).

Bernard's handwritten text, which was printed from woodcuts, was an isolated example and it was not until fourteen years later that it reappeared with ten handwritten poems by Lise Hirtz, *Il était une petite pie*, illustrated by Joan Miró with eight images and published by Jeanne Bucher in 1928. Hirtz's efforts also proved to be isolated and the concept lay dormant until Tériade reintroduced it within the aesthetic framework of the *manuscrit moderne*. Tériade had also published a facsimile of handwritten text in his journal, *Verve*,

number 3, as early as the summer of 1938. This was an article by Paul Claudel, titled “Écritures”, a text on Oriental writing. This facsimile is possibly an early signal of Tériade’s aesthetic progression towards the handwritten text and an example of his use of *Verve* as a test bed for his artists’ books (Anthonioz, 81-88).

Emphasising the multidimensional richness of Tériade’s new wartime cultural weapon, the images and texts of his first two artists’ books, *Divertissement* and *Correspondances*, are inculcated with codes and symbols of cultural resistance, designed to highlight the resilience and longevity of French national heritage, and to give the French hope for their eventual liberation. The *manuscrit moderne*, created during the German Occupation of France, became a strategic weapon in the cultural battle to safeguard centuries of French heritage.

It was a period of turmoil. Tériade had just published *Verve*, volume 2, number 7, *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, in March 1940 when, a few weeks later on 10 May, the Germans invaded France. Not long after, on 1 June 1940, he published his wartime edition *Verve*, volume 2, number 8, *Nature de la France*, and then fled the capital for the safety of the Grand Hôtel, Souillac, in the Lot department of south-western France. Two weeks later, on 14 June 1940, the Germans occupied Paris. As the occupiers settled into Paris, Rouault, now approaching seventy years of age, fled the city in late August 1940, eventually moving into an apartment at 25 boulevard de la Plage, Golfe-Juan, in the South of France (Di Crescenzo, 52; Rabinow 1995, 23, 28). Because of the increased difficulties enveloping Europe, Rouault had felt a deep-seated fear for the future of France and “He suffered, in fact, both in mind and body as a result of the German occupation” (Courthion, 289).

Bonnard and his wife Marthe had previously fled Paris in September 1939 just after France declared war on Germany. They lived in virtual exile in their house, Villa du Bosquet, in Le Cannet, near Cannes, not far from Tériade and Rouault (Clair 9). Now in virtual exile in Souillac, undeterred by the shortages of material, Tériade contemplated his next steps. He continued to make his subtle but powerful politico-cultural statement, working on a further two issues of *Verve* devoted to the medieval manuscript and published during the Occupation in October 1943: *Verve*, volume 3, number 9, *Les Fouquet de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, which reproduced images from several manuscripts held in the Bibliothèque Nationale; and *Verve*, volume 3, number 10, *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry: Images de la Vie de Jésus*, which is a continuation of *Verve* number

7 and includes a sequence of images of Christ. Having successfully established his art journal, *Verve*, Tériade was ready to expand his publishing horizons.

Although Tériade's absence from Paris caused logistical problems, he was able to continue to publish mainly because of the energy and dedication of his assistant Angèle Lamotte, who coordinated all the necessary work. She travelled between the publisher's Souillac residence, now in Vichy France, and his Paris office at rue Férou in the occupied territory. With the help of her sister Marguerite, she obtained paper and organised the printing of the wartime *Verve* issues and his artists' books (McDougall, 105).

It was Tériade, an art critic who had not yet published an artists' book when the Nazis occupied France, who emerged as the creative force to fill the publishing vacuum left by the veteran Ambroise Vollard's untimely death (Di Crescenzo, 44-46). Vollard had been one of the most successful book publishers and art dealers in France becoming the dominant and innovative driving force of the artists' book in the lead-up to the German Occupation (Bunbury, 26). Vollard's practice was to commission artists rather than professional engravers for his publications, giving them the artistic freedom to interpret and illustrate their books in the manner they wished, a method that was condemned by the conservative bibliophilic community (Vollard, 254). Clearly demonstrating his leadership of this genre in prewar France, he published twenty-four artists' books, more than any other publisher at the time. On 22 July 1939, barely six weeks before France declared war against Germany on 3 September 1939, Vollard was killed in a car accident. Yet his premature death did not stop the reach of his aesthetic influence as other publishers, including Tériade, sought to emulate and enrich his standards.

Tériade first approached Matisse on 20 August 1940, with his concept, even before the artist, who had also fled Paris, arrived in Nice. Tériade wanted to create a book to highlight the originality of Matisse's emerging *découpage* images, a technique the painter used for *Symphonie chromatique*, the cover of Tériade's wartime *Verve*, volume 2, number 8, *Nature de la France*. Because of his frail condition and the difficulties in accurately reproducing the kind of colour variation he required, Matisse refused. Despite Tériade's persistence, he held out until June 1943, when, finally convinced that the publisher could reproduce his wide range of colours, he eventually agreed and went on to produce *Jazz*, a book that was to be Tériade's third *manuscrit moderne* (Di Crescenzo, 52; Rabinow 1995, 87).

### **Rouault's *Divertissement*: the first *manuscrit moderne***

At the same time as he approached Matisse, Tériade also began discussions with Rouault to work on an illustrated book and by the Summer–Autumn of 1940 they had agreed (Rabinow 1995, 28). Tériade had a lengthy relationship with Rouault, having previously reviewed the artist's work and published interviews and pictures in his journals, including *Verve*. In addition, Rouault had considerable experience with artists' books, having illustrated Marcel Arland's *Carnets de Gilbert*, published in 1931; Alfred Jarry's *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*, published in 1932; Rouault's self-authored *Cirque de l'Étoile filante*, published in 1938; and Vollard's last publication, André Suarès's *Passion*, published in 1939.

