

PITY THE LAND THAT NEEDS A HERO

Political Discursive Strategies of Identity (re)Production
in Contemporary France

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ABSTRACT

Since his election in 2012 French president François Hollande has indulged in a predilection for a discursive politics of memory, structuring an ever-increasing proportion of his public addresses around physical sites of historical and cultural memory, thus intensifying a trend set by his presidential predecessors in the later decades of the twentieth century. This thesis explores this pattern of political instrumentalisation of monumental sites, identifying and analysing the particular physical and representative power of monumental sites as employed in political discursive strategies of identity. In my examination of these political discursive strategies of identity (re)production, in which I draw extensively on techniques offered by literary and narrative theory, especially M.M Bakhtin's chronotope and Bertrand Westphal's geocriticism, I show the discursive tactics of President Hollande's memorial excess to be in a tradition that is both timeless and, as a result of accelerating social and communication realities, in crisis: that is, the Western tradition of experiencing collective identity not only as narrative but also, more specifically, as myth.

Myth as understood in this analysis is the myth of Greek epics, of Celtic traditions, of Christian dominance. A myth that forms both individual and collective identity by offering to its adherents stabilising explanations and meaningful experiences of time and space. Such myth is understood as always and inevitably operating as a triad: myth as narrative, ritual and hero. Should one of these interdependent components prove wanting, the myth will fail. My thesis begins by establishing the collective identity of the modern nation-state in this mythical tradition, identifying, as it does so, the manner in which the political myth of nation-state has adapted the balance of its narrative-ritual-hero triad to changing conceptions and experiences of space and time as provoked by developments in technologies of communication and social interaction.

The subsequent narrative analysis of contemporary French political identity discourses allows me to identify the manner in which cultural and monumental sites are being employed in political efforts to mobilise the powers of ritual and hero without which the national narrative cannot aspire to mythical dominance. By analysing a tradition of museum politics, from the Louvre of the French Revolution to the recently-inaugurated National Museum of Immigration History, I isolate the strategies employed by political leaders in their (re)definition of national identity. Furthermore, in exploring contemporary attempts to evoke the mythical triad in cultural sites, I can identify the failings of the national model of collective identity in the twenty-first century context by contrasting the notions of ritual and heroism called upon by French leaders today through sites such as the Pantheon and the figure of Jeanne d'Arc with emerging experiences of lived identity provoked by the new temporal and spatial realities of cyberspace and the contestations around tradition social identity and leadership provided by increasing female political and social leadership and by the presence of previously marginalised social groups in contemporary collective narratives.

INTRODUCTION

Knowing what it is to be Modern

TROUBLED BY BEING AND BELONGING

There is that moment between night and day when the fear descends. When one knows oneself to be alone and in that moment of terrible clarity knows too what it is to be mortal. *Not to be here/Not to be anywhere/And soon; nothing more terrible, nothing more true*

This is a special way of being afraid
No trick dispels. Religion used to try,
That vast moth-eaten musical brocade
Created to pretend we never die,
And specious stuff that says: No rational being
Can fear a thing it will not feel, not seeing
That this is what we fear – no sight, no sound,
No touch or taste or smell, nothing to think with,
Nothing to love or link with,
The anaesthetic from which none come round.¹

But day returns and the fear subsides. The soundless dark in which we sensed with mind, body and soul that which we think must always have been there has fled as light filtered in. “Work has to be done/Postmen like doctors go from house to house”. This is our cure: the rhythm of the day beating forward and bringing us with it. And maybe tomorrow we will sleep through the night.

In his dawn terrors, Philip Larkin knew that there was no comfort in the assertion that a rational being cannot fear a thing it will not feel. Such a statement presumes too much. It fails to ask what is it to be rational. Or what is it to feel. Several years ago I came across an article describing our inability to experience ‘wetness’ and explaining that, scientifically, we cannot feel directly what it is to be ‘wet’ but rather experience a combination of temperature and pressure enhanced by ‘perceptual learning’ (i.e. that we expect rain to be wet upon our skin).² To feel ‘wet’ is, therefore, to experience a “perceptual illusion” (Filingeri et al., 2014). I found it a troubling thought and struggle with it still. Even if I now know that the rain I feel

¹ All poetic quotations in this section are taken from Philip Larkin’s *Aubade* (1977)

² I first came across an article on the fact that we do not feel ‘wetness’ many years ago in a National Geographic magazine, the year and issue number of which I can’t recall. However, a more recent exposition on the phenomenon is provided by Filingeri et al. (2014)

on my face, that the water that flows through my fingers, is a combination of temperature, pressure and prejudiced expectation rather than a discrete sensation of ‘wet’ I’m not sure I see how it matters. Is this particular combination of factors not a sensation in its own right? Is this not, therefore, a definition of wetness rather than a repudiation? Is what I feel less real because of the knowledge that enables it to be thus analysed and explained? Or is it not rather that the phenomenon of ‘wetness’ is real because I feel it as such? I feel the rain like a liquid on my skin.

To claim something is ‘real’ because we feel it to be so can, of course, be irresponsible and even dangerous. I write this introduction in a year when a U.S. presidential election campaign has placed ‘feeling’ above fact and thus provided licence for the spreading and injurious falsehood and ignorance. However, in this thesis I argue also that to promote the totality of a ‘real’ that is independent of belief is equally, if not similarly, mistaken. There are truths that become so through belief, sometimes because the veracity of these truth claims can neither be confirmed nor disproved, because our sensations cannot always be broken down so neatly by a scientific journal article that explains our experience to be an illusion. Other times truths come about because our belief causes us to enact them into reality. When we become products of our beliefs, to deny the truth of our faith is to undermine the facts of our existence. And there is beauty in faith – the beauty in knowing the sensation on my skin to be elemental, a product of sea and sky. And there is comfort in faith; not only the musical brocade, before it became moth-eaten and when it still convinced us we would never die, but also the faith that draws us together in a common project. The sense of sharing in a community, of being with others even when we are alone. The kind of faith that lets us fall gently back asleep when we awaken before dawn, that gives us something to love and link with. That enables us to believe in a thing we cannot see.

There is too, of course, a danger in faith, in creating a truth through our actions. However, it is not only the overt danger of fanaticism, of segregation, of hate and mistrust. Nor is it only the danger of what happens when faith breaks down – though that question too haunts my inquiries in this thesis. There is a particular danger of faith that occurs when we cease to recognise our faith as such, when the supernatural masquerades as the natural. With explicit recognitions of declared faith – faith as expressed at mosque, church and temple – there is an awareness of practice. The beliefs of such faith might be ‘natural’ in that they are for the faithful an undeniable element of existence; however, they are also characterised by their recognition and embrace of a supernatural. They are otherworldly. In this thesis I consider a faith that refuses this otherworldliness or any explicit embrace of a supernatural.

Indeed, the faith of nation on which I focus here is necessarily of this world and this world alone. Therefore, it is the particular challenge of this faith to incorporate the power of the supernatural and the promise of transcendence in the worldliness of daily life, to root the theory and practice of the faith of nation in this world rather than use it to offer the possibility of another. The challenge of the nation is to present as natural a faith beyond our physical nature, to present as rational that which is innately irrational. The danger of the faith of nation is therefore different to the dangers of a fanatical religious belief; it is the danger of being oblivious to the role that faith plays in our behaviour, to the degree in which our ‘natural’ comportment is in fact a physical practice of our faith. When the practice of ‘rational’ and ‘natural’ expands to the point of encompassing that which in theory should contravene the logic of this rationality – as I argue in this thesis is the case with national sentiment in the modern age³ – then the potential exists for all human behaviour to be justified as or provoked in the name of the natural, the rational. The possibility of outside thus ceases to exist, in a totalising project that inspired and haunted the work of Frankfurt School writers like Benjamin, Fromm, Adorno and Horkheimer. Witnesses to one of the greatest failures of humanity, they identified in the crimes of the mid-twentieth century the success of emotive rationality, a distorted apex of scientific progress.

There is beauty in belief, in trusting in something that we cannot touch and taste. There is exhilaration in feeling something that we cannot easily explain. There is a peace in not feeling the need to explain or understand. Do not rob me of my faith; it brings me joy and hope and makes me feel alive. The project of the nation offers us this pleasure of faith, transforms the being-in-space of our existence into a belonging-in-space and, beyond this still, into a belonging-together. Yet the nation, as considered in this thesis in its modern iteration in the nation-state of Western-shaped culture, also denies the buy-in necessary to other religions as the nation becomes an entity rather than a belief system. Marrying the affective project of nation with the scientific rationality of the socio-political movements that led to the development of the modern state-structure thus can constitute the denial of the affective ‘irrationality’ and in this suppression create what I identify, drawing especially on the work of Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey on space and place, the possibility for the exertion of power. In this thesis, therefore, I seek to investigate what I identify as both the contradiction and the power of the modern nation-state: that from within the prosaic form exudes the power of the poetic, its atavistic pull concealed underneath and contradicted by

³With the understanding of what constitutes this ‘modernity’ discussed later in this introductory chapter.

the directness of its form. In the everyday resides the power of the eternal. Where life lived in the logic of the modern is life lived as if all is given, all is known, where “the familiar has prevailed over the fabulous” (Westphal 2011, p.79), those who have access to tools of the fabulous have access to mechanisms of influence and control.

This thesis seeks to draw attention to the fabulous in the familiar and to identify the power of the sacred as it operates through the everyday. It does so by taking the idea of ‘modern nation-state’, focussing on the empirical case of the modern French Republic, to wonder at the contradiction that this formulation implies: that within the scientific rationality of a modern socio-political structure the transcendent, fabulous of nation prevails as if natural and logical. I thus argue that this scientific rationality of the modern denied too much, that it let open spaces of uncertainty in which politics could operate by calling upon the power of the affective that the modern logic ostensibly denied. This thesis therefore proposes using the notion of ‘myth’ to investigate these contradictions and spaces of uncertainty within the modern socio-political and by this to reveal the manner in which these contradictions and spaces can be exploited in operations of power. The argument here is, therefore, that contrary to a positivist logic that would see myth and modern being necessarily in opposition, it is instead the myth within the modern that secured the achievement of the modern project. It is the element of myth within modernity that turns our being-in-space into a belonging-in-space and thus strengthens our affective connection to the administrative structures of modern society.

THE PROBLEM OF THE MODERN

This inquiry into the manner in which the interaction of familiar and fabulous contributes to turning ‘being-in-space’ into a ‘belonging-(together)-in-space’ is formulated in terms of myth and modernity and explored in the context of the modern French nation-state. It investigates how the pull of the ‘affective’ – the belief in that which cannot be seen – can be called upon in the legitimation of the administrative; i.e. the manner in which the organisation of state can lay claim to the authority of nation by making the association of the rational, organisational, administrative state with the affective, emotional nation seem natural and, ideally, inviolable. It is the argument at the heart of this exploration that this relationship of nation-state can productively be analysed through a framework of myth and more specifically a framework of myth as conceptualised in the context of the modern. It will be shown that not only does such an analytical approach facilitate the identification and

exploration of the familiar-fabulous or administrative-affective interaction in modern society but also that this particular approach yields results that provoke deeper understandings of issues of identity and belonging in and of twenty-first century European society, not least the focus on the hero of title. Understanding the modern nation-state in terms of myth encourages us to look to the hero figure around which classical and traditional myths are inevitably structured and to wonder whether the notion of heroism is still valid in our society today and whether or not this might really matter.

The basis of both the theoretical and empirical components of this thesis is therefore this notion of the 'modern; that which is particularly 'modern' about the modern nation-state and what I mean when I refer to 'modernity' in my formulation of the relationship with myth. Indeed, this discussion of modernity is a prerequisite for any engagement with the concept of myth since, as is shown in Chapter I, myth is most productively understood not as discretely defined but rather as a function (albeit a function broadly defined by certain recurring and essential characteristics). However, in beginning with modernity and the modern I necessarily begin with a failure. For being, as Baudelaire describes it, "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent" (1964, p.13), modernity eludes definition. Like the atom of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, the more we try to define it in one position or from one aspect the more uncertain its operation in other positions and aspects becomes. Nonetheless, although first admitting to this failure I will now claim it as productive rather than as a hindrance. It is this very elusiveness of modernity – an elusiveness in an internal contradiction, as considered below, with the core tenets of modern thought – that creates the space of uncertainty in which the influence of the affective can be, whether consciously or not, exerted.

It is my contention, therefore, that modernity is in many ways as elusive as myth will prove to be in Chapter I. The first implication of this is that, as stated above, neither myth nor modernity should be considered in isolation but rather in partnership, as with the velocity and position of Heisenberg's Principle. The second implication is that rather than focussing on what modernity *is* it is potentially more productive to concentrate on what modernity *does*, especially on what 'being modern' does to being-in-space. However, I do not shy away completely from efforts to engage with a definition of modernity as an *is*, as even in this project doomed to failure a closer idea of what modernity *does* emerges.

At its most basic level the modern is that which is new "that which is distinguishable from the past" (Cooper 2005, p.119). It is not merely that 'now' that its etymology suggests but a particular experience of now that necessitates, as Frederic Jameson writes in his *A Singular Modernity*, the notion of a break with that which went before (2002, p.17). In this

way, the modern is not only a phenomenon and/or description of the ‘now’ but also is constitutive of a ‘before now’. In the modern “the past is created by way of its energetic separation from the present; by way of a powerful act of dissociation whereby the present seals off its past from itself and expels and ejects it” (*Ibid.*, p.25). In many interpretations, this break was from a past overshadowed by an adherence to superstition and mysticism, a separation of truth from lie facilitated by new intellectual freedoms that were in turn encouraged by socio-technological innovation (Gay 1960; Harvey 1990). This sense of a ‘break’ was to contribute to a modern effect of turning dyads into dichotomies. In the true-false division of Enlightenment thought and the superstition that it professed to supersede (Gay 1960, pp.118-119) relationships such as that of myth and logic were now accepted as dichotomous rather than as the mutual dependence that the original interpretations of *mythos* and *logos* had implied (Heehs 1994; Fowler 2011).

The idea of modernity being a disruption of temporal consciousness or the creation of a new one recurs throughout the study of the cultural politics of the modern French state throughout this thesis and is considered in some more detail in Chapter I where the historiographic project of turning the personal of memory into the official of history is considered. This temporal imposition or accident of modernity – the delineation of a past, a present and an eventual future – is also identified by Benedict Anderson in his study of the modern nation-state in his *imagined communities*. Anderson writes in terms of ‘apprehensions of time’ (2006, pp.22-26), which he links to print-capitalism and the resultant literary form of novel and socio-political structure of nation-state, by which time comes to be understood as something that advances and along which we advance simultaneously, as compared to pre-modern communities where simultaneity was experienced vertically rather than horizontally across progressive time, i.e. that the past and future were always contained in, as opposed to distinct from, the present in what was the logic of Divine Providence or Messianic Time.

Therefore, even engaging with the modern at this most basic level of its etymological significance leads us from a ‘definition’ to an ‘apprehension’. Little wonder that there is, as Frederick Cooper emphasises in his study of interpretations of modernity, more confusion than clarity in efforts to fix on a definition of modernity (2005, p.113). Confusion not only as to whether modernity is singular or plural, or an oppressive Western imperial construct or a Western-originating universal means by which to elude oppression but also as to whether modernity is a condition or a representation (*Ibid.* pp.113-114). In speaking or writing of modernity and/or the modern are we describing or in fact creating or imposing? Within this

question, which I take less as seeking an answer than as a caution against reification, is the complementary issue of whether modernity is an epoch or, as Michel Foucault (1984b, p.39) preferred, an attitude. I would assert that, as with the aforementioned multiplicities of modernity, it is both. It is both because the term is used as such and thus comes to represent both but both also because one needs the other. The epoch of modernity can be plotted calendrically but is nonetheless known characteristically; that is, by what it is about the ‘attitude’ of modernity that distinguishes it from what went before. Similarly, one of the consequences of the ‘attitude’ of the modern, which Foucault defined as “a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling” (Foucault 1984b, p.39), is the creation of a calendrical consciousness by which a modern ‘epoch’ could be plotted. This calendrical consciousness relates not only to the temporal break mentioned above and the linear succession of past, present and future but also to the new conditions of knowledge brought about by technological development. The technologies of measurement and mapping that emerged from the Renaissance onwards encouraged new experiences of time and space by which both could be plotted and plotted with relation to one another. Thus can be observed again this transformation of dyads into dichotomies; e.g. where once, as explored in chapters I, II and III, the relationship of time and space was understood as fully interactive and mutually dependent and constitutive, the tempo-spatial relationship was now accepted as one of complementarity between two distinct properties. This novel conceptualisation of time and space as discrete, complementary coordinates is an aspect of the modern consciousness that is central to the inquiries of this thesis and is thus one I return to again below, when considering the effect on human behaviour of the modern attitude

THE ‘DOING’ OF THE MODERN

The Temporal Effect: Rupture and Continuity

A particular formulation of Foucault’s characterisation of modernity as a “mode of relating to contemporary reality” is that offered by Frederick Jameson, of modernity “not [as] a concept, philosophical or otherwise, but a narrative category” (2002, p.40). This can be linked to the observations above on the particular temporal character of the modern and very closely to Anderson’s work on the modern nation and the related literary sensibility of the novel. In defining modernity as a narrative category, Jameson identifies this narrative

function as a (constant) rewriting of the past in service of the present.⁴ However, what Jameson particularly emphasises in the narrative character of modernity is that it allows for the ‘break’ – the claims of newness and a distinction from a tradition or a past – to be combined with an “integration into a context from which it can be posited as breaking” (*Ibid.*, p.57). Therefore, to consider modernity in terms of narrative is to understand it not only as creating or representing a break from the past but also connecting with the past again in a new narrative relationship. This is an analysis of modernity that can be found also in Hans Blumenberg’s *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, in which Blumenberg posits an interpretation of the modern less as a total discontinuity with what has gone before but rather in terms of efforts to find new ways of connecting to an already there, of seeking new ways of answering questions that had been posed before (1985, p.397). Jameson and Blumenberg thus present a modernity that is both a rupture and continuity, a new beginning embedded in a timeless concept. This characteristic of the modern, this desire to posit a new beginning while nonetheless asserting a relationship with ‘before’ is one of the contradictions inherent in the idea of the modern that drives this thesis. It can be seen, for example, in Chapter II in the story of the founding of the Louvre as a national museum in what was a Revolutionary effort to mark a rupture from the France of ‘before’ by turning a place of the elites into a resource for the populace while using the historical significance of the building and the artefacts it was to house to insert the new Republic into a lineage of eternal ‘Frenchness’ in what I analyse as a very ‘modern’ political attempt to lay claim to legitimacy by providing a promise of a new while drawing on the power of continuous tradition. One of the elements of the modern as considered here is therefore that its promise or assertion of a ‘new’ is at its most attractive when the new is reinserted into an already-there. The discussion of myth in the modern provided in Chapter I shows how this apparent temporal contradiction between the theory and practice of ‘modern’ can be resolved by understanding modernity as having mythical aspects; the freedom of Kantian self-determination saved from becoming the “insecurity powerlessness, doubt, aloneness and anxiety” (Fromm 2001, p.54) of an unlimited positivism by finding a grounding in an originary and temporally-advancing narrative, i.e. in the story of nationhood and national belonging. Marrying of myth and the modern in this way leads me

⁴ Although not the focus of this thesis, where I concentrate very much on a ‘Western’ experience and expression of the modern attitude in my study of the French socio-political context, it should be noted that one of the criticisms of both the attitude of modernity and Western scholarship on the modern is that the narrative effect of modernity has not only been to narrate the past in service of the present but also to create a temporal distinction between a modern ‘West’ and a temporally ‘late’ other, especially in the colonial context. See for example Homi. K. Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture* (especially the concluding chapter “Race”, time and the revision of modernity’ (pp.338-367) and Frederick Cooper on the concept of ‘modern’ in the colonial context (both theoretically and in practice) (2005, pp.113-149).

to propose that modernity can be understood as finding the resolution to some of its inherent contradictions in appropriating these contradictions and rewriting them into its own particular form. In this, although adopting a very different approach to his structuralist analysis, I am in agreement with Claude Lévi-Strauss who saw the purpose of myth as “provid[ing] a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction” (1955, p.443), an achievement that Lévi-Strauss claimed would be impossible if that contradiction was real. The success of the myth in the modern is, I argue, that the contradictions of modernity were never real and thus needed to be reconciled rather than overcome, a function that I present in this thesis as having been achieved through the myth of the nation.

The Spatial Effect: A Galilean Scandal

One of the main things that the attitude of modernity ‘did’ in terms of altering the experience of being-in-space was to promote an experience of space independent of time, a modern move related both to the desire to be liberated from the stultifying temporality of superstitious tradition and also from the social and technological developments associated with both epoch and attitude of modernity. The European modern, as considered in this thesis, was characterised both by the new patterns of spatial organisation provoked by increasing urban populations and facilitated by advances in methods and material and also by the fixing of spatial meanings, as emerged from the intellectual and socio-political impulses of the European Enlightenment. This was the “practical rationalisation of space and time”, the origins of which David Harvey traces from the instruments of measurement and mapping of the early Renaissance through to the cadastral surveys of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Harvey 1990, p.259). These new techniques made of space something to be known completely; however this newly perfect knowledge of space not only gave to humankind a control over the functions of space but also took from space its properties of functioning otherwise than as a coordinate or as a passive location in the temporal unfolding of the world. Michel Foucault described this spatial modernisation as a movement from a sense of place – the affective experience of space – to a purely geometric conceptualisation of space. “The real scandal of Galileo’s work lay [] in his constitution of an infinite, infinitely open space. In such a space the place of the Middle Ages turned out to be dissolved [...]; a thing’s place was no longer anything but a point in its movement” (Foucault 1984: 1-2).

Space and Place in Modern Attitudes

The ‘scandal’ that this new knowability of space constituted was central to the liberating philosophical and intellectual project of the Enlightenment: in seeking a better society in which man could be free to achieve his own potential it was necessary “to pay attention to the rational ordering of space” and to develop both conceptual and physical politics of space (Harvey 1990, p.258). It was, however, a move that, as Edward Soja writes in his *Postmodern Geographies*, subordinated space to time in ceding narrative power to history (Soja 1989, p.15). The resultant presumption or acceptance of an “already-made geography” (*Ibid.*, p.14) caused the political nature of space to be overlooked. It is this overlooking of the politics of space, this denial of its affective nature in favour of the rationalist definition, that enables space to play a role in the politics of power, a role identified by Harvey as a politics of place, whereby “those who command space can always control the politics of place even though, and this is a vital corollary, it takes control of some place to command space in the first instance” (Harvey 1990: 234). This overlooking of the affective potential of space, which can be thought of in terms of ‘place’ (Garcia 2015, p.20; Tuan 1977, p.54) or of ‘productive space’ (Lefebvre 1991), is another one of the areas of uncertainty inherent in the modern sensibility. If the affective is denied does it become absent? Or rather, if left unacknowledged in the logic of the modern, does the affective not become something open to manipulation, a manipulation to be hidden beneath the apparent logic of the modern? This is one of the claims I make throughout this thesis, using the ritual characteristic of myth, as introduced in Chapter I, to draw attention to those sites that are located physically within modern space but that operate outside the logic of the modern. Chapters II and V deal with monumental and ritual spaces, which I identify as sites in which mythical time is permitted to function within the modern. These are spaces that are therefore simultaneously within and without the modern and in which the ‘affective’ of place denied by modern spatial logic can be called into action. In this thesis, the focus is on those sites that are called into action in service of the official, e.g. state museums in Chapter II and the Pantheon of Paris, in which great figures of the state are inhumed in great ceremony, in Chapter V. The study of these sites enables us to understand the operation of the mythical in the modern and thus understand how the modern administrative entity of ‘state’ can lay claim to the affective power of nation by exerting, to repeat David Harvey’s formulation, a self-propagating control of space and place.

Spatial Knowledge as an Instrument of Power

My contention that one of the effects of being in the modern, whether this be the attitude of the modern or the physical and administrative structures that can be associated with both attitude and epoch, is that space comes to be understood as something that is fixed and geometric has several consequences for my analysis of the discursive politics of nation-state in this thesis. The new knowability of space facilitated greater administrative control of populations, both physically and through the production of a newly dominant form of spatial knowledge. In this latter case, the mapping technologies and practices that we can link to the intellectual projects of Enlightenment and the new confidence in individual self-determination that resulted from this new knowledge and apparent mastery of space contributed to a new conceptualisation of the world not only in terms of space but in terms of space that could be measured and mapped. However, while the map was a valuable navigational and education tool, an acceptance of the modern of the map as a faithful representation of the world can be also read as a constraint upon possibilities of knowing oneself in this world. The markings on a map might be merely conventional signs but a map can serve as more than just a representation of these conventional signs. That is, in representing as 'real' such conventional signs the map becomes more than a representation. It becomes a technology of power (Massey 2005, p.106). Instead of representing an objectively already there' the map "anticipated spatial reality [...], was a model for rather than a model of, what it purported to represent" (Thongchai 1988, cited in Anderson 2006, p.173). The power of the map is that it is what remains when the situations and decisions that led to its particular conventional signs are long faded or forgotten, "the operations of which it is the result or the necessary condition...push[ed] away, as if into the wings" (de Certeau 1984, p.121). We gave it an inch and it took all our miles: the map "colonises" our space (*Ibid.*), becoming the natural issue of a natural space rather than something rather more expressly calculated. That our Mercator projection shows us a world that we recognise as real is because, as David Harvey observes "the map is in effect, a homogenisation and reification of the rich diversity of spatial stories" (Harvey 1990, p.253).

This elimination or smoothing over of narrative realities was a late-career preoccupation of cartographic historian J. Brian Harley, who came to consider all maps as text, narrative and rhetoric (Harley 1988; 1989). Harley's aim in his deconstruction of cartography was to provoke a recognition that the writing of the world through cartographic practices is necessarily always a process of silencing as much as it is one of illuminating, a practice of fiction as much as science. In Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* there

is the map as a colonial fiction in its imposition of science, maps as institutions of [colonial] power that turned sacred sites into components of secular geographies, that imposed a new imagination of space on conquered peoples (Anderson 2006, pp.163-178). It was to counter such impositions that Harley sought to draw attention to the “social consequences” of cartographic practice, to encourage us to reject the neutrality of maps and to see them as intentional rather than as representational (Harley 1989, p.7). Harley was thus seeking to expose, and perhaps challenge, the social and ideological agency of maps, to remind those living in the world of the map that maps don’t merely provide us with a picture of our world: they make this world, they change it, they are sites of power.⁵

Control through Space in the Urban Modern

While I consider this interaction of real and representation in the mapped world of modernity in some detail in Chapter III, the new potential for the exercise of power that the rational fixing of space created extended beyond the power to represent the real in a certain way. The spatial politics of the modern effected through new planning policies and projects in the emerging and growing urban centres of modern Europe⁶ created further possibilities for state authorities to exercise corporeal, behavioural and, ultimately, affective control over state subjects. Such planning and policies were, and continue to be, necessary for reasons of, inter alia, health, security and well-being and it is not my intention to present urban planning practices – nor indeed geographical practices as touched upon in the section above – as in anyway necessarily nefarious or to deny their positive potential and effect. However, I do wish to highlight the ‘dark side’ (Yiftachel 1998) of spatial planning, that spatial planning can also be a form of social control or a means of regulating behaviour.

Urban planning was very much exercised as a form of social control in the earlier years of the modern French nation-state, i.e. in the years following the Revolution, especially in a rapidly expanding – both in terms of population and national socio-political influence – Paris. Paris as we know it today is very much an organisation of space, a conscious planning not only of physical structures but also of human behaviour. Napoleon Bonaparte embarked on his spatial reimagining of Paris after surviving by a royalist attempt on his life. A bomb on Christmas Eve of 1800 failed to kill the emperor but instead provided him with the

⁵ Readers familiar with ‘Big Block of Cheese’ story-line in the second season of television show *The West Wing* will recognise here the mission of the ‘Organisation of Cartographers for Social Equality’ (in a project supported in real life by UNESCO among others) to replace the Mercator Projection with the Peters projection, as the Mercator project’s representation of relative size and position “has fostered European imperialist attitudes for centuries and created an ethnic bias against a Third World” (*The West Wing*, Season 2, Episode 16).

⁶ As well as by modern European authorities in their colonial conquests

motivation and opportunity not only to purge the city of many of those he suspected of plotting against him but also to clear an area of the city of what were, for the emperor, unsightly and inconvenient buildings. The failed assassination attempt having left a number of houses in the area damaged, Napoleon proceeded to have not only those but indeed the whole area demolished, destroyed and cleared, not hesitating to use coercion or intimidation to do so (Horne 2002, p.205). In their place he created a new network of broad streets (the names of which all referenced the emperor or his great triumphs (*Ibid.*, p.204)) with the intended Musée Napoléon (in the buildings of what had been the Louvre palace) to be a focal point in the centre of this newly opened vista. Paris, for Napoleon, was not just the capital of his empire; it was also to be the theatre of his glory. “Paris shaped Napoleon as much as Napoleon transformed Paris: during the Revolution Napoleon realised that public opinion could be manipulated and that power was to be seized in the capital” (Musée Carnavalet 2015, p.2).