Rouault had an extensive personal and contractual relationship with Vollard that seemed to work well during Vollard's lifetime. Six years after they first met, Rouault and Vollard signed a contract on 5 March 1917 in which Rouault gave Vollard exclusive rights to sell all his paintings and illustrated books, and Vollard provided a studio for him in exchange (Courthion, 255-56; Johnson, x). Vollard's death caused Rouault problems. Just after the funeral, his brother Lucien informed Rouault that the family had locked up his studio in Vollard's home and all his paintings and books were now under custody. The matter was before the courts and a judge would decide on the ownership of Rouault's paintings and books and determine which works, if any, he would get back (Courthion 295-96; Schloesser, 341, 349).

With the threat of the seizure of his paintings by the Vollard estate and the Occupation of France hovering, on 30 April 1941, Rouault received Tériade's suggestion of a new illustrated book concept. There was a close personal affinity between the two men, as they shared the same patriotic zeal and seemed determined to uphold and propagate France's cultural heritage in face of its assault by the Germans. Rouault, who the Nazis had declared a degenerate artist and who was 'excommunicated', boastingly told his friend Suarès that he wore his rejection as a badge of honour (Rouault to Suarès, 13 May 1939, in Loe-Beew, 130). Now dejected with his life, his long running legal dispute with the Vollard heirs and his illness, Rouault, while welcoming Tériade's book proposal, saw parallels between his own fate and that of France; he felt that circumstances had stripped him of dignity and heritage (Davenport, 365).

Tériade suggested to Rouault that he produce an illustrated book that emulated the medieval manuscript in which a single person produced the text and image (Davenport, 365). He made his objectives clear:

The basic idea of publishing would be to make a manuscript. Painted and written by you. And in order that the reproduction be perfect, we must forget in so far as possible the idea of reproduction. You know my old school ideas about that [...] the painter must not be hindered, influenced by the possibilities of reproduction, nor bend to doing the engraving himself, nor modify his colours. (Tériade to Rouault, 30 April 1941, in Schloesser, 342)

Tériade reassuringly clarified that he did not want the printing process to be a constraint on Rouault's images nor on his choice of colours, instead he wanted the artist to have as free a reign as possible in creating the images. Although Rouault was attracted to the concept of hand writing the text in Tériade's book, knowing of the challenges it would entail, he was also unenthusiastic. Writing text, particularly after he had created the images, was not a new experience for Rouault. He had written the text for *Cirque de l'Étoile filante*, after publisher Vollard rejected the original prose written by André Suarès (Chapon, 12). Rouault instead offered to hand write the captions only, an idea that Tériade turned down, and after further discussions they agreed to a self-authored and handwritten text by Rouault, a proposition they embodied in their contract, which they signed on 17 August 1941 (Rabinow 1995, 42, 46). Working on this new concept, Rouault took full control of the book, he created the images, authored and hand wrote the text, and organised the layout. The first manuscript moderne, created by Rouault, thus gave structure to Tériade's evolving vision.

In this difficult time, Rouault wanted to name the book *Divertissement*, meaning "diversion", a reflection of his desire to be diverted from his current predicament. His idea was to imagine himself in the light-hearted atmosphere of the circus. The circus was not a new subject for Rouault, for from as far back as 1903 he had drawn on its themes for his images, depicting wrestlers, dancers and riders (Chapon, 15). The circus had been the focus of artists and art historians for centuries, and it epitomised a sparkling sanctuary of illusion, a return to a carefree childhood where simple acts of magic and performance provided a light-hearted diversion from the burdens of daily life.

The circus was a theme that could unify people, as adults and children came together to laugh and forget their hardships, a theme that many resistance supporting artists adopted. For a brief moment, the performers achieved the impossible, as the clowns, trapeze artists, lion tamers, human cannon balls and midgets transported the audience into a fantasy world. The performers, amongst those rejected by Hitler's Aryan ideology, were the freaks and the marginalised

who came from different backgrounds, coalesced as a society “and presented an environmental model of social integration” (Thomas, 47).

Through *Divertissement*, a book that also reflected a sense of pathos, Rouault “turned his private grief into a cry for solidarity”, as he transposed himself back to his childhood and created fifteen highly colourful images of circus performers, evoking a mediaevalist idiom with the “fresh colours of fifteenth century French miniatures”, while articulating his anti-Nazi messages (Davenport, 368-68). This was his masked call to arms to defend French civilisation, as much as it was to provide relief and lightness to the people during the Second World War (Schloesser, 342-43). Rouault inscribed the text onto opaque paper, painting over and rewriting his errors using the high-quality brushes and Indian ink that Tériade provided (Rabinow 1995, 47). Rouault’s thick deep black calligraphic text in *Divertissement*, a format later used by Matisse for *Jazz*, balances his colourful images. His text, inscribed in a neo-Gothic style, occupies the central column of the page, and is reminiscent of the medieval hymnals in ancient cathedrals.

Rouault’s autobiographical writing was a cry for solidarity. His opening line in a prose titled “Parade” establishes his role and birthplace, Panam (which is French slang for Paris) and the scene of his delayed baptism. He identifies with the fifteenth-century poet Villon through the Church of Saint Leu, where coincidentally they were both baptised. The text stands alone without illustration:

Enfant de Panam  
– village émouvant  
jamais quitté –  
depuis que je suis né  
un bien long temps  
Baptisé à Saint Leu  
Paroisse de Villon dit-on  
tardivement ondoyé (7)

[Child of Panam  
– poignant village  
Never quitted –  
since my birth  
So long ago.  
Baptized was I at Saint Leu  
Villon’s own parish, they say,  
Belatedly dunked (Davenport 365-66)]

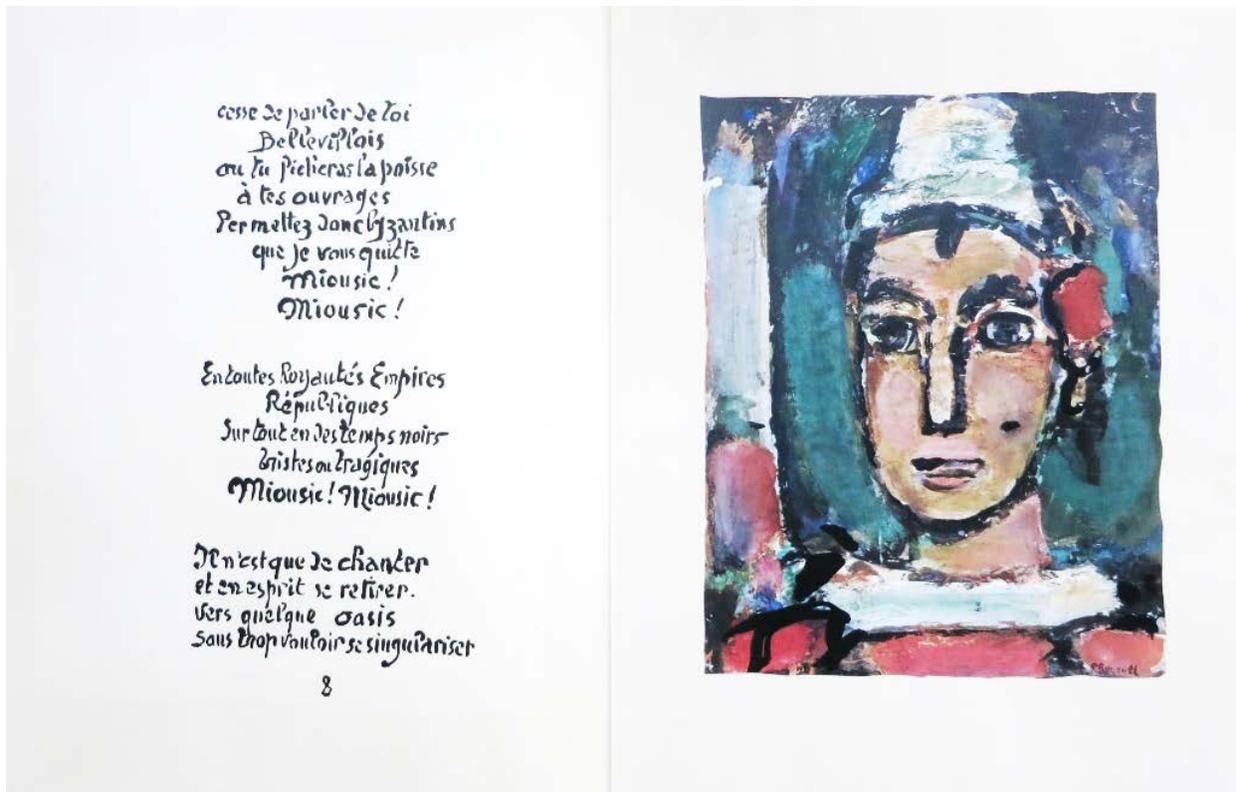


Fig. 1. Georges Rouault, "Jentie Bernard", in: *Divertissement*, Paris, Tériade, 1943, 9.

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On the following page is the opening image of a dejected-looking young boy which is a portrayal of the artist, that Rouault named "Jentie Bernard" [Fig. 1]. The young boy is adorned with the patriotic red, white and blue colours. Emphasising the difficult time that the French were facing, Rouault wrote in the text the poignant question that many of those Parisians who had fled their capital were asking, "Le feu est-il à ta maison? / et Paris ne serait-il plus ton village?" (14) [Is your house on fire? / Is Paris no longer your hometown? (Davenport, 367)].

Rouault introduced a touch of lightness into the mostly unsmiling, sullen looks on many of the characters by choosing humorous names, such as "Mange-tout" (Eats Everything), "Le Moqueur" (The Mocker) and "Les Deux Têtus" (Two Stubborn Men). Hidden behind these innocent-sounding names are highly politicised images. For example, the two scowling men facing each other in *Les Deux Têtus* [Fig. 2], resemble Maréchal Philippe Pétain, the leader of Vichy France, and his deputy, Prime Minister Pierre Laval, to which a despairing Rouault writes a text lamenting at the tension between these two leaders: "voyez

ces deux têtus / toujours se regarder / de travers / Aucun des deux / ne cédera et ne reculera / d'un doigt / face à son adversaire / . . . Effrayée, / de voir ces chiens enragés"(21) [two stubborn men / Always looking across at / each other / Neither of the two will give / an inch / Facing his adversary / . . . Terrified / I see these mad dogs (Rabinow 1995, 49)].

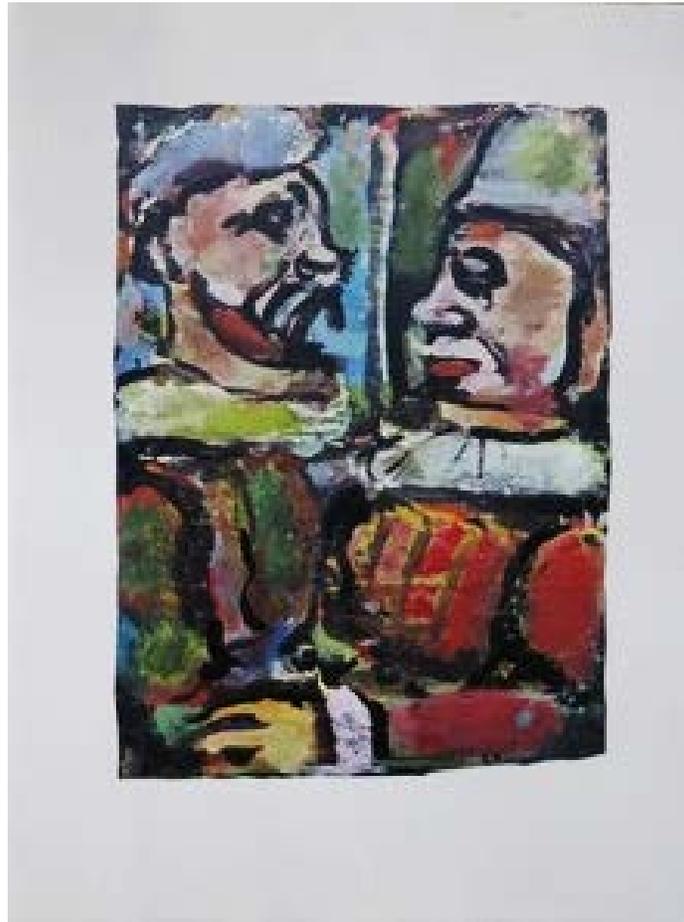


Fig. 2. Georges Rouault, "Les Deux Têtus", in: *Divertissement*, Paris, Tériade, 1943, 23.  
© Georges Rouault/ADAGP. Licensed by Viscopy, 2017