Paris as designed by Napoleon – a project only partially realised – was a temple to the great man. The Arcs de Triomphe, the Temple of Glory, the Vendôme column: Napoleon was inscribing himself in the landscape of the city. However, his plans for Paris went beyond the execution of a vanity project; after the period of extreme turbulence that followed the Revolution, the emperor sought to ensure the security of both the city and the regime. The new Paris was not only a city of the elites – a city of court and palace – but was also to be a city of the public. Public amenities included new park, museums, libraries, canals bridges, fountains. It was Napoleon who introduced the system of house numbering (the same system that is in place today) and who ordered – for reasons of public health and– that the dead of Paris be buried in new, large-scale cemeteries located on the outskirts of the city. However, this investment in public space and in leisure amenities was carefully planned and weighed. With these physical developments accompanied by the placing of the policing of the city under central control – notably in the creation of the roles of Prefect of the Department and Chief of Police – “the public arena was kept under close police surveillance. Parisians were encouraged to enjoy themselves while refraining from all criticism of the authorities” (Musée Carnavalet 2015, p.4).

In these never-fully realised plans for Paris, Napoleon began a process of modernisation that was resumed by, and more often associated with, Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann. Haussmann’s reimagining of Paris, a project no less politically calculated than that of Emperor Napoleon, was also born of violent origins. Louis-Napoleon, who appointed Haussmann to the position of Prefect of the Seine Department and who charged him with the

reconstruction of the city, not only sought a renewed Paris that would provide a break from the past, that would liberate Paris “from constraints that bound it so tightly to an ancient past” (Harvey 2004, p.95) but also, in the wake of the 1848 revolution, sought to remove from the city both incitements to revolution and the structures (e.g. narrow streets and compact communities) in which had been built the barricades of rebellion. The Paris that emerged from Haussmann’s reconstruction was a Paris of boulevards and parks: the network of *grands boulevards* by which we know Paris today and the thousands of acres of parkland that Haussmann made available to the people of Paris. As was the case with Napoleon’s Paris, this “greening” of the city was not only an aesthetic project – i.e. the beauty of Paris for the glory of the nation – but was also an effort to channel the leisure-time of the inhabitants into benign and easily-policeable activity. Several years later, Claude-Marius Vaïsse, the ‘Haussmann of Lyon’, was to implement this same approach of ‘boulevards and parks’ in France’s second city. Lyon had, in 1831, been shaken by a violent social insurrection among the ‘canuts’ (the artisan silk-workers of the city) that saw the workers in bloody confrontation with the army and the national guard on the narrow streets of Lyon’s central peninsula. This revolt was followed by other uprisings in 1834 and 1848. Once more in a mission assigned by Louis-Napoleon, Prefect Vaïsse undertook a dramatic reconstitution of the city in which the centre of the city was transformed, with narrow and closed streets giving way – with the demolition of nearly 300 houses and the displacement of 12,000 residents – to grand, open boulevards in the Haussmannian style. Vaïsse was also responsible for realising the creation of a large public park on the outer edges of the city, a park that would contain lawns, gardens and lakes and that the Prefect envisaged as not only as providing a social good but also as alleviating the aggravations of the workers, thus staving off the risk of further violent protest.

The importance of built space in modern social organisation is therefore central to this thesis. However, the focus here is not merely on the physical control of populations but rather concentrates on how the behaviours provoked by building in the modern in turn contribute to a sensibility that reinforces the authority of the modern – be this the ‘attitude’ of the modern that encourages the ‘rational’ perception of space and time or the official administrative governance structures of this modernity. Therefore, I move away from the question of how spatial organisation can suppress certain types (e.g. riotous) of behaviour to that of how new spatial practices can be encouraged in service of a particular figure or type of authority. David Harvey, in his *Paris: Capital of Modernity*, draws attention to the importance of spectacle in urban life and to how spectacle and leisure practices were directed by Parisian authorities of the mid-nineteenth century to reflect and reinforce the centralised power of the

state (1990, pp.209-224). I develop upon this in concentrating upon how the spatial practices of and at certain physical sites – e.g. the museum and monument – create the possibility for modern geometric space to be infused with the affective potential of mythical time, an operation that when successful makes the discursive association of nation and state not only possible but also appear as natural or evitable.

Reintroducing Time to Space

To understand how the affective power of nation can be engaged through the spatial structural policies, I propose an analytical approach that restores the space-time relationship denied in the modern logic. This is done not only by drawing attention to the mythical aspects of the modern but also – and facilitated by the framework approach suggested by this application of a mythical approach to the problem of the modern – by applying specific analytical tools that recognise both the interdependence of space and time and a modern context in which this interdependence and mutual-constitution is denied. M.M Bakhtin's chronotope and Bertrand Westphal's geocritical approach are two literary analytical tools that are based upon the premise that to understand both text and world it is necessary to acknowledge that space is not fixed but is in constant temporal interaction. This idea of 'text and world' is central to the chronotope and to geocriticism, both of which propose that the way in which we live space comes not only from the materiality of space but also from its narrative. Both the chronotopic and geocritical approaches arose out of the intellectual impulses of the early twentieth century, especially the work of quantum physicists, such as Einstein, Heisenberg and Bohr, that built upon the scientific breakthroughs of the Enlightenment onwards to challenge the spatio-temporal assumptions that had marked modern positivity, not least the consideration of time and space as discrete and independently knowable. The chronotope and geocriticism, as explored in detail in Chapter III, are thus approaches that acknowledge that the politics of space cannot be understood without returning the temporal dimension to space and understanding space and time as space-time. These two approaches were developed from a literary-critical angles and although, as can be seen in Chapter III, they have been applied to analyses across many fields beyond the literary it is this very literary aspect that makes them particular suitable for the analysis undertaken here. Firstly because the examination of the relationship between text and world that both the chronotopic and geocritical approaches encourage is easily transferable to the study of political speech and creation of national community that I undertake in chapters II to V but also because Bakhtin and Westphal use their analytical innovations to examine the mutually

constitutive relationship of text and world in the modern. The inherent contradictions of the theory and practice of space in the modern results in a situation where “space oscillates between reality and fiction” (Westphal 2011, p.90) with narrative as that which ensures a smooth transition between reality and representation. However, this ‘fictional’ aspect of space means not only that the experience can be formed through the temporal infusion from the narrative but also that the relationship can work the other way: that “the representation fictionalised the sources from which it emanates” (*Ibid.*, pp.76). Adopting a chronotopic and geocritical approach, as set out in Chapter III and as applied in Chapters IV and V, therefore makes it possible to examine the temporal operation of space in the construction of a national sensibility through discourse of state as well as to identify a constant interaction of space and story in the narrative construction of nation-state.

The Totalising Project of Modernity

I will finish this section by claiming that the analysis of modernity to this point suggests that modernity has a totalising effect. Perhaps to identify this as the totalising project of modernity risks attributing to modernity an agency; however, it could also be conceived as a modern effect that can be instrumentalised within particular projects of the modern – e.g. that of the inevitable association of nation with state. To know oneself in the modern is to be fully of the modern; the alternatives for identities or knowings of the self that are otherwise than or outside the modern sensibility is blocked by the modern will to encompass all narrative within the modern. To be modern is to have the will to know and to have the possibility of access to the means to know it; however, in this the modern becomes totalising in its will to encompass all narratives. If selfhood is achieved through knowledge and if the technological understanding of modernity is that all things can be knowable then there can be no knowing of the self outside the modern. If we have the ability to know then we have the ability to know everything, and this knowing must be in the logic of the modern. This totality of modernity is encountered in its most terrible in Adorno and Horkheimer’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1979), a work provoked by the horror of totalitarianism in the first half of the twentieth century in which the authors argue that once a truth becomes all-encompassing it becomes the very myth that it sought to escape. “The more the machinery of thought subjects existence to itself; the more blind its resignation in reproducing existence. Hence enlightenment returns to mythology, which it never really knew how to elude” (Adorno & Horkheimer 1997, p.27). While the totalising effect of modernity can thus be traced to the ‘attitude’ of modernity it is reinforced by the experience of modernity as epoch. Because we

are in the modern – a calendrically identifiable modern – we exist in the time of the modern and since the time of the modern is the time-line of the course of our lives rather than the more complex component of the space-time relationship we find ourselves firmly and absolutely in the modern. To be outside the modern is to be outside all the references by which we know ourselves, implying that to be outside the modern might be not to be. This totalising aspect to the modern is another one of the major contradictions within the idea of ‘modernity’. In the modern attitude, the affective is denied or explained away by the scientific. This project of explaining away that which we can never know corresponds with and contributes to the Enlightenment aim of freeing us from the bounds of oppressive superstition. However, it also places new bounds upon us and new boundaries on our imagination. It therefore becomes a totalising myth of our existence and understanding modernity as such can help us to understand how we are tied.

I would suggest that this totalising effect of the modern gives to a power to discourse in the modern that goes beyond – or is at least different to – the rhetoric of earlier ages. This idea is present in much of the work of Bakhtin on discourse and is related to the idea that the closer the text is to the real, e.g. the greater the similarity between the chronotope of the narrative and the space-time of the reader or listener, the greater the power of the representation to influence the real. Bakhtin, in both *The Dialogic Imagination* and *Art and Answerability* points to the novel form (as introduced in Chapter I and explored in more detail in Chapter III) as the dominant narrative sensibility of the modern. However, the inability to ever define exactly the novel – as opposed to the canonical genres of epic or poetry, for example – or rather the ability of the novel to embrace rhetorical and artistic literary forms makes it possible for novelistic discourse to lay claim to all, to both the real and to the represented.

TROUBLED BY FRANCE

The exploration in this thesis of the internal contradictions of modernity and the resultant spaces of uncertainty that create the opportunity for operations of power, especially by calling into action the hidden potential of the affective, is focused here on the idea of the modern nation-state; that is, the means by which the administrative structures of state can successfully be allied to the affective concept of nation in a manner that suggests this alliance to be natural, inevitable or even inviolable. The particular case of nation-state analysed here is that of France and the period of the ‘modern’ covered is from the Revolution of 1789 to the

present day. Within this particular place and time, the analysis focuses on sites and stories claimed or controlled by official authority and on the political discursive strategies that make it possible for these administrative authorities to lay claim to the identity of nation in the legitimation of their authority.

In this research project, it was not much a case of my choosing France as it was of France choosing the research approach. My initial inquiry had been provoked by France's military interventions in Libya and the Côte d'Ivoire in 2011. I was struck by the fact that in presidential announcements of and updates on these interventions the justification was structured in terms of a French national mission or destiny. I wondered why it was necessary or necessarily desirable to call upon the narrative of nation in decisions of state. Perhaps triggered by this, at around the same time I began to notice a difference in the flag-waving in France and a neighbouring country in which I had spent a lot of time, Belgium. When I had first moved to Belgium several years previously I had been struck by the number of flags that I would pass as I made my way home in the evening. Not flying proudly on top of monuments and tourist sites, as was the case in France, but stuck to or draped from windows. These two flags, both from countries that were not my own, had a very different effect on me. The French flag and regional flags flying from the top of the iconic towers of La Rochelle, which was my home after leaving Belgium, made me 'feel' in a way that those in the Brussels windows did not. It was, I supposed, because I was more familiar with French history than I was with Belgium and my feeling was therefore just a recognition of the stories that the French Tricolour recalled to me. Yet even when I familiarised myself with the Belgian stories, even when I painted my face in the red, yellow and black for the World Cup I never experienced the evocation that the French equivalent could effect. This was a personal experience and therefore not an observation upon which to base the inquiries of doctoral thesis. However, these personal observations led to me to look deeper into the stories behind the flag, not only their originary stories but also their narratives in the present. That the Belgian flag displayed in neighbourhood windows was particularly prevalent at that time was, I soon learned, related to the administrative difficulties being experienced in Belgium. A political crisis had erupted a short time previously and the country was without a central government and was to remain without one for nearly two hundred days, fuelling fears or hopes of regional separation. When Yves Le Terme, then minister-president of Flanders and future prime minister of Belgium, was asked on the Belgian national day in the year of crisis if he could hum the national anthem he sang instead a few bars of France's *La Marseillaise* and admitted he didn't know the significance of the date of the national holiday. The flags in

the windows were, I supposed, attempting to do what the French Tricolour aloft national monuments seemed to be doing so effortlessly. Representing an idea of a country that was both nation and state.

The question of the tricolours was therefore for me that of what made a flag more than a flag, just as I wondered why it was so important that French president Nicolas Sarkozy present the military decisions of state in the discursive terms of the nation. Questions that were banal in their obviousness and yet it was this very banality that intrigued me. Why in this supposedly secular age and region where the individual was taken to be sovereign and rational did it seem that we needed this idea of nation to justify our adherence to the rule of the state? A response is suggested by Pierre Nora in the titles to his various volumes of his now-iconic historical project *Les Lieux de Mémoire*. Tome II is 'The Nation' while Tome III is 'The Frances'. The seeming constancy and particularity of nation, Nora writes, allows for multiple experiences or interpretations of 'France' within this one nation (Nora 1992, pp.17-32). The notion of nation though contravening the logic of the modern as explored above is perhaps necessary for the success of the modern project of the state. Thus it was that I began to study by what specific means this idea of 'nation' was being engaged in the legitimization of state authority.

Beyond this – once the question of nation, state and what makes a flag more than a flag had arisen – the story of France presents an interesting study case for the relationship between myth and modern as set out in this introduction. France is a land of Reason: the land of Diderot, Montesquieu, Voltaire, a land in which a royal mistress, Madame de Pompadour, pushed the Court of Louis XV to embrace Enlightenment philosophy and ideas of scientific rationality, a land in which the great revolutionary Robespierre carried a copy of Rousseau's *The Social Contract* in his pocket. It is a land that based its new Republic on the concept of individual rights. However, it is also a country of great spectacle and iconography. Ideas of 'Frenchness' are expressed through Bastille Day, the Eiffel Tower, the Marseillaise, through the heroic narratives of Jeanne d'Arc and Charlemagne. Indeed, the argument that the ostensibly secular Republican revolution can be just as easily read as clear instance of religion or myth.

There was a revolutionary religion whose object was the institution of society itself. It has its obligatory dogmas (the Declaration of Rights, the Constitution), its symbols which inspired a mystical veneration (the Tricolour, the Trees of Liberty, the Altar of the Patrie, etc.), its ceremonies (the civic festival), its prayers and hymns (Mathiez 1904, cited in Souboul 1985)

These extremes of modern and myth make of France an enthralling case for the exploration of the interaction of ‘real’ and ‘affective’ in the politics of the nation-state.