Rouault's image of "La Roussalka" [Fig. 3], a veiled signal to the French, depicts a graceful, almost peaceful face. Roussalka, with golden hair, thin lips and a flicker of a smile, posing in front of a red, white and blue window scene recalls Marianne, an allegoric figure representing the French republican motto of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité* (Agulhon, 31-35). The threat to France is clear:

Et ils me disent  
ces bonnes gens  
Peintre de la Mort  
Amoureux des ténèbres  
Nuit froide et mortelle  
j'en ai horreur (64)

[And they say  
these good people  
that I am a painter of Death  
in love with Darkness  
With Deathly and Cold Night  
I abhor it]



Fig. 3. Georges Rouault, "La Roussalka", in: *Divertissement*, Paris, Tériade, 1943, 65.  
© Georges Rouault/ADAGP. Licensed by Viscopy, 2017.

But Roussalka, praising life in spite of the threats of death and darkness that France was facing, responds, “et j’adore tout ce qui vit / sous le ciel” (64) [I adore all that lives / Under the sky (Davenport, 371)].



Fig. 4. Georges Rouault, “Madame Yxe”, in: *Divertissement*, Paris, Tériade, 1943, 45.  
© Georges Rouault/ADAGP. Licensed by Viscopy, 2017.

Accompanying another image, that of a dancer, an anonymous bleak-looking figure that Rouault calls “Madame Yxe” [Fig. 4], warns the French, “La route est longue / direz-vous, elle monte / redescend et puis remonte encore” (44) [The road is long, / you might say, it climbs /and descends and climbs again]. Through Madame Yxe, the artist laments, “n’avons jamais la paix / toujours inquiets / l’esprit tournant / en un cercle vicieux / nous périrons” (47) [we will never have peace / are always anxious/ with the minds turning / in a vicious circle /we will perish (Davenport 367)]. Here he is possibly warning of the difficult times ahead, a period of hostility he thought would never end.



Fig. 5. Georges Rouault, “Harlequin”, in: *Divertissement*, Paris, Tériade, 1943, 77.  
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The final image is the “Harlequin” [Fig. 5], a cultural resistance symbol of unity, no longer the youthful Jentie Bernard. Facing the Harlequin, written into the text is the word “Charlot”, suggesting the circus like figure of Charlie Chaplin’s tramp, a figure imbued with pathos. The text evokes the levelling power of death, “J’aime te voir une dernière fois [...] pour une danse macabre de hautbord” (75-76) [I like to see you one last time [...] For the supreme dance of death (Davenport 372)].

It was still during the Occupation, in February 1943, under great difficulty, that Tériade’s printmaker Draeger Frères completed printing the images onto separate paper and then cut and pasted them onto the final pages. Draeger Frères used the traditional *héliogravure* technique, a two-stage process used for high quality art books. It was a replication of the process the printmaker used for

*Verve*, volume 2, number 7, *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, thus creating another link between the medieval manuscript and Tériade's *manuscrit moderne*. Later that year, Tériade released the book to widespread acclaim (Chapon 186; Rabinow 1995, 53). Rouault exhibited ten of his *Divertissement* paintings of circus and religious scenes at the Galerie Louis Carré, avenue de Messine, Paris, between 15 April and 9 May 1943 (Courthion, 290-91).

Many artists and writers considered the book a triumph; for example, the poet Tristan Tzara wrote to Tériade congratulating him and requesting a copy (Rabinow 1995, 53). Although Tériade and Rouault grew close during the Occupation, *Divertissement* was the only artists' book that they produced together. Not only was *Divertissement* the first purposefully planned handwritten artists' book of the modern era, where the artist took creative control of the book as author and illustrator, but it also cleverly disguised Rouault's anti-Nazi message and can thus rightfully claim a place in the annals of cultural resistance.

### **Bonnard's *Correspondances*: a return to childhood**

While working with Rouault on *Divertissement*, Tériade proposed to Bonnard, on 10 April 1941, that they work together on an illustrated book (Rabinow 1995, 173). Bonnard was an obvious choice. Tériade already had a long relationship with the veteran artist, which grew even stronger during the war. As an art critic, he had previously reviewed many of Bonnard's exhibitions and had featured him in *Verve*. From the very beginning of his career Bonnard embraced the graphic arts and produced a rich diversity of images for items such as posters, piano music, playbill designs and book illustrations. In his poster assignments, Bonnard became one of the early pioneers of incorporating large handwritten text overlaid on the image, thereby making text and image an integral part of the whole. His first, and probably most notable success in combining handwritten text with the image, was the [poster](#) that Debray France-Champagne commissioned in 1889, which propelled him to greater recognition (Ives, Giambruni and Newman, 6). Bonnard had a long and successful history with artists' books. He illustrated nine, five of which he published with Vollard, so becoming the most prolific of his artists.

*Parallèlement* (1900), [Fig. 6] which many scholars deem he perfect marriage of text to image and a pinnacle achievement for the French illustrated book, was Vollard's and Bonnard's first artists' book (Harthan, 253). Vollard seized the initiative, and gave the artist complete freedom to illustrate Paul Verlaine's erotic

poems. Bonnard's one hundred and nine rose-coloured lithographs decorated the margins and transgressed the white spaces around the text and at times even overlapped the text. His sensual images neatly complemented Verlaine's impressionistic rhythmical verse about the sexual and lesbian relationships of young women. The first print run was recalled by the printer L'Imprimerie Nationale, the director becoming concerned at the dubious nature of the contents. Vollard, not to be beaten in his first attempt, reissued the book without the printer's marks (Newman, 166; Vollard, 253).