The ‘modernity’ of France could be traced to an earlier era than that I have chosen here. It could be traced to Diderot and the *Encyclopédies* or further back to Descartes. To Cardinal Richelieu and his political state project or his establishment of the *Académie Française*, perhaps. However, the choice of the 1789 Revolution was made not only as the foundation of the modern French Republic but also because of the patterns of rupture and continuity that can be identified, and thus analysed, from and relating to this event. The fact that the Revolution was initially a violent break from the monarchical past – a break, indeed, that went so far as to change the calendrical organisation of the state – and yet also characterised by the assertion of a true and eternal ‘Frenchness’ presents an promising condition for the exploration of the work of myth in the modern as outlined above. That the initially success Revolution was followed by a series of other significant political and narrative breaks – through five republics and two empires – with each successive regime distancing itself from the previous and presenting itself as representative of the one true France creates the possibility for the tracing of patterns of rupture and continuity across an extended period and thus to examine whether or not techniques of resolving the question of ‘rupture from but continuity with’, where the from and with referred practically but not symbolically to the same ‘before’, could be seen to be similar. Was the myth called upon in the assertion of the structures of modernity only at a point of formation or was it constantly at work in the upholding of the modern? This question is addressed empirically in the thesis through the examination of the spatio-temporal politics of entities that predated the modern France nation-state and that are still at work in nation and state today, e.g. Jeanne d’Arc in Chapter IV and the Pantheon in Chapter V. The choice of region and era for my study of the interaction of myth and modern in the politics of the nation-state is therefore not arbitrary. However, nor would I claim it to be definitive nor necessarily ‘right’, even if justifiable. A different interpretation of the ‘modern’ would perhaps lead me to a different space and a different time. Nonetheless, as I have shown here the idea of modernity is necessarily elusive and thus the perfect ‘modern’ situation would be impossible to identify. When Heisenberg showed us that an atom’s velocity could never be perfectly known if its position was kept stable his theory was given the title of Uncertainty. The atom needed to be considered as static if any reasonable measure of its velocity could be estimated and therefore the choice to be made in analysis was one of uncertainties. I have picked my point of position.

CHAPTER-by-CHAPTER

The opening chapter provides the basis on which the analyses of the subsequent chapters can be built. In exploring the social and narrative impact of the gaps in space and time opened up by the intellectual and technological developments of the Renaissance and early Enlightenment, I show the terrible anxiety of a freedom without transcendence to have been staved off by the emergence of a modern myth, a new story-telling that gave us our origins, our destiny, and a sense of community in between. This was the myth of the nation, and in demonstrating that this myth of the nation can be understood as a successor to the earlier Western myths of the Classical, Celtic and Christian world I develop a mythical framework to be applied to my later analyses of political discursive strategies of identity (re)production within the modern myth of the nation. This framework is that of myth understood as operating as a triad of narrative, hero, and ritual. While the narrative sets out the story – giving origins and direction to human existence – the hero provides example, embodiment and hope of transcendence with the ritual serving as the performance through which myths are brought to life and put into practice. This identification of the mythical triad makes it possible for me to consider the characteristics of each element of the triad in turn, resulting in a detailed understanding of the productive mechanisms of myth against which the political discursive strategies of the later analyses can be compared.

The second chapter aims to elucidate the strategies of identity (re)production particular to the identity politics of the modern by investigating, through the story of the modern French museum, how the physical and narrative construction of monumental sites in the space of the modern makes it possible for a hidden presence of the sacred to be appropriated in and by modern spatial narratives. The analysis of the museum politics of France's Fifth Republic, with an emphasis on the museum stories of the twenty-first century, exposes this modern instrumentalisation of the sacred, temporally-infused space of monumental buildings. It also highlights the role of the museum in the politics of identity (re)production through the mechanism of rupture and continuity, with the ability of the museum to write history through the organisation and depoliticisation of its artefacts making possible both a temporal break with an undesirable past and an assertion of continuity within a timeless identity. This chapter also serves as a template for the analyses of the subsequent chapters by rooting the contemporary analyses of political discursive strategies in a historical and theoretical context that facilitates the identification of the mechanism of rupture and continuity at work in contemporary (re)productions of mythical identity.

Whereas the previous chapter had explored the role of cultural spaces as privileged sites of identity (re)production in modern politics, Chapter III examines the narrative tactics that create the potential for these sites to be called upon in the mythical formation of the nation. This chapter undertake a narrative analysis of the modern nation that reveals our belonging to a nation to be a constant storytelling in which the boundaries between the real and imagined are not only porous or permeable but constantly shifting, fading and re-emerging. This tracing of the inter-dependent relationship of nation as socio-political entity and novel as literary form enables me to contribute to the theory of political discursive analysis by demonstrating that critical approaches borrowed from literary theory can provide new insights into and understandings of the manner in which political discursive strategies of the modern operate. The literary critical techniques of geocriticism, as formulated by Bertrand Westphal, and the chronotope, from Mikhail Bakhtin, are introduced in this chapter and their subsequent application to contemporary strategies of identity (re)production in France reveals the manner in which the identity of the nation can be presented in political discourse as narratively inevitable by means of the strategic rooting of the representative discourses of nation in the reality of the nation's physical space.

In Chapter IV the application of the analytical tools of the preceding two chapters to the analysis of the role of the hero in contemporary political discourses reveals how political leaders in France today call upon the mythical strategies of modern identity firstly to promote a chosen hero as embodiment of the nation and secondly to enable the contemporary leader to employ the narrative strategy of real and represented to lay claim to the authority of the dead hero. The analysis of political discursive evocations of the heroic narratives of Jean Jaurès and Jeanne d'Arc permits me to identify the elements necessary to raise a heroic narrative from story to myth and, furthermore, to explore what changing patterns in the political instrumentalisation of these heroes can tell us about contemporary pressures on and challenges to the modern mythical identity of nation. However, focussing the analysis of contemporary strategies of identity (re)production on the heroic narrative also produces further insights that permit me to conclude that the hero is if not dead then at least dying. The mythical distance required to raise an individual to heroic status has been filled in by the immediacy of a new spatio-temporal era while new and emerging conceptualisations of hero in society and in popular narrative suggest the hero of the future to be no longer heroic, no longer removed and transcendental but instead constructed on the same plane and from the same material as the common individual. This impending death of the hero raises questions about the continued viability of mythical strategies of identity production – can there be a

myth where there is no hero? – and also suggests the possibility of the emergence of new non-heroic narratives.

The ritual story around which the analyses of the final chapter are structured is that of the Pantheon in Paris. The Pantheon is one of the great civic national monuments of the Republic. Originally built as a church, the Pantheon was reinvented in the years of the Revolution as a secular temple in which the great wo/men of the Republic could be laid to rest in and for the glory of the nation. By analysing the political ritual practices of identity in twenty-first century France in the historical context of the Pantheon, I demonstrate that practices of ritual are being adapted or altered to take account of the present or impending loss of the hero. I thus identify two ritual responses to this loss of the hero. The first is the attempt to revive or create the hero through an intensified promotion of the traditional hero ritual while the second is to promote a new culture of hero-less ritual. I claim that both tactics risk opening up spaces for the formation of new narrative identities, i.e., for and by those excluded from the exclusive narrative of the first and through the failure of the second to succeed in its mythical narrative production in the absence of a hero.

CHAPTER I: MYTH IN MODERNITY

A Historiographic Project

Myth expresses in terms of the world the understanding that man has of himself in relation to the foundation and the limit of his existence.

Paul Ricœur

Nicolas Sarkozy launched his presidential election campaign of 2007 with a visit to one of France's most celebrated sites, the iconic island-village of Mont-Saint-Michel. Sarkozy's choice of Mont-Saint-Michel as the site of his first public event as official presidential candidate was a considered one, he declared, allowing him to begin his electoral journey from an "absolutely extraordinary site that conveys the idea that France is not a thing of the past, that France is a country without parallel".¹ While the centre-right candidate was to use the imagery and history of this symbolic location to emphasise the Christian heritage of France (an important theme of his campaign and later presidency), that this island off the coast of Normandy is of a more general significance in and to political conceptualisations of national identity is attested to by its transformation over the last three decades into a site of pilgrimage for presidential hopefuls from left to right, from Socialist candidate François Mitterrand in 1983 to prospective centre-right and centre-left candidates Alain Juppé and Manuel Valls in 2015 and 2016.

When Jean-Marie Le Pen, Front National candidate in the 1988 presidential elections, landed at the foot of the island in a helicopter bearing the inscription "Le Pen for President" it was in order to boost his campaign by an association with this "symbol of an eternal France; a site in which the values of France become sacred" (Chombeau 2007). This association of Mont-Saint-Michel with the sacred in the evocation of a spiritual national identity was echoed thirty years later by Socialist President François Hollande in his assertion that "those who question the strength of France should come to Mont-Saint-Michel and feel the force of its spirit".²

¹ Original reads: "*Le Mont-Saint-Michel est un site internationalement connu et absolument extraordinaire qui, pour moi, doit porter l'idée que la France, ce n'est pas fini, que la France est ce pays à nul autre pareil*". 'Au Mont-Saint-Michel, Nicolas Sarkozy place sa campagne sous le sign de la spiritualité,' *Le Monde*, 15 January 2007. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2007/01/15/au-mont-saint-michel-nicolas-sarkozy-place-sa-campagne-sous-le-signe-de-la-spiritualite_855730_3224.html#EJDgIT8odoRGMMqh.99

² Original reads: "*Ceux qui doutent [...] de notre force, de celle de la France, qu'ils viennent au Mont Saint Michel [...] pour être justement touché par cet esprit-là*". Discours au Mont-Saint-Michel, 30 October 2015. Available at: <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-su-mont-saint-michel-2/>

Visiting the island monastery in October 2015, Hollande spoke of Mont-Saint-Michel as a *lieu de mémoire* – a site of memory – a phrase that he was to reiterate throughout his speech. “A *lieu de mémoire* of the French Nation [...], of our political history, the great, beautiful, tumultuous history of France”.³ The identity evoked by and at Mont-Saint-Michel was thus an identity formed by both history and memory, the history (and history-in-the-making) of the state interwoven with the memory of the nation.

In this chapter, I show that this interaction of history and memory in discursive strategies of identity (re)production in contemporary France is best understood in terms of myth. In doing so, I demonstrate that the manner in which the modern nation produces a sense of shared belonging can be placed in a lineage of the mythical identities that preceded the modern era, e.g. the Western Classical, Celtic and Christian mythical traditions. Establishing this understanding of the nation as a mythical identity not only creates new possibilities of understanding the success of the nation in remaining the dominant means of being in or belonging to the world but also suggests a mythical framework by which contemporary French political discursive strategies of identity (re)production can be identified and analysed.

Myth as understood in this exploration of identity politics is not the myth known in the pejorative sense of falsehood or baseless belief but is rather the myth of our collective story-telling, that which gives us our origins, our destiny, and our sense of communion in between. However, as explained below, to talk of national belonging or identity in terms of myth is not simply to equate history with story-telling but rather to investigate what it is that brings stories of nation to life, that allows them to be experienced as individual and collective identity in the nation. The concept of myth is helpful in analyses of national identity not only, as shall be seen in Chapter III, by virtue of its ability to deal with national narrative as always both real and imagined but also because of the particular structural understanding of identity (re)production that theories of myth offer. That is, as I demonstrate below, that myth operates as a triad of narrative, hero, and ritual. While the narrative sets out the story – giving origins and direction to human existence – the hero provides example, embodiment and hope of transcendence while the ritual serves as the performance through which myths are brought to life and put into practice. Considering these three elements in concert creates new insights into the manner in which a mythical identity, in this case the mythical identity of the nation, is (re)produced.

³ *Ibid.* Original reads: “C’est d’abord un lieu de mémoire, de mémoire de la Nation française [...] un lieu de notre histoire politique, je parle de la grande Histoire, de notre histoire, de la belle histoire, de la tumultueuse histoire de la France”

WRITING ABOUT MYTH

In the Preface to his *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes stated that his decision to embark on a mythical exposition of elements of French daily life was provoked by “a feeling of impatience at the sight of the ‘naturalness’ with which newspapers, art and common sense constantly dress up a reality [...] which is undoubtedly determined by history. I resented seeing History and Nature confused at every turn, and I wanted to track down, in the decorative display of *what-goes-without-saying*, the ideological abuse which [...] is hidden there” (Barthes 2000, p.11). Barthes’s semiological study of myth was therefore aimed at understanding what he identified as a linguistic structure of myth that “transforms history into nature” (*Ibid.*, p.129) by “giving an historical intention a natural justification, and making contingency appear eternally” (p.142). The “ideological abuse” that Barthes railed against was not only the confusion of history or nature nor that the linguistic operations of myth could turn meaning into form (p.131) but rather that in doing so openly, in the elements of the banal, familiar and everyday of which *Mythologies* is composed, myth depoliticises its own language move. By thus “talking about things [myth] purifies them, it gives them a natural and eternal justification [...] it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences” (p.143). Jean-Pierre Vernant, looking at the societal role of classical narrative myth rather than the twenty-first century mythical instances of Barthes’s France, also highlights both the naturalising power of myth and the fact that this mythical power can hide its power of the mundane in the expectation that myth be unreal or other. “Myth appears both as the soil in which, in the course of centuries, a culture takes root, and at the same time as a part of this culture whose authenticity the latter seems to fail to acknowledge” (Vernant 1980, p.224).

While not operating within the same semiological approach as Barthes, Hans Blumenberg comes to the similar conclusion that by knowing things through language we can make them familiar and write them into our lives in a way that makes them belong or appear natural. Blumenberg contends that one of the functions or effects of myth, (depending on one’s view of agency or instrumentalisation involved), is to give names to things and thus render them familiar and accessible. “All trust in the world begins with names” (1985a, p.35). The “suitable naming of things” (*Ibid.*) removes the distrust between the person and ‘things’, the act of naming replacing ignorance or fear with control. A thing that is named can be talked about and thus, to return to Barthes’s observations, purified and rendered natural. Therefore in both Blumenberg and Barthes we get this first hint that although the idea of

'myth' is often associated on first impression with the supernatural, the fabulous, the other, the effect of myth is in fact to render the fabulous familiar, to remove the 'enmity' (Blumenberg 1985a, p.35) between the human and those elements of the world that he/she might not fully understand. Blumenberg's work on the naming function of myth thus not only draws attention to the name politics of, e.g., Christian and Classical narratives but also offers an insight into the totalising power of the modern. He links the projects of knowability of scientific empiricism to a mythical need to be able to name, to make familiar through language. That the projects and philosophers of the modern were driven by the need to know rationally, to establish control through classification meant that the need to name and to make familiar was especially heightened. It was no longer possible to accept the idea of unknown and thus all needed to be name, or at least to be understood as being opening to naming. "The modern age has become the epoch that finally found a name for everything" (*Ibid.*, p.38). In this way, the attitude of modernity can also be read as an attitude of myth, both sharing the belief that "the reestablishment of Paradise would be once again to have the correct name for everything" (p.37).

In his now canonical *Theorizing about Myth*, Robert Segal opens by admitting to the difficulty of comparing different theories of myth, a difficulty attributable to the fact that "myth is an applied subject. Theories of myth are always theories of something broader that is applied to the case of myth" (Segal 1999, p.1). In this thesis, the something broader to which myth is applied is the idea of modernity, as already set out. Thus the myth literature I consider here is that that tries to engage with myth as it manifests or functions in the modern. However, the work on myth in this chapter is not to build a theory of myth nor to provide a classification of pre-existing theory of myth. Subsequent to his engagement with the major modern theorists of myth, Segal asks if there is anything left for myth to do. My question is rather that of whether an engagement with existing theories of myth can tell us if there is something that myth is always doing. Across this broad and often very diverse theoretical spectrum – in which myth is regarded variously as explanation, action, symbolism, story-telling – are there common points or characteristics that hint at a commonality of myth? After first considering the different approaches to myth across these schools of thought I then look at what it is that makes them all 'myth'. While I am aware that by adopting such approach I risk painting a mythical picture in strokes that are dangerously broad, that I will lose out on the nuance of each individual theoretical approach and that I thus could be accused of gross instrumentalisation, this broad picture of myth is necessary for the exploration of the idea that myth is always 'doing' something in particular in the modern attitude and era. Therefore, I

will reiterate that I am not trying here to build a theory or philosophy of myth but rather to understand firstly what myth ‘does’ in modernity to allow for the resolution of apparent contradictions and secondly, and emerging from this, to wonder if the study of theories of myth can suggest a framework of mythical analysis that allows for the examination of the manner in which *mythos* and *logos* – translated in the modern into the dichotomy of false and true – are reconciled in the very modern sensibility that had torn them apart. The mythical exploration undertaken here is therefore aimed not at proposing a theory, whether new or preferred, of myth but rather to use existing theories of myth to grant me insights into the ‘mythical’ aspect of modernity and thus, as per Barthes, to reveal the possibility of any ideological abuse that turns our history into nature and makes the contingency of our situation appear eternal.

A Mythical Means of Filling the Void

To understand what this ‘mythical’ aspect might be, and before embarking on an exploration of myth as understood in the modern, I begin at the beginning. With the stories that were foundational in both Western society and, indeed, in theoretical conceptualisations of myth. Whatever the differences between modern theories of myth, the fundamental aspect shared by all is that of filling a void. For Hans Blumenberg and for Ernest Cassirer, with whom I begin my exploration below, an absence in explanation; for the social theorists, an emptiness between men; for the psycho-analysts, the hidden distance between the individual and forms of consciousness. There is void to be filled and we turn to myth to fill it.

In the foundational myths of Greek Classicism and Western mythology, this void is the beginning. It is the nothingness that calls for meaning and explanation. “In the beginning was the Void. The Void was called Chaos – a name with no suggestion of confusion or disorder, but meaning a dark gaping space”. The classical story of the world as told by Hesiod⁴ begins with this Chaos of empty darkness. From the void comes Earth and Love and Underworld and from these is made everything that was made (March 2008, p.21). In Hesiod’s account of the Greek myths these primeval elements beget and create, thus filling the chasm of empty space and time and making of the world a place not only of darkness but of light and of life. In the later Western myths of Christianity, the biblical stories of the Old Testament begin with the nightmare of nothingness, with earth “a formless void” where

⁴ With this translation take from March (2008).

“darkness covered the face of the deep” (Genesis 1:2). Then God spoke and made of the world a place not only of darkness but of light and of life.

These foundational myths were thus operating in terms of the Word that came not only to explain but also to initiate the origin of the world. And because these myths were the creation of all that came after they were not only totalising but also particularly, if rarely, vulnerable. Should they begin to fail to explain, then all the basis of being could be called into question. Studies of the origins of *mythos* and *logos*, which came to be divided as myth and reason in the modern attitude and era, tell us that in the beginning *logos* was not truth nor *mythos* a lie. Rather *mythos* and *logos* came from the same roots and only over time did a distinction or dialectic emerge (Heehs 1994; Fowler 2011; Bottici 2007). Both terms referred to the ‘word’ that had filled the void and of which the world was made; however in the classical tradition *mythos* and *logos* had different speech or word functions. Myth was “pronouncement, not just utterance. It is an act” (Fowler 2011, p.53). For classical scholars like Robert L. Fowler, myth is a function of speech or word that extends beyond the descriptive to encompass the conditions in which the utterance in being made. “*Mythos* denotes the whole package [...]; when *mythos* is in play, something is at stake” (*Ibid.*). Literary critiques of classical narrative similarly identify myth as being something more than narrative; it is a form of story-telling that brings unity to our being-in-the world, a form of verbal art that not only describes but creates (Frye 1961, pp.591-598). However, although this understanding of myth recalls Barthes’s theory of earlier in its function of “assimilat[ing] nature to human forms” (*Ibid.*, p.598), in classical interpretation this function of myth is positive production rather than an oppressive ideological move, as per Barthes’s *Mythologies*. This role and function of myth in filling the originary void and/or providing a ‘whole package’ narrative of our world might give to myth a creative and determining power but it also means that when a myth fails it fails absolutely. If a myth is our all – that which gives us our origins and determines our meanings – then when myth is no longer all it risks becoming nothing. When a myth is no longer lived as truth it becomes the lie that modernity always knew it to be.

The Temporal Void of the Modern

This section opens up the possibility for a mythical understanding of the modern by suggesting that modernity has been characterised by a fear of the void always to be filled. One of the impulses behind this thesis was to explore the possibility that that the particular operation of myth in modernity – which has maybe always been on the brink – is faltering

due to growing inconsistencies in modernity's spatio-temporal logic. The inquiry into political (re)productive identity strategies in France's nation-state is thus influenced by an apprehension that an increasing friction between the structures of time and space that arose out of and contribute to the attitude of the modern and the spatio-temporal experience of the twenty-first century is re-opening a void that the mythical functions of modernity helped to fill or at least to cover over. This void at the limits of the modern was, I argue here, initially a temporal one.

There is a story, referred to by Walter Benjamin in his *On the Concept of History*, that has July Revolutionaries of 1830 France firing at a clock tower in a futile assault on time. The time that was being attacked was mechanical time, time as measured by the periodic advances of the clock hands, time that gives a structure to our days and years. This is a common conceptualisation and experience of time in the modern: time as linear, progressing, measured in intervals and interspersed with the incidents of past 'nows'. Therefore, if the rebels of the anecdote had truly wished to escape the tyranny of their time, they might have been better served in attacking not its symbols but rather the often unquestioned assumptions of time as linear measurement. A challenge to time's role as description, as invariable, as the horizontal axis on the plots of history and being can destabilise these very functions of history and being and open new possibilities for freedom. Time is what gives to us a sense of our present as a progression from and to our past and future, it is what gives to space the sense of place so important in the situating of personal and collective identity. If we are not grounded in time as we have assumed it to be we are cast adrift in a dark directionless freedom, where our way is no longer set out along an advancing path.

Time is felt, is lived, it passes by and marches on. We live with and in time, to a degree such that time cannot stand alone in its own definition. Time therefore become both a determinant of and determined by Self. For Ricoeur, the 'now' in which we describe ourselves as being has existential significance in the context of mechanically measured time, "but when the machines used to measure time are cut off from this primary reference to natural measure, saying 'now' is turned into a form of the abstract representation of time" (1980, p.174). Without the reassurance of time named and measured, our being in time becomes once again inseparable from our being, and time as a linear series of nows (see Heidegger 1962; Ricoeur 1980, p.170) loses its power of definition and explanation. Indeed, time is central to Ricoeur's notions of identity. Identity for Ricoeur contains the components of sameness and selfhood and while sameness provides for recognition and identification

with others, selfhood for Ricoeur is “permanence in time” (Ricoeur 1992, p.116). Without time, there is no self.

For Heidegger “the making present which interprets itself – in other words, that which has been interpreted and is addressed in the ‘now’ – is what we call ‘time’” (1962, p.460), making of time an element inseparable from the moment of its understanding. Similarly, anthropologist David Richards describes time as central to the knowledge of the self, providing not only “an analogical and linear destiny, but as a field or pattern of associations” (1994, p.17). Time is portrayed not as fatality but as location, emanating from the centre of the personal ‘now’. Time by Heidegger, by Ricoeur, by Richards is something personal, a means of locating oneself that is in turn dependent on the self, that is born of and shaped by the self’s understanding. Time by this formulation is something that cannot be known in isolation but rather as something that gives shape and meaning to and is given shape and meaning by personal or collective experiences and memories. As Anderson (2006) among others has written of the relationship of time, religion, and identity, situating our being in time allows us to believe that our lives are not ephemeral, it allows us to believe in something above or beyond; knowing ourselves in time allows us to attribute meaning, transcendence and belonging to our existence.

However even within the assumption of calendric, empirical time there presents the problem of situating oneself – ourselves – within this time. With time stretching infinitely forward, extending back to a time before time, how should we know where to place ourselves? Knowing too how big or small the scale of our time should be is problematic; we don’t have the means to judge when the past ceases to be our history. Therefore, organised religious belief systems not only offer an ordering and particular understanding of time but they also contain and define their own origins, and in this controlling of and locating in time “religion operates a sort of closure of the social imaginary” (Bottici 2009, p.992). This is the Messianic time of the mono-theistic religions, the time into which, at any second, the Messiah could enter (Benjamin 1940) and it is this understanding of time that Anderson takes as a reference in his treatise on the birth of the modern nation. Anderson draws upon Benjamin’s “secret protocol” (Benjamin 1940, p.II) between generations to describe a “simultaneity-along-time” (Anderson 2006, p.24) through which lives were connected across eras in a communion with God. In this, the important uniting thread was that of faith and destiny, with the bonds that connected co-religionists stretched along and beyond the paths of time. Therefore, as seen in the discussion on modernity in the introduction, belonging was a lineage along rather than across time, and affinity with one’s fellows was based less on

transverse contemporary connections than on links back to those who had been and had believed and forward to those who were yet to come. Such a simultaneity across time serves to control infinity, reducing the void from threat to promise until it becomes something, as poet William Blake described it, to be held in the palm of your hand.

As seen earlier, Anderson writes of the temporal characteristics of the nation in terms of “apprehensions of time” (Anderson 2006). By his thesis, the emergence of secular or positivist science altered the nature of simultaneity in time as described above. Secular thought was to shake the heretofore secure temporal bonds of mystic and religious philosophy. The vertical links down the scale of time were no longer valid and so simultaneity along time was no longer possible, or at least was no longer the dominant way of knowing and being in the world. Anderson, again borrowing from Walter Benjamin, describes this new apprehension of time as “empty, homogeneous time” (Anderson 2006, p.24; Benjamin 1940, p.XVIII). Time by this understanding becomes something to be filled and in it individuals and peoples are cut free from destiny, released from those bonds of simultaneity along time and no longer anchored in the inevitability of converging past, present and future. Infinity is once again opened, no longer capable of fitting into the palm of a hand.

Anderson recounts how time emptied of religious direction was soon filled by a new simultaneity: a simultaneity *in* time, in which technological advancements allow people to become aware of their connections to fellows they would never encounter in space. By Anderson’s account, the empty homogeneous time that dawned with the Enlightenment – the time of ‘meanwhile’ as he characterises it – was soon filled by the transverse simultaneity of nation and novel, with the development of the printing press allowing for the spread of the written world and the sensation of sharing the world with simultaneously lived lives. However, while Anderson catalogues this shift in the apprehension of time and the resultant emergence of the modern nation, his work deals with the mechanisms that made the modern nation possible and he does not dwell on the moment of emptied time and the inevitability or otherwise of the ‘nation’ as the means for filling this time. This moment could be read as an obvious instance of a void to be filled and can be consider as a moment ripe for a particular engagement with or of myth.

While the aim of Enlightenment philosophy was to enable reason and experience-based knowledge to shine through the occult of mysticism and religious prescription, the liberation that this release from the determinism of faith brought was, as seen in the earlier study of the characteristics of the modern, not without qualification. The transformation from

simultaneity-along-time to simultaneity-across-time, triggered by growth of secular, scientific thought and facilitated by the spread of the written word, is a time of ambiguity; “if it is the time of the people’s anonymity it is also the space of that nation’s anomie” (Bhabha 1994, p.229). As Bhabha and Wollman & Spencer (2007) observe, there is an ambivalence in Benjamin’s consideration of empty, homogeneous time that is not acknowledged in Anderson’s study of the nation. With Anderson there is a sense of progress that does not engage with the personal emptiness of the collective empty time. For Bhabha the “alienating time” that Anderson fails to locate is in the “naturalized, nationalized space of the imagined community” (1994, p.231), yet neither does Anderson make explicit the ambivalence, alienation, anomie of that time before the imagined community, the gap between the vertical linkages of Divine Providence and the ‘meanwhile’ of nation and novel. For emptied time destroys the certainties of identity, the situating of ourselves and others not only in space but in time-infused place. Robbed of our anchoring in time, our past turned into a lie and our future emptied into the nightmare of uncertain destiny, existence in this scenario is floating and ephemeral, capable of anything or of nothing.

The dread engendered by this emptying of time is not merely an a posteriori projection. Sensations of terror and loss were experienced even by those to the fore of the Enlightenment movement. If Enlightenment’s homogeneous empty time was freedom and opportunity it was also insecurity and nightmare. For Diderot this was the battle of head and heart, where his sense of identity was still tied up in his Catholic heritage, while his Scottish contemporary David Hume found the path to Enlightenment to begin with a profound sense of self-doubt, isolation and instability. “Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? and on whom shall I have influence, or who have any influence on me?” (cited in Gay 1966, p.66). In emancipating, Enlightenment thought also destabilised. This sensation of destabilisation is common to other challenges to the continuity of time. Habermas acknowledges the destructive possibilities of delineated time in his consideration of the challenges to accepted time of surrealism, “when the containers of an autonomously developed cultural sphere are shattered, the contents get dispersed. Nothing remains from a desublimated meaning or a destructed form: an emancipatory effect does not follow” (Habermas 1981, p.10). In the vocabulary of Kierkegaard, liberation brought anxiety and the dizziness of freedom.