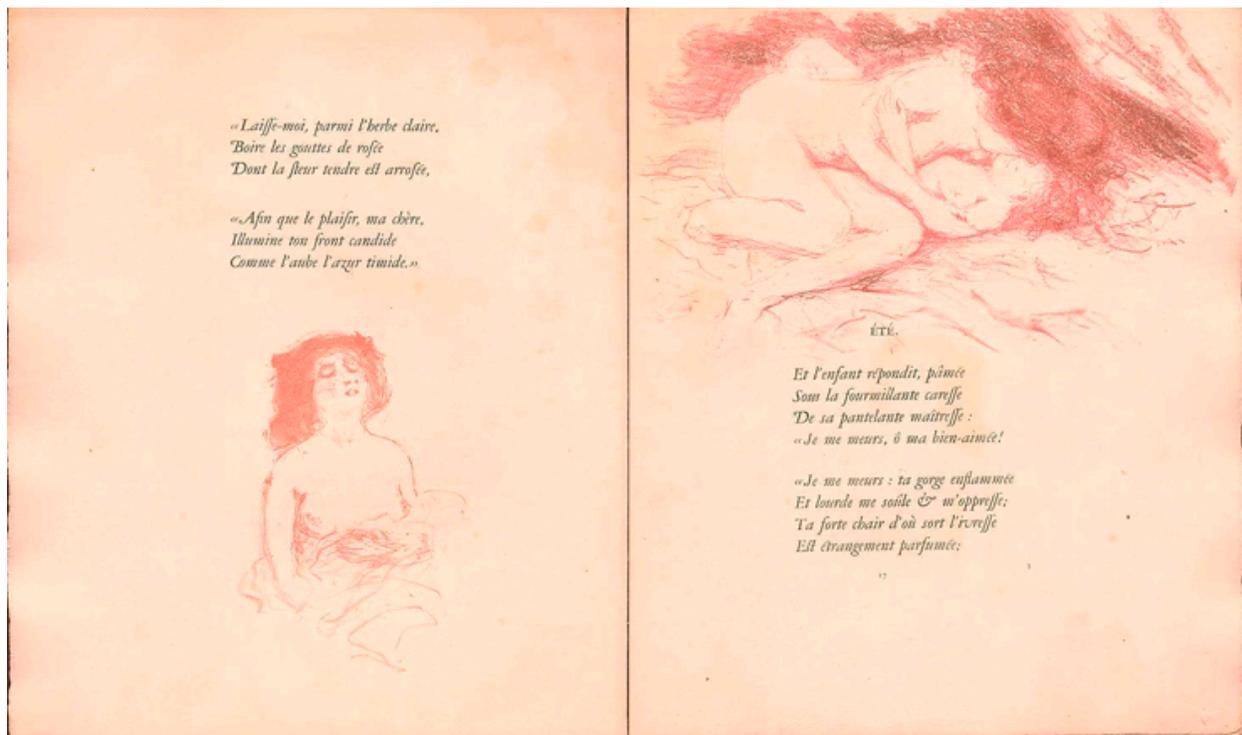


Fig. 6. Pierre Bonnard & Paul Verlaine, "Été", in: *Parallèlement*, Paris, Ambroise Vollard, 1900, 16-17. © Pierre Bonnard/ADAGP. Licensed by Viscopy, 2017.

When Tériade approached him to work on another *livre d'artiste*, Bonnard was vulnerable. The artist was worried about the material and psychological deprivations caused by the war: "material concerns and worries about the future are troubling me a lot, and I'm afraid that painting may abandon me because of a lack of mental freedom" (Bonnard to Matisse, 8 September, 1949, in Clair, 68). To add to his difficulties, the death of his brother Charles in Algeria in February 1941 left him devastated. Marthe, his wife, was very ill and on 26 January 1942 she died of cardiac arrest; Bonnard organised her burial in the Le Cannet

cemetery. Later that year, aged seventy-five years, Bonnard developed a pulmonary virus that affected his kidney (Bonnard to Matisse, 12 December 1942, in Clair 116). His illness and the deaths of his brother and wife made him increasingly despondent about the war. Tériade tried to help his friend and sent weekly food parcels to a depressed Bonnard, who was cut off from the outside world (Anthonioz, 169).

Since the handwritten text and complex colour printing of *Divertissement* in January 1943 progressed well and seemed to accord with Tériade's concept, he proposed to Bonnard that he repeat Rouault's initiative and write his own text for the book. Realising the difficulty in authoring his text, Bonnard, like Rouault before him, was initially reluctant to do so, although he later relented. To make the task simpler, Bonnard and Tériade agreed that the text would comprise a series of fictional letters to and from a young Bonnard, reflecting the happy and carefree summer vacations he spent at his family's country cottage at Le Clos. During his long summer breaks, Bonnard developed a "love of nature and of animals which would be of central importance to his art." Le Clos was Bonnard's escape to a "pastoral eden where life was simple, peaceful and savourous, where people performed age-old duties in touch with the earth and their domesticated animals" (Giambruni, 40-42).

Bonnard and Tériade signed the contract for the book on 14 September 1943 in Le Cannet, long after the artist had commenced work on it (Rabinow 1998, 81). The book, which they agreed to name *Correspondances*, would subtly reflect on the joyousness of France before the Occupation and hold out hope for a return to those days. Bonnard also welcomed the topic because he often turned to his own life and his personal associations as subjects for his art (Ives, 14). Keeping to the aesthetic construct of the book, Bonnard created twenty-eight images with a childlike simplicity that complement the handwriting of the text [Fig. 7].