The anxiety of freedom is captured also by the writers of the Frankfurt School. The upheavals of the interwar years and the shocks of totalitarianism led Benjamin, Erich Fromm

and Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer to new, often bleak, examinations of time, enlightenment and freedom. For Adorno and Horkheimer it was the cyclical relationship of myth and Enlightenment, with myth becoming Enlightenment and the myth of Enlightenment expanding until all of thought and society must fall within its sphere (1997, pp.3-42). For Benjamin, it was the Angel of History, being pushed by the rubble of a catastrophic past into an unknown and unknowable future (Benjamin 1940, p.IX). These nightmare scenarios were, Fromm wrote, the result of mankind's failure to cope with the freedom that modernity brought about. Enlightenment, the release from the shackles of proscriptive and prescriptive time, created a freedom from oppression. However without a freedom *to* – a sense of mission, destiny, an aim or direction – this freedom *from* becomes itself a means of oppression.

By losing his fixed place in a closed world man loses the answer to the meaning of his life; the result is that doubt has befallen him concerning himself and the aim of life [...] Paradise is lost for good, the individual stands alone and faces the world – a stranger thrown into a limitless and threatening world. The new freedom is bound to create a deep feeling of insecurity, powerlessness, doubt, aloneness and anxiety. (Fromm 2001, p.54)

Release from the set path of Messianic time closed off the certainty of paradise and set the individual adrift in the limitlessness of possibility.

Filling the Void

Barthes's categorisation of myth as a type of speech that allows for the banal to gather meaning is one that is common to other disciplinary approaches to myth. Bottici (2007), in her work on political myth, talks of political myth-making as a response to a need for significance, by which we are shaped by and consequently shape the world in which we live. However, she argues, it is not enough that human beings find meaning in the world; they must also be able to build a relationship with the world. Myth allows for this building of relationship, for the creation of significance that helps humans overcome the indifference of the world. In thinking of myth in terms of significance Bottici draws on the work of Hans Blumenberg, for whom myth's function was not to explain to the world "but to allay anxiety over the world, to fulfil the need to be at home in the world" (Segal 1999, p.145). Hence Blumenberg's observation on the function of myth as giving names to things, thus making reality graspable and providing reassurance by filling up empty space, since emptiness generates fear and anguish and empty space is "a void that the mind will not endure" (Burke 1986[1790], p.188).

Similarly, religious historians Armstrong (2005) and Eliade (1963) write of myth not only as assigning to us our origins but as giving to the world and to human life significance and intelligibility and as bestowing hope for transcendence, transcendence of death as well as of the doubts of life. Myth is a structure “designed to help us cope with the problematic human predicament” (Armstrong 2005, p.6), its aim is to enable us to transcend human weakness and fear and its truth is therefore not in the stories it tells but rather in its effectiveness in dulling the human anxiety, be this of life or, in the case of Joseph Campbell’s psycho-analytical study of myth as considered in more detail below, death. For the psychologist, myth allows for transcendence of individual solitude and for communion in society, it enables man “to structure his internal clamour of identities” and find resolution in the shared identity of community (Bruner 1959, pp.350-354). The role of myth in creating meaning and community is overtly acknowledged even in the politics of today, with Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland calling on the public and on public intellectuals to engage with myth in order to strengthen an identity capable of withstanding and rebuffing the social challenges of the world today.

What remembering and imagining have in common is myth-making: the one, remembering, is often initiated so as to achieve a healing; find a rationalisation; construe an event in such a way as to be both a warm cloak for the self and a dagger for the threatening other; the other imagining, needs myth to retain belief, not merely as assurance or reassurance, but as a mechanism for the retention of hope in the unrealised possibilities of being human, truly free, in emancipatory, celebratory, joyous co-existence with, and through, others on this vulnerable planet on which we share life.⁵

Modern theoretical work on myth and society tends to apply myth to certain aspects of our life or of the world. Myth approaches or is approached, it analyses or is analysed, it is speech or action. Myth is allegory (Frye 1986), it is explanation or expression of the unconscious, it is a statement about society, it is ‘for’ something (Cohen 1969; Segal 1999, 2004). Myth “comes into play” (Malinowski 1954, p.107), it “functions” (Segal 2004, p.4), it “expresses”, is “a vital ingredient of human civilisation” (Malinowski 1954, p.177). Telling stories through myth allows us not only to understand the world cosmologically but also draws society closer in the telling (Campbell 1968). And yet myth can be much more. Although applying the conclusions in a very different way, this thesis takes its cue from Adorno and Horkheimer in alleging that myth cannot be ‘for’ or ‘about’ anything. Myth cannot approach or explain anything. Myth is the all. In considering how Enlightenment

⁵ ‘Remembering and Imagining Irishness’, speech given to the American Historical Society on 1 May 2012; see also ‘Identities in Transition’ of 24 April 2013. Both available at www.president.ie.

became the very myth it sought to escape and destroy, Adorno and Horkheimer describe the structuring of our understanding of the world in terms of fear. Myth must be the all because “nothing can remain outside, because the mere idea of outside is the very source of fear” (1979, p.16). Adorno and Horkheimer describe how our way of knowing and being in the world must encompass all of our knowledge and our existence, for should our sphere of being be less than complete then the world can no longer be comprehended, and the suggestion of uncertain or non-existent limits would then recall the dizzying anxiety of freedom, the terrible space of Fromm’s ‘freedom from’ without a ‘freedom to’. Instead myth as a way for organising and knowing the world allows for freedom to be constrained and the terror of pure self-determination to be calmed. Myth, to recall Barthes’s observations, allows history to be given the essence of nature and one cannot argue with nature. Therefore, this thesis considers myth not only as a tool of understanding but also as a tool of structuring our being, with nation as another manifestation of our need for myth.

It is from consideration of the anxiety of freedom, in the recognition of the importance of the human need for belonging through anchoring in both space and time, that the framework of myth proposed here arises. In the quote above from Uachtarán Higgins there is reference to imagining and remembering, and it is this process of adding memories to identity that reinforces the sense of belonging. The appropriation of time inherent in such calls on memory is central to this framework of myth and to its core aim of tracking shifts in consciousness and expression of nation. The success of the Greek myths in filling the void of gaping darkness owed much to the ability of myth to provide a reference, to anchor the present in the past (Cohen 1969, p.349). Myth helps us make sense of the unknown, giving meaning to the experiences of life and death and helping ward off the terror of infinity and of extinction (Armstrong 2006, pp.1-11). In its narrative functions, since myth above all is a story that we tell, myth restores linearity to emptied time, maintains stability through changing apprehensions of time. Therefore, in what follows I look to theories of myth to identify common elements in myth’s ‘doing’ that would enable me to propose an analytical framework for the analysis of myth in modernity, an analysis that would permit me not only to examine in new light the political discursive strategies at play in attempts at identity (re)production in the nation-state but also, as Barthes did in *Mythologies*, to try to create a new space of knowledge that would work towards freedom when the production of myth becomes oppressive and ideologically abusive.

TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK OF MYTH

Ernst Cassirer and Ritual Symbolism

Ernst Cassirer was one of the notable philosophers of the twentieth century to engage with the theorisation of myth in the modern in a project prompted not only by his intellectual background but also, in his last work *The Myth of the State* (published posthumously in 1946), by the human devastation of Nazism. Cassirer's observations on myth are in many ways quintessentially modern in that his writings on the subject consider scientific rationality to be the goal and end point of human progress, which necessarily places myth in a relationship to reason that resembles the *mythos/logos* opposition discussed above. Although Cassirer's philosophical approach to myth bears common traits with psycho-analytical theory – notably in the engagement with ideas of myth and the unconscious – and with social theorists on specific modern instances of myth in action, such as Georges Sorel in his *Reflections on Violence*, Cassirer departs from the reflections on and understandings of myth of very many theorists, such as those called upon in the section above, in denying that there is any essential object of myth. Myth for Cassirer is best understood by analysing “its function in man's social and cultural life” (1973, p.34). Thus Cassirer's study of myth deals less with myth as a narrative function than with its symbolic and ritual rites. Cassirer identifies an individual's participation in rite and ritual as a means of satisfying “deep, ardent desire to identify themselves with the life of the community and with the life of nature” (*Ibid.*, p.38). Myth is that which enables the ritual behaviour to become symbolic, to have meaning and explanation. It is a means through which ritual behaviour or participation in rites is justified or legitimised. The function of the myth in the modern for Cassirer is therefore to restore (and for Cassirer this is not necessarily a positive restoration) the primitive to the rational. Myth and ritual reflect the “deep desire of the individual to be freed from the fetters of its individuality, to immerse itself in the stream of universal life, to lose its identity, to be absorbed in the whole of human nature” (*Ibid.*, p.41). Therefore, although myth is thus necessarily in opposition to the more preferable state of human rationality, myth can have a function in the modern by helping individuals make sense of the world and by communicating this message of ‘common sense’. Chiara Bottici thus summarises Cassirer's understanding of political myth as “a collective desire personified” (2007, p.13). Myth becomes undesirable when it is no longer in service of the rational modern but rather when its ritual functions turn against scientific pragmatism. The symbolism of myth “harbours the curse of mediacy; it is bound to obscure what it means to reveal” (Cassirer 1946, p.7).

This mythical condensing of collective desire, the potential of its symbolism to obscure the ‘truth’ rather than reinforce can become nefarious in times of political crisis. “In these moments the time for myth has come again. For myth has not been really vanquished and subjugated. It is always there, lurking in the dark and waiting for its hour and opportunity. This hour comes as soon as the other binding forces of man’s social life, for one reason or another, lose their strength and are no longer able to combat the demonic mythical power” (Cassirer 1973, p.280). Cassirer identified this demonic and mystical power as being at work in the ritual politics of totalitarianism, with the rituals of, e.g. Nazism, bringing the private individual evermore into a public expression of being. He thus advocated for the study of political myths in order to regain the intellectual and bodily freedom of rationality. “In order to fight an enemy you must know him [...] We should carefully study the origin, the structure, the methods, and the technique of the political myths. We should see the adversary face to face in order to know how to combat him” (1973, p.296).

While Cassirer’s approach to myth is useful in the context of modern identity (re)production as considered in this thesis, one of its limitations is that its philosophy is so much of the rational modern that it fails to go beyond the functionality of myth in modern society. The modern sensibility of Cassirer’s approach regards the myth-rationality relationship as dichotomous and thus fails to get at the nuances of the affective operation of myth in the manner that I attempt in this thesis. Nonetheless, his work on myth is hugely helpful in drawing attention to the mythical function of rite and ritual in modern politics and society, thus supporting the contention of this thesis that ritual should be considered as one of the three components of an analytical framework of myth.

Social Theory and Ritual Practice

The emphasis on ritual in mythical function that is central to Cassirer’s philosophical approach is also the focus of sociology and social theories of myth. In social thought, ritual is the means through which “myth is put into action” (Durkheim 2008, p.385). The myth in question is the productive myth of society, that which allows for the collective consciousness of social entities, in which the concerns of the individual are transformed into the new moral relations of society. In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* Durkheim argues that it is through ritual practice that the collective can come to assert a moral or authoritative function in the behaviour and attitude of the individual. The mythical function of ritual is not only to engage individuals in the enactment of a collective consciousness but also to restore mythical temporality to the modern – “the rite involves remembering the past and making it present”

(2008, p.376) – a characteristic that I also identify in this thesis in the ritual politics of monumental sites in contemporary France. Therefore, in contrast to Cassirer, Durkheim believed firmly in the positive functions of ritual in creating or reinforcing the myth of the collective within modern society. The individual consciousness as encouraged by the modern attitude enabled people to break away from the moral codes and responsibilities of societal membership, encouraging behaviours that were focussed on the self at the expense of the greater good of the community. In his 1897 book *Suicide*, Durkheim diagnosed the disconnect of the individual from the collective consciousness of society as one of the primary malaise's of modernity. Through ritual, social solidarity and a sense of belonging together in the world, as opposed to an individualistic being-in-the-world, could be engendered or reinforced (Cossu 2010, p.43).

Ritual in Durkheim's sociological analysis is therefore more than the performance of a myth. Is it the component necessary for an effective narrative or consciousness of belonging together in the world. Such an approach sees ritual not only as representation of myth but also as constitutive both of myth and the world, a view shared by theorists of myth of the social inquiry sub-field of anthropology.⁶ Through the mythical of power of ritual "the world as lived and the world as imagined turn out to be the same world" (Geertz 1973, p.112). Clifford Geertz thus contends, in his study of the symbolic forms and practices in the formation and interpretation of culture, that in all ritual that can be linked to myth or religious narrative, there is an inevitable, and often intended, "fusion of ethos and world view" (*Ibid.*, p.113). While this fusion of real and imagined in French national ritual practice can be traced through the empirical examples of the following chapter, I also contend in Chapter III that one of the particularities of the modern myth of nation–state is that this blurring of the lines between world and belief is, in the modern, not limited to the ritual practices of a national identity but can also be effected through practices of modern narrative, this perhaps explaining the totalising power of modernity, as previously suggested

In his observation that the fusion of ethos and world view is particularly true of more elaborate and more public rituals, Geertz is supported by early twentieth-century anthropologist W.H.R Rivers who, in his work on the sociological significance of myth, contends that myth is generally not found to be at work in the situations in which the social

⁶ Although Chiara Bottici, in her book *A Philosophy of Political Myth* makes the point that since both Geertz and Malinowski deal with myths under the general category of symbolism their work might be considered less useful than that of some of the other theorists considered here for carrying out inquiries in the field of political myth, Percy S. Cohen, in this essay on 'Theories of Myth', values the contributions of anthropology over those of the psycho-analytical tradition, pointing out in particular Claude Lévi-Strauss's contribution in persuading anthropologist to pay more attention to the generalisability of their work on myth (1969, p.345).

structure has become extremely familiar. These statements might be considered as being in opposition to some of the observations on the banality of myth already encountered, for example Barthes and his myths of the everyday, yet it is worthwhile noting that Rivers specifies that his conclusions on myth and the socially familiar “[are] only true so long as a people remains homogeneous and undisturbed by outside influence” (1912, p.326). As with Cassirer’s theory of myth, in moments of crisis or when what is ‘familiar’ about the social structure comes to be challenged, myth can enter to fill the void in meaning. Indeed, in a study of the political crises in the history of the modern French state it can be seen that state-organised activities of ritual, celebration or festival are intensified when the narrative of the state and/or nation comes under threat, e.g. at the time of the foundation of the first Republic (Soboul 1985), in the transition from after the 1848 Revolution and the subsequent failure of the Second Republic to the Second Empire of Louis Napoleon (Harvey 1990), and again in the early years of the new Republican regime of the 1870s and after defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (Ben-Amos 1991; Rearick 1977)

Charles Rearick’s observation of state-organised festivals in France’s Third Republic – as is echoed in Harvey’s *Paris: Capital of Modernity* – that they “were intended to benefit the rulers as much as the public” (1977, p.436) not only by turning the festive events into rituals in service of the myth of the leader, the state or both but also because they were a means of suppressing the very often violent or subversive public outbursts that could occur at carnival or holiday time by bring these events under official control thus corresponds with Geertz’s theoretical conclusions on the exercise of power through ritual and symbolism, that sovereign power is exercised by leaders who “justify their existence and order their actions in terms of a collection of stories, ceremonies, insignia, formalities, and appurtenances that they have either inherited or, in more revolutionary situations, invented” (Geertz 1983, p.124). The exercise of ritual therefore not only operates by drawing the individual into the collective narrative but also serves to identify or reinforce the legitimacy of a sovereign power – and, as we see in this thesis, very often a ‘heroised’ sovereign power – within this society.

While these instances of ritual practice are consistent with classical theory of myth (see for example Gregory Nagy (2013); Armstrong (2006)), Georges Sorel’s understanding of ritual and myth departed from the classical notion of ritual being in service of mythical authority or of a hero figure. Sorel took a sociological view of myth in that he believed mythical practices necessary for the creation or maintaining of human unity on earth; however, he also had believed that such mythical unity could be brought about by ritual action not in service of a sovereign authority but rather in defiance of oppressive bourgeois

power. In his *Reflections of Violence* (1950), Sorel proposed that ritualistic violent action, e.g. the workers' revolt of the General Strike, would be in itself mythic and heroic, that instead of ritual being in service of the hero the ritual action itself would be heroic. However, although Sorel's writing was to influence Mussolini in his mythical constructions (Perry 1992, p.310), it is important to note that Mussolini's myth – which was, for a time at least, significantly more successful than that of Sorel – returned to the classical in using its ritual and symbolic action in service of the narrative of the hero figure of *Il Duce*. I would contend that this return to the hero is hardly surprising, for Sorel's own ritual could never be mythic. As I argue throughout this thesis, ritual without hero or narrative does not have the eternalising influence of a ritual that in service of a narrative hero or heroic function. Even where the ritual has come first or its original narrative impulses have been lost, that the creation or emergence of new mythical narratives can be necessary to legitimate the ritual practice in society (Malinowski 1954). Therefore, in terms of myth as considered by the theorists looked at here and in terms of my own operationalised framework of myth as needing the complementary components of hero, narrative and ritual to create an effect of belonging-in-the-world, ritual as exhorted by Sorel becomes empty action. Even if immediately productive, its influence in terms of establishing or maintaining a durable social identity is likely to be doubtful.

Jungian Psychoanalysis and the Heroic Journey

Percy S. Cohen, in his 1969 essay on theories of myth, distinguishes the psychoanalytical approach of myth from, e.g., the classical, sociological and anthropological theoretical traditions. Where, to a degree, much of theoretical work on myth is aimed at moving ever closer to a definition or understanding of myth and/or its functions, psychoanalytic thought works from a broader understanding of myth that loses a considerable amount of its socio-political analytic potential by being too widely applicable and less concerned with the social significance of myth. Nonetheless, the psycho-analytical approach is worth considering here if only for more the 'mythically-focussed' scholarship it inspired, especially that of Joseph Campbell on the hero journey. It is also an interesting book-end to a section that began with the writing of Ernst Cassirer, as in contrast to Cassirer Freud and Jung consider myth as compatible with, rather than in opposition to, scientific, rational thought.

Although the Freudian approach to myth draws explicitly on the Classical tradition, this is done in service of an understanding of the human mind rather than the operation or even the experience of social structures (Freud 1937; 1989). While Freud's application of myth adopted a social view of mankind, the use of the mythical approach to explore the

collective unconscious was aimed at understanding an individual being in the world drawing on the basis of an already-there collective unconscious rather than considering the manner in which the individual is transformed into a member of the collective through mythical practice, as is the focus of this thesis. Nonetheless, the Freudian approach of situating individual trauma in a grand narrative in order to dissipate the “widespread and bewildering experience of trauma” (Caruth 1996) is very much consistent with the narrative function of myth, resisting the terror of infinity by filling the temporal void with the mythical story.

Although both were influenced by the Classical mythic tradition, Carl Jung is much more closely associated with the operation of myth in psycho-analysis than Freud. Also in contrast to Freud, Jung believed that myths were not collective, in that even when social they operating on the level of the individual. "Myths are first and foremost psychic phenomena that reveal the nature of the soul" (Jung 1981, p.6). For Jung, self-realisation through myth is achieved through the operation of ‘archetypes’, symbolic elements that work through the narrative of myths

It is not enough for the primitive to see the sun rise and set; this external observation must at the same time be a psychic happening: the sun in its course must represent the fate of a god or hero who, in the last analysis, dwells nowhere except in the soul of man. All the mythologized processes of nature, such as summer and winter, the phases of the moon, the rainy seasons, and so forth, are in no sense allegories of these objective occurrences; rather they are symbolic expressions of the inner unconscious drama of the psyche which becomes accessible to man's consciousness by way of projection--that is, mirrored in the events of nature. The projection is so fundamental that it has taken several thousand years of civilization to detach it in some manner from its outer object. (*Ibid.*)

The archetypal power of myth is not limited to self-realisation, however. For Jung, archetypes not only come from story but they are also to the central of the writing and rewriting of stories, they “create myths, religions, and philosophical ideas” that “set their stamp on whole nations and epochs” (Jung 1990, p.118)

The Jungian basis of Joseph Campbell’s psycho-analytical theorising of myth can be seen in the emphasis on the importance of symbols and symbolism in the human experience, a symbolic approach that, in contrast to that of Ernst Cassirer, considers the power of symbolism as positive rather than nefarious. “It has always been the prime function of mythology and rite to supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, in counteraction to those other constant human fantasies that tend to tie it back” (Campbell 1993, p.11). Within this overarching function of carrying the human spirit forward, Campbell identifies four primary functions of myth, these being the metaphysical function of evoking awe before the mystery of existence, the cosmological function of presenting an image of the

cosmos at which this awe can be directed but that is nonetheless familiar in that the individual can recognise his/her own experiences of the world in its images, the sociological function of validating and maintaining a social and moral system, and the psychological function that enables the mythical narrative to carry the individual through the stages of his life, from birth to death (Campbell 2004, pp.6-10). The necessarily positive ending of myth suggests “a transcendence of the universal tragedy of man” (Campbell 1993, p.28). Campbell’s myth thus fills the void of human emptiness and permits the individual to experience his/her life as cosmologically significant, it releases life from “the mutilations of ubiquitous disaster” (*Ibid.*, p.29). The figure of the hero is, for Campbell, crucial for the success of these functions of myth, with the greatest impact of Campbell’s work on both academic study and popular culture (see Chapter IV) being in his proposal of a plottable and traceable ‘hero’s journey’ (Campbell 1993). In Campbell’s work on human transcendence of the fear of death, there can be no myth without hero.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, in his ‘The Structural Study of Myth’ (1955, p.431) claimed that “if there is a meaning to be found in mythology, this cannot reside in the isolated elements which enter into the composition of a myth, but only in the way those elements are combined”. Thus it is that in this thesis I argue that the myth endures only when the three mythic elements of narrative, hero and ritual are present and in interaction. In Campbell too we can see the mythic triad completed; just as the hero is necessary in the writing of the narrative that allows a person to trace his/her life-path in terms of cosmological transcendence and ultimate fulfilment, symbols of the mythical narrative, such as shrines to the hero and myth, are essential in order to signify and inspire, and the ritual practice at these shrines or of these symbols is a means by which the “universal pattern” that strips life of its terror can be rehearsed (Campbell 1993., p.43). In what remains in this chapter I consider these three mythical elements in turn, in preparation for their application to the empirical explorations of the subsequent chapters.

THE MYTHICAL TRIAD

The Narrative Function of Myth

Historian William H. McNeill challenged the assumption that myth is a false telling of the world while history tells the world as it really is by placing the emphasis not on the writing of the narrative but rather on its reception, on the question of belief: “one historian’s truth becomes another’s myth, even at the moment of utterance [...] my truth dissolves into

your myth even before I can put the words on paper (McNeill 1986, pp.1-4). The importance of history for nations or communities is not, McNeill claims, in the veracity or comprehensiveness of its narrative. Instead the value of history is in how it is received by its public. Shared belief allows a group be drawn together, creating ties or a common sense of mission; it allows for the creation of borders with non-believers, thus cementing social bonds through the knowledge of external dissent or difference (McNeill 1986). Therefore, the importance of the narrative of myth is not that it is true but rather that it is believed and through this belief becomes a lived truth.

In the specific case of the nation, the circular relationship of truth and myth casts the infallibility and inviolability of history into question. However, it also allows us to understand the telling of the nation through history as a process of story-telling, where the issue is not so much of true or false than of narrative persuasion. This allows for approaches such as the one I adopt in this thesis: examining the continued success or otherwise of national identity as the dominant mode of collective belonging by considering changes in the practices and dynamics of its story-telling.

The mythical rejection of the dichotomies of real and unreal or true or false help us make sense of the unknown, giving meaning to the experiences of life and death and helping ward off the terror of infinity and of extinction (Armstrong 2006, pp.1-11). Telling stories through myth allows us not only to understand the world cosmologically but also draws society closer in the telling (Campbell 1968). Narrative is both the function and form of myth. In offering a narrative of existence the myth of the nation not only fills the void of origin but also attributes a meaningful past to a structured present (Friedman 1992, p.194). In its establishment of a narrative, myth “locks a sense of circumstances in an original sense of events” (Cohen 1969, p.351), turns the abstract into the concrete and the contingent into the natural. Narrative tells us the story and in this provides the temporal reference, provides legitimisation by anchoring present in past, restores linearity to empty homogeneous past. Not only does the narrative of national belonging give us the past but it orders our memories in such a way that allows them be shared and in this shared past offer us the possibility of a shared destiny. In this, the national narrative allows us to belong; by placing events in a coherent plot, narrative provides individuals and societies with not only meaning but also with significance (Bottici 2007, p.115). In the traditions of Western myth these narratives have been structured around the figure of the hero, the social example and promise of transcendence of the heroic narrative enabling the individual “to structure his internal

clamour of identities” and find resolution in the shared identity of community (Bruner 1959, pp.350-354).

Therefore, where the emptiness is that of time robbed of its positive progression and its role in uniting past and future in the complicity, myth can mobilise narrative in the restoration of a comforting temporal destiny. Narrative restores the security of our present, by “collapsing the present into a future and a past” (McQuillan 2000, p.15), it treats us for the wounds of time by allowing us to identify our origins as a reality (Eliade 1963). Myth provides a means of filling empty time and allows us a history that, by “attributing a meaningful past to a structured present” (Friedman 1992, p.194), returns to us our place in the world, cast into question by the challenges to time of the Enlightenment and its aftermath. Myth also permits the idea of destiny, of a shared purpose, of a future that is no longer the nightmare of infinity. Myth as narrative places limits that allow for the situating of oneself in the world, that enables time once again to operate as an explanation of space in endowing a sense of place, thus allowing for the (re)claiming of a sense of belonging. Myth thus offers the possibility of organising the world and of centring the individual’s experiences in time, space and society (Campbell 1968). Myth is the all-encompassing story. It is that which tells how reality came to be, and how all of existence fits into this reality. “By knowing the myth, one knows the 'origin' of things and hence can control and manipulate them at will” (Eliade 1963, p.15).

One of the functions of myth in the modern is therefore to enable time to operate outside its modern function of advancing measurement, permitting the affective of ‘memory’ to operate within the modern historiographical logic without seeming to contradict this modern logic, much in the manner of place-space relationship already considered. The separation of time from space that can be observed in the politics of modernity is mirrored in the modern relationship of memory and history. As suggest in the discussion above and in the earlier consideration of the relationship of *mythos* and *logos* in the modern, the attitude of modernity effected the transformation of dyads into dichotomies and the creation of opposition where there might have been mutual dependence (Gay 1966). Therefore, in the modern logic, memory and history are not synonymous but rather are set in opposition (Nora 1984, p.xix). Memory is that something private that comes to be shared and lived, the mass of experiences and narratives that don’t compete but interact, whereas history is that which responds to the ‘particular universal’ (Galli 2010) of the State: the one story shared by all. The individual is subsumed when memory becomes history (Pomain 1984, p.173) and reemerges newly individuated, now as the subject of a historical regime (Featherstone 2006,

p.591). Memory challenges the truth of history by allowing for a multiplicity of interpretations and experiences; therefore the mythical project of the nation requires that memory be subsumed into the narrative productions of history, just as the affective of place had to be accounted for in the logic of the modern. Where memory is a remembering that the past is never truly past, history introduces a divide between ‘then’ and ‘now’ (Nora 1984, p.xxxi). This distinction between past and present is, as we will see in the next chapter, central to the political project of the nation, allowing for present identity to be portrayed as historically inevitable and for future plans to be justified by a historically-determined present. Therefore the “perpetual actuality” of memory (Nora 1989, p.8) undermines the advancing temporal logic of the modern, this unfixing of time a threat to modern history-politics since “more than on its ability to recall, the power of the state rests on its ability to consume time, that is, to [...] anaesthetise the past” (Mbembe 2002, p.23).

Thus, one of the narrative particularities of modernity is in the historiographic operations of modern narrative. The project of historiography – that very modern preoccupation – was to precipitate and accentuate the separation of memory from history, “to introduce doubt to its core, to plunge the critical blade between the tree of memory and the bark of history” (Nora 1984, p.xxi). Just as with the separation and anchoring of space and time as scientific, quantifiable categories, this division of binaries allowed for an ordering and control, a totalising of the narrative. Michel de Certeau writes of historiography as “separat[ing] present time from its past” in an operation that necessarily involved a process of selection remembering, an act of memory that is no longer purely personal but that contributes to the narrative formation of the world, contributing to the emergence or identification of “what, at a given moment, has *become* unthinkable in order for a new identity to *become* thinkable” (1988, p.4; emphasis in original). The historiographic operation of the modern “is an odd procedure that posits death, a breakage everywhere reiterated in discourse, and that yet denies loss by appropriating to the present the privilege of recapitulating the past as a form of knowledge. A labour of death and a labour against death. This paradoxical procedure is symbolised and performed in a gesture which has the once the value of myth and of ritual: *writing*” (1988, p.5; emphasis in original). The writing of history in the modern therefore operates by providing both the rupture and continuity necessary for the (re)production of the modern consciousness, in a process of writing that is thus always potentially mythical. De Certeau’s observation that this writing of history is also a ritual performance is also worth noting, and can be seen at play in the *roman national* of Chapter III, where the writing of history is always an act of writing *into* history.