To match the name of the livre d'artiste, Bonnard designed the title page to look like an envelope with a small hand-drawn stamp on the top right-hand side and the word "Correspondances" written in an upward slope in the middle of the page, where the address is usually placed. On the top left-hand side are the words "Pierre Bonnard" in capitals to acknowledge the artist and author, and on the bottom left-hand side in smaller sentence style is "Tériade Editeur" to acknowledge the publisher [Fig 8].

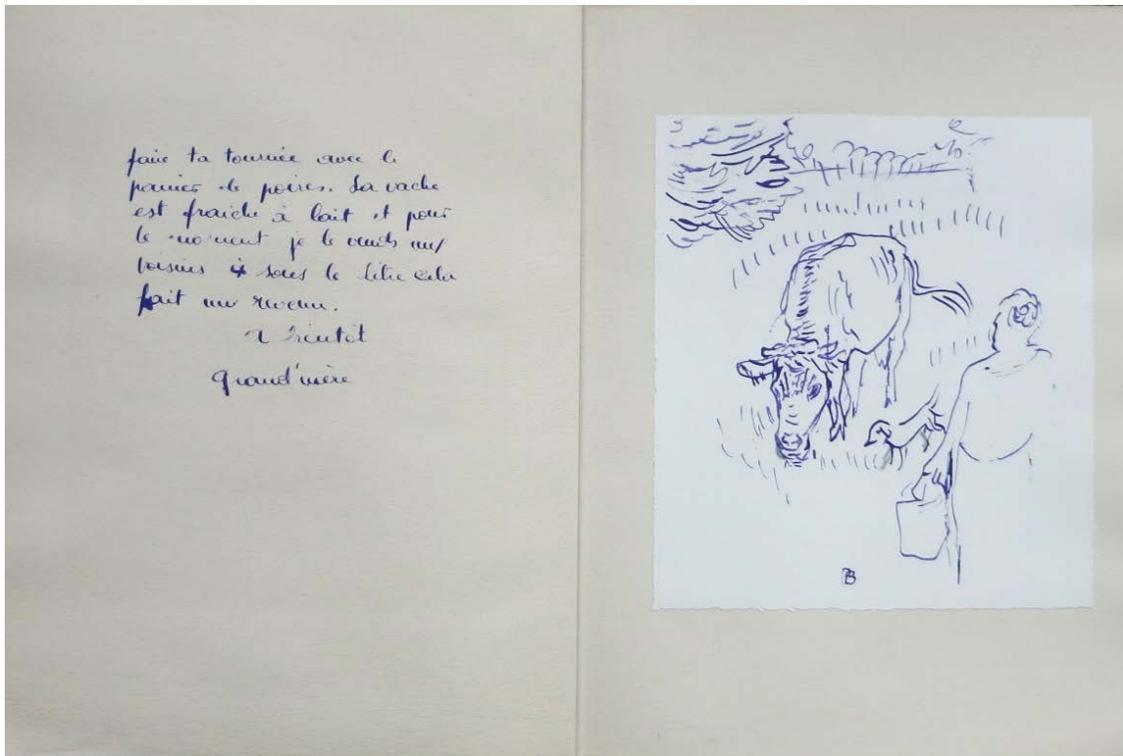


Fig. 7. Pierre Bonnard, *Correspondances*, Paris, Tériade, 1944, 21-22.  
© Pierre Bonnard/ADAGP. Licensed by Viscopy, 2017.

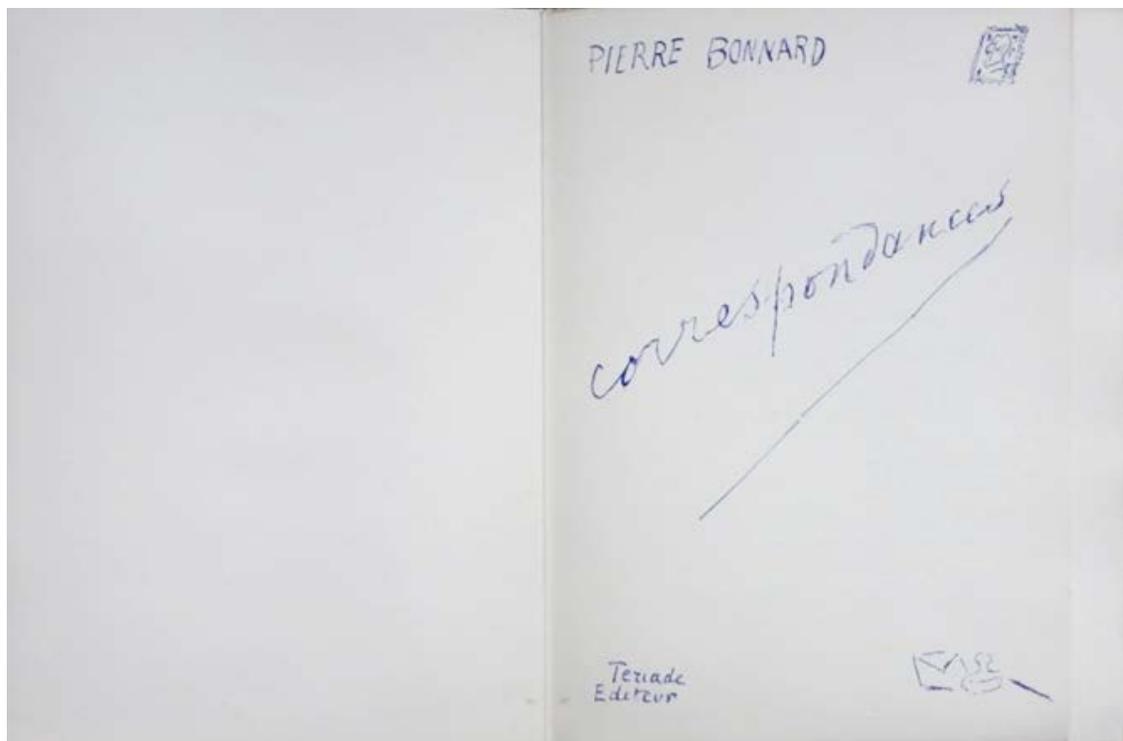


Fig. 8. Pierre Bonnard, *Correspondances*, Paris, Tériade, 1944, title page.  
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Recapturing the joys and simplicity of childhood in *Correspondances*, Bonnard took a journey back in time by returning to Le Clos. In doing so, he adopted a return to the land symbolism that Vichy appropriated as a pillar of its ideology. Echoing his carefree life around the 1890s when he was in his late twenties, the artist created eleven imaginary letters written by himself, his mother and his grandmother, to which he added three poetic proses.

While the autofictional character Pierre writes only one letter each to his mother and grandmother, he shows his closeness to his recently deceased brother, Charles, by writing him five letters. Although the letters to his brother, recalling their carefree days together as youths, were most likely a tribute, he acknowledged the void left by Charles's death by the fact that he received no letters back from Charles, whereas he received two letters from his mother and one from his grandmother. His carefully crafted letters and prose in *Correspondances* were an escape from the reality of the war and from the stresses of his illness and the sadness at the deaths of his brother and wife.

The first letter in *Correspondances*, from his grandmother, describes a domestic scene in which she writes about the simplicity of her life:

Me voici installée au Clos devant tout le monde. Je me trouve bien à la campagne. Pour le moment j'écosse des petits pois nouveaux dans la salle à manger le chien à mes pieds et les deux chats sur la table. J'entends souffler, c'est la vache qui montre sa grosse tête à la fenêtre. La petite bonne crie au dehors "Joseph le veau qu'est détaché" Dis à ta mère que tout va bien et que je surveille le potager. (7)

[I'm here installed at Le Clos before everyone else. I feel well in the country. At the moment I'm shelling new peas in the dining room, the dog at my feet and the two cats on the table. I hear breathing, it's the cow who shows her big head at the window. The little maid shouts outside, "Joseph, the calf is loose!" Tell your mother everything is going well and I'm keeping an eye on the kitchen garden. (Giambruni 41)]

The first image, a picture of domestic peace, aptly described by grandmother's letter, an emotional cry for the safety of home, sets the tone for the series of childhood images [Fig. 9]. Bonnard drew his grandmother sitting on a chair looking down at her hands while shelling peas from a bowl resting on her lap. Through the large window just above the old woman, is a farm-like scene reflecting the description in his mother's letter: a cow, whose head is inside the room, looks at the grandmother. In front of the woman is a table where two cats are playing

with each other, and under her chair is a dog scratching itself. The whole image generates a sense of peaceful domestic security.



Fig. 9. Pierre Bonnard, *Correspondances*, Paris, Tériade, 1944, 9.  
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There is an inescapable sense of pathos throughout the book. For example, in a letter his mother informs Pierre that the family have arrived and are now waiting for his arrival at Le Clos. The image accompanying the letter, on the following page, is replete with the security of domesticity: the family relax outside the house in the garden, the two men smoke pipes, and the children play with a dog [Fig. 10]. In another letter, Bonnard describes to Charles his arrival at Le Clos after three months and writes that on seeing the children at lunch he is greeted by his niece Jean who announces that “Ton-Ton le chat a mangé le fromage blanc” (77) [Ton-Ton the cat has eaten the cream cheese (Giambruni 69)].

The image accompanying the letter portrays Pierre arriving to be greeted by the two children eating, the nursemaid looking on, and a cat and a dog playing in the background. The symbolism of Bonnard in the safety of his family in a carefree rural setting is hard to miss.

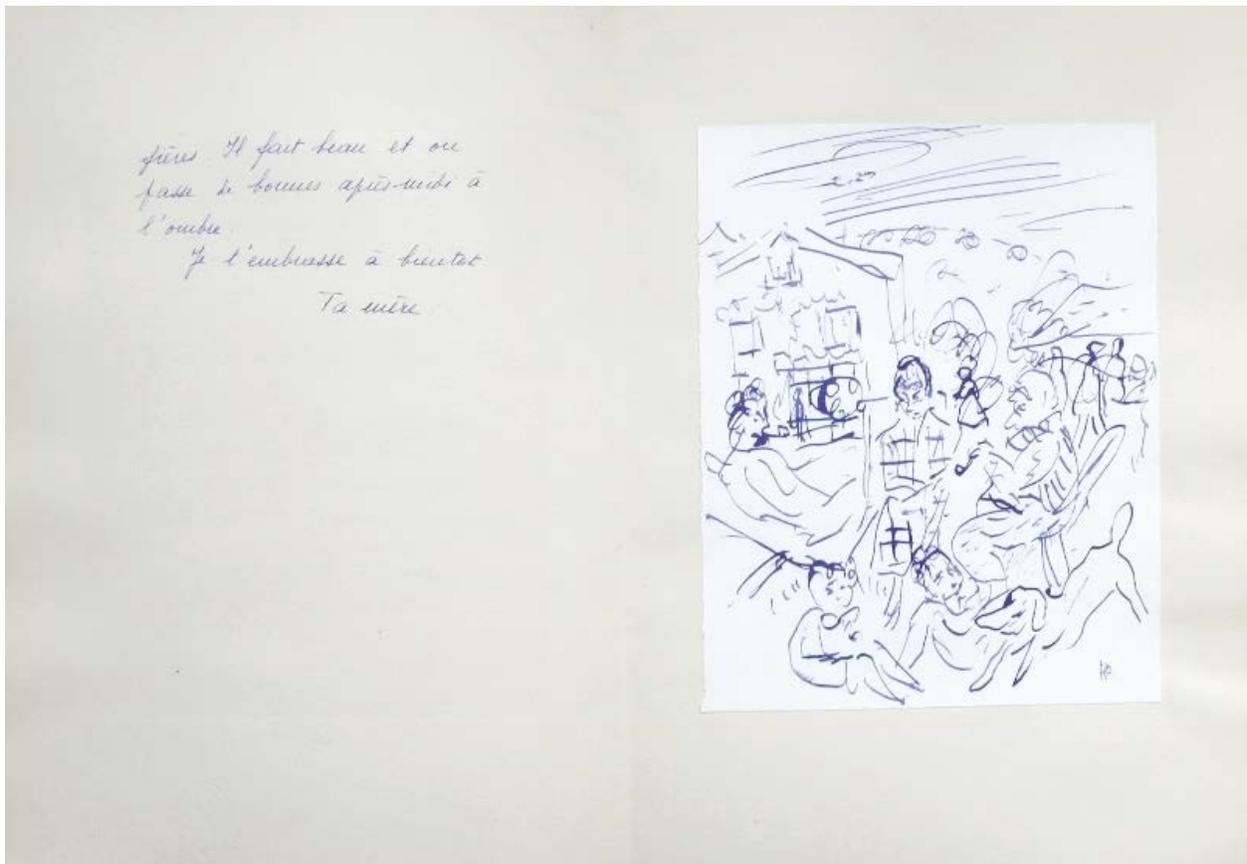


Fig. 10. Pierre Bonnard, *Correspondances*, Paris, Tériade, 1944, 42-43.

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To give *Correspondances* a sense of reality and to add variety to the text, Bonnard arranged for the handwriting to differ for each writer. Although he transcribed the seven letters and the three poetic texts that Pierre wrote, he asked Tériade to arrange for Angèle Lamotte, Tériade's assistant, to write the two letters from his mother and for another person to write the letter from his grandmother (Rabinow 1995, 76). It is not known who wrote the grandmother's letters, but one possibility is that, because of the close relationship between Lamotte and Tériade, it was the publisher who did so. Bonnard's own handwriting imitated the style of a young child, and he combined the images

and text in such a manner that the illustrated book took on the appearance of a school drawing album.

Not being diverted by the tumultuous events unfolding in France at the time, Louis Sol at Draeger Frères finished printing the book during the month of the Liberation of Paris, in August 1944, using héliogravure, the same technique as for *Divertissements*. However, because of the shortages of material and the lack of paper in the final days of the Occupation, *Correspondances* was a much smaller book and less grand looking than Tériade's first, *Divertissement*. Tériade published Bonnard's *Correspondances* on 11 December 1944 to a nation that was beginning the long process of reconstruction and was reaching out to its artists, writers and publishers in its quest to regain its prewar artistic leadership.

The first public showing of *Correspondances* took place between 5 and 20 December 1944 at the Bonnard exhibition, *L'Œuvre graphique de Bonnard*, at the Galerie Berès owned by the book dealer Pierre Berès. In a liberated Paris, *Correspondances*, with its handwritten text crafted by the artist after the images were created, was another step in Tériade's evolving notion of the *manuscrit moderne*. The book helped establish an aesthetic innovation that characterised many of the artists' books created after the Occupation. Rabinow reveals that many critics gave *Correspondances* good reviews, and journals such as *Les Arts* and *Les Lettres Françaises* reprinted some of the images. She notes that one prominent critic thought that, because of complementary colouration of the text and images and the complex use of the emerging photo-mechanical methods of reproduction, only Tériade could produce a book like this and she quotes Jacques Guignard of *Le Portique*: "for anyone else . . . [it] could have resulted in disaster" (Rabinow 1998, 184).

### **The proliferation**

Tériade's third *manuscrit moderne*, Matisse's *Jazz*, followed the precedent established by Bonnard and Rouault. Here Matisse created his wartime images first, embedding code of cultural resistance into them, and later authored and handwrote his text. Still experimenting with the *manuscrit moderne*, Tériade's fourth *manuscrit moderne* was different, as he allowed the concept to flourish and change. In this book, Pablo Picasso introduced his abstract arabesque illustrations into Pierre Reverdy's hand written poetry, *Le Chant des Morts*. In all, Tériade published twelve artists' books with handwritten text in the manner of his *manuscrit moderne*, and in only three of these did the artist use a text that

had been authored by someone else. Picasso's illustrations of *Le Chant des Morts* and Gris's illustrations of *Au Soleil du Plafond* are two livres d'artiste in which the author Reverdy, not the artist, wrote the text. In Miró's illustrations of Jarry's *Ubu Roi* the artist wrote out Jarry's text. After the Liberation, the manuscript moderne led to a post-War outpouring of handwritten illustrated books, joining an unprecedented resurgence of artists' books that lasted for years.

Jean Dubuffet became one of the most prolific artists to author, hand write and illustrate his own texts in the postwar period, producing seven handwritten illustrated books. Bernard Buffett and Miró each illustrated six handwritten artists' books and Braque illustrated three. Out of all the publishers of the handwritten artists' books, Alain Manzo published four, and Louis Broder, Aime Maeght and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler published three each.

This paper has recorded the emergence of the manuscript moderne by analysing the first two books of this new genre in an all-inclusive manner and within the context of the Occupation. In their own way, Bonnard and Rouault responded to the difficulties they faced. Rouault's *Divertissement* camouflages his anti-Nazi message as he laments the torment of Paris through his handwritten semi-autobiographical text and colourful circus-based images. Bonnard's *Correspondances* reflects on the joy and innocence of childhood and family life as an antidote to the Occupation.

Through the manuscript moderne, Tériade transformed the notion of the artists' book, giving the artist complete freedom to create their images free from the constraints of the text. The images were created before the text in an innovative reversal of the conventional mode of production of the French artists' book. Another striking departure from the norm is the replacement of the font by the handwritten text. Indeed, Rouault and Bonnard authored and hand wrote their own texts, so that the handwritten text effectively became an image, and the text and image merged as one. The manuscript moderne emulated the aesthetic complexity of its forerunner, the medieval manuscript, and is an example of artistic creativity during a dark period in France's history. Thus, conceptualised by Tériade during the Occupation, given life by Rouault and Bonnard, the manuscript moderne became a prolific genre in postwar France.

## Notes

1. This paper is based on material from chapter four of the author's PhD dissertation, *Resistance and Resurgence: The Cultural and Political Dynamic of the Livre d'Artiste and the German Occupation of France*.

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