A second particularity of the narrative of the modern, as explored in detail in Chapter III, that the narrative of myth in the modern can be productively thought of in terms of novel. This can be linked to the historiographic project – it is no accident that, as discussed in Chapter III, the *roman* of the *roman national* of French historiographical writing translates as ‘novel’ – and to the emergence of new experiences of individuality, public and private, and physical space that characterised the modern attitude and came to be, as discussed in detail later, represented and reinforced in the new literary genre of the novel, a literary form that was made possible and influenced by modern technological developments of printing, communication, education and language. However, the forms of modern and novel did not only share socio-physical characteristics, as identified in Chapter III, but they both also shared the characteristic of being always-in-the-making. The etymological newness of ‘novel’ reflected that of modernity, just as modernity could be characterised by an attitude that of a “constant reconstruction and the reinvention of the self. The subject and the present it belongs to have no objective status, they have to be perpetually reconstructed” (Dolar, cited in Bhabha 2004, p 344), the forces that defined the novel “are at work before our very eyes” (Bakhtin 1981, p.3). While novel as considered here and by Bakhtin is the novel as it emerged and became popular in the modern, it is interesting to note that Jean-Pierre Vernant emphasised, in his *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, the importance of the ‘writtenness’ of literature in the classical mythical tradition and in the emergence of a separation of *mythos* and *logos*:

it is in and through written literature that this type of discourse became established; where it is concerned the *logos* is no longer simply speech but has come to imply demonstrative rationality and, as such, it is set in opposition, both in form and in fundamental significance, to the speech of *muthos*. In form it is opposed to *muthos* in all the ways that argued demonstration differs from the narrative of the mythical story (Vernant 1980, p.206)

The novel could thus be considered as “the leading hero in the drama of literary development in our time precisely because it best of all reflects the tendencies of a new world still in the making” (*Ibid.*, p.7) Therefore, one factor that distinguished other narrative genres, such as, for example, modern iterations of the dramatic form, from the novel in the mythical creation of the real through narrative representation is, as discussed in Chapter IV, the particular relationship that the novel creates with the reader. In the novel, the reader is no longer receptive in the manner that the audience is before the stage; through reading he/she becomes involved in the creation of the narrative. The novel can also be understood, as Walter Benjamin suggests in his essay ‘The Story-Teller’, as a rupture in narrative consciousness in the same manner in which the notion of modernity can be considered as a rupture in societal

consciousness (Benjamin 2006, p.394). The novel as narrative form responds to and reflects the emerging individuality of the modern, an individuality that was both autonomy and isolation. “The novelist has isolated himself. The birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual, who is no longer able to express himself by giving examples of his most important concerns, is himself uncounseled, and cannot counsel others. To write a novel means to carry the incommensurable to extremes in the representation of human life. In the midst of life’s fullness, and through the representation of this fullness, the novel gives evidence of the profound perplexity of the living” (*Ibid.*). The novel therefore resonates with the increasing individuality of lived experience (“in this solitude of his, the reader of a novel seizes upon his material more jealously than anyone else. He is ready to make it completely his own, to devour it” (*Ibid.*, p.372)) but it is also a means for the reader to reach beyond the isolation of this experience, albeit in a manner that Benjamin identifies as being very much removed from what he considers as the more socially productive communal story-telling of oral or dramatic tradition. “The novel is significant, therefore, not because it presents someone else’s fate to us, perhaps didactically, but because this stranger’s fate by virtue of the flame which consumes it yields us the warmth which we never draw from our own fate. What draws the reader to the novel is the hope of warming his shivering life with a death he reads about” (*Ibid.*, p.373)

Nonetheless, it would be mistaken to take my focus on the novel in this thesis as a denial of the role that other narrative forms have to play in the formation of a particularly modern – or a potentially ‘post-modern’ – identity. As Bakhtin writes in his study of Dostoevsky’s polyphonic novel, “a newly born genre never supplants or replaces any existing genres” (1984a, p.271) but rather expands upon them. To understand the narrative form of myth in terms of novel is not only to understand all those characteristics that link the attitude of the modern and the literary genre of the modern but also to understand how other literary forms became ‘novelised’, e.g. the manner in which narrative operates in a particularly modern context.

Myth & the Hero

The myths of Hesiod and Homer were the myths of the gods and the people. But the gods no longer dwell among us. In the battles of Troy they made their mischief amidst mortals, fighting alongside and against the men whose victories and destinies they would make and unmake. The gods of Celtic times were both human and divine, combining the corporeal and elemental in living both in and beyond the mortal world. The one God of

Christianity also occupied both heaven and earth, sending his own flesh – through the holy Trinity – to dwell among us. And when the gods retreated to their heavens they left us with their offspring, as with the demigods of the Greek Herakles and the Celtic warrior Cúchulainn. Later still the gods gave not their flesh but their blessing, in the divine right and authority of kings and popes. The heroes who came, who peopled our stories and our societies, were, as I discuss below, the continuation of a lineage that would always lead back to a higher power. But what then of a time when the gods retreated still further and took with them the universal certainty of a higher power? For Giambattista Vico this course from divine to mortal was the due course of the nation, along which all peoples would inevitably pass through the three ages of gods, heroes and men (Vico 1948, §915). At the core of this thesis project is the question of what happens to the mythical story-telling of identity when the descent is final. If the hero is an essential part of the mythical triad that is in turn essential for the success of the nation as dominant means of collective belonging, then the reduction of heroes to men and women must either undermine the myth or provoke a compensating shift in the other areas of narrative and ritual.

At the simplest level, the hero provides a character around whom the narrative can be structured, the hook on which to hang a story. The hero can thus serve as an analytical tool in the understanding of national narrative: observing the role of the hero offers a new perspective from which to describe and analyse and also allows for the study of agency and example in the construction and assertion of national identity, as can be seen in Chapter IV. However, the value and the validity of the hero as tool and focus of research go beyond that of narrative technique. The hero has not only *been* a role in the enduring stories of our societies; the hero has also *had* a role in both story and society. The hero of myth, as is explored further below, is never a fictional character. As with myth itself, the reality or lived existence of the hero ceases to matter once the story is believed. The significance of the hero lies not in the actuality of his⁷ being but in the effect of his told life and deeds on the populace. In the case of those heroes whose existence can be verified, the realities of their lives are often enhanced, elaborated or added to, until the real figure acquires a supernatural narrative (Ó hÓgain 1985, see especially the character of Daniel O’Connell pp.99-102). In the Greek myths, the heroes were connected to a higher plain. Often begotten of the gods,

⁷ As we shall see, the vast majority of mythical heroes have been male; this is especially true of the Western Christian and national tradition. For Otto Rank, who applies Freudian analysis to myth, the hero is always male (Rank 1990). This dominance of the male to the exclusion of the female in the mythical narrative was in reciprocal relationship too gender roles in society and, as is explored Chapter IV, the ascent of women to roles of power in society could be seen to have impacted on the narrative upon which the modern myths of belonging have been based.

through their deeds they gained glimpses of immortality or of the eternal glory given by the higher powers (March 2008). That the heroes of our myths are portrayed as less than an ideal but as somewhat more than ‘real’ or ordinary man (see also Nagy (2013) and Klapp (1954)) suggests a space between the ordinary and otherworldly that was open to be filled in the imagination of the individual or collective audience. “It is only by being refracted through the legendary adventures of the heroes or gods that human actions, conceived as imitative, can reveal their meaning and fall into position on the scale of values” (Vernant 1955, p.213).

The ‘ideal’ of hero comes not only from above – divine inheritance and approbation – but also from below. A hero cannot merely be told; he must be accepted. In this, the hero and his characteristics must “have corresponded to a worldview shared by the bulk of the community” in order for a hero to be accepted as such in popular myth or lore (Ó hÓgáin 1985, p.306). The hero in this becomes the link or passage between the divine and the mortal as the corporeal representation of both a heavenly ideal and the ideal personification of the clan or community (Rank 1990, p.121). Although serving as an ‘ideal’ the heroes of myths are rarely perfect. Nonetheless, their faults do not diminish them. Instead, their imperfections allow us to aspire to their status of hero, “to tap into the vein of heroism within ourselves (Armstrong 2006, p.141). The hero therefore plays a dual role in offering possibilities of transcendence (by blurring the boundaries between mortal and immortal) and by suggesting the social example or aspiration of a societal ideal.

In occupying the space between above and below, between gods and men, the hero not only acts socially as ideal or aspiration but can also serve as an analytical instrument by presenting at least a partial reflection of the societies or communities from which he emerged. What then can the study of the central character of these myths tell us about the societies from which these myths originate and in which these myths and characters endure? For Irish folk historian Daithí Ó hÓgáin, “the lore concerning famous historical characters, taken typologically and functionally can provide insights into the nature of [the national] culture” (1985, pp.306). In his work “On Heroes” Victorian philosopher Thomas Carlyle proclaimed the history of the world to be the biography of Great Men (1940, Lecture 1). “Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here” (*Ibid.*), with these Great Men portrayed by Carlyle as heroes with a hint of the divine, or at least of divine favour, about them. Could we see these heroes well, says Carlyle “we should get some glimpse into the very marrow of the world’s history”. If what it is to be a hero changes – if the hero is no longer to be the Great Man of

Carlyle's history or the traditional hero of societal lore – then is the mythistory of the people equally changed?

American sociologist Orrin E. Klapp identifies four ways in which the hero arises in popular imagination: as well as gaining hero status through portrayals in literature and lore the hero can come to be so by means of spontaneous popular recognition, formal selection or ordination as hero and the ascension to hero status over time and legend (Klapp 1948, p.135). Mythical heroes, however, usually contain elements of all four. The heroes that have made the passage to our present day are those that have been written down – even if they may have first had their telling in oral lore – and they are also those that have made it through formal selection processes. Those heroes who found their place in the narratives of religion, culture, nation or state are those that have been approved and held up, whether expressly or incidentally, by those who have influence over the production, distribution and employment of texts in the modern world. Therefore, and as explored in the contemporary context in Chapter IV, without the other complementary mythical characteristics of narrative and ritual to bring his story to life, the hero cannot hope to attain mythical status.

As well as fulfilling the universal functions touched on above of linking with the gods, offering possibility of transcendence by stepping into the space between mortality and divinity and providing a figure of aspiration, the hero of myth could often play one of several roles in society and in myth and lore. While different scholars vary somewhat in identifying these roles, according to the field of their interest or angle of their analysis, the general similarities are striking. In Carlyle, whose hero is always characterised by a spiritual connection to the Unseen World or to the No-World (1940, Lecture 1), the hero presents himself as Divinity, as Prophet, as Poet, as Priest, as Man of Letters, or as King (Carlyle 1940) though, as with both Ó hÓgáin (1985) and Joseph Campbell (2004), there is considerable overlap between these categories. Campbell's categories chime with his psychoanalytical approach, as he sees the hero as Warrior, as Lover, as Emperor and as Tyrant, as World Redeemer and Ó hÓgáin, who concentrates his study on Ireland and on Celtic myth, reverses the formula of Carlyle and Campbell and does not present his categories under the heading of "hero as...". Instead Ó hÓgáin gives us the Saint as hero, the Social Leader as hero, the Outlaw as hero, the Poet as hero. For Ó hÓgáin the human individual comes very much before the hero and achieves hero status only by dint of his social role or through the social significance the people attach to his legend. In combining the three approaches we can observe three levels at which the hero operates in myth: Carlyle's hero operating largely at a spiritual level, Ó hÓgáin's hero characterised by his social role

with Campbell's hero, while enjoying hero status at community level, exerts his influence on the level of the individual. Quite apart from the similarities between the typology of hero at all levels – hero as man of god, as political or social leader, as man of words⁸ – it is striking to observe in these works the consistencies and themes that appear across time and space in different traditions of myth and hero. Campbell and Carlyle draw on myths and heroes from across traditions (as do Rank (1990) and Raglan (1990), not included in the passage above as neither provides a typology of hero, though both present a pattern for the life of the hero in myth) and identify common themes in the life of heroes from across cultures and countries. Although Ó hÓgáin's study is of the Celtic mythical hero in the context of Irish lore, he highlights the similarities in both mythical theme and heroic characters with other Western traditions, notably with Greek myth, with other Celtic nations and with Christianity (Ó hÓgáin 1985).

In all cases the hero is he who stands away from or above the crowd. This is as true for the leaders, poets, priests and prophets of the typologies above as it is for the hero of passage of Rank and Raglan, who is set apart not only by his character and actions but also by the exceptional circumstances of his birth and death. The exception or the extreme is the mark of the hero (Nagy 2013), it is what raises the heroic man above those who will worship, admire or follow him. "Because of their superior qualities, heroes dominate the scene of human action, symbolising success, perfection and conquest of evil, providing a model for the identification by the group – one might say the better self" (Klapp 1954, p.57).

A final recurrent characteristic in narratives of the mythical hero is that the exceptionality of the hero is often expressed through or accentuated by spatial distance from the mythical community, a pattern seen especially in stories of the messianic hero. Messianic elements are prevalent in Ó hÓgáin's recounting of the Celtic hero myths: the coming of the hero foretold, the hero coming – sometimes from across the seas – and recognised on his coming by certain traits of appearance (1985, e.g. pp.122-123). Similarly, the hero patterns of Raglan (1990), Rank (1990) and Campbell (2004) follow the quest or messianic template as sketched out by Armstrong. The heroic potential of a spatial distancing not only adds to but might be manipulated to replace the exceptionalism of the hero; indeed, in folk narrative the power of the messianic image was often manipulated to their political advantage by hero figures (Ó hÓgáin 1985, p.161) with the characteristic of 'outsiderness' contributing to the

⁸ Although Klapp deals more with the hero in popular narrative than in myth specifically, the roles of hero that he identifies overlap considerably with those others mentioned here. Klapp's hero roles are: Conquering Hero, Clever Hero, Cinderella/Unpromising Hero, Quest Hero, Deliverer/Defender/Avenger, Popular Benefactor, Culture Hero, Martyr. (Klapp 1954, p.58)

prestige and mystery of the returning hero (p.271). As a messianic hero, the hero is not just exceptional but is exceptional on behalf of the community to which he has chosen to return. A hero perceived as messianic can therefore have the authority to speak on behalf of the community for whom he is exceptional. Similarly, the ruler perceived as ideal – combining truth and splendour and good judgement with a reign characterised by peace and prosperity – could ascend to the role of hero even in his own time (Raglan 1990; Ó hÓgáin 2005) and thus speak on behalf of his community. However, if the power of the hero wanes, who then has the right to speak on behalf of a community?

The Ritual Performance of Myth

Myth is not only narrative; it is also performative. Through ritual we bring myths to life and put them into practice. By reiterating, repeating and reinforcing the message of myth, our participation in ritual makes us complicit. We create myths and live our lives by our own creation. If myth gives us the narrative of our existence, myth goes beyond narrative in being “an event that – in some sense – happened once, but which also happens all the time” (Armstrong 2006, p.111). The value of ritual therefore lies not only in the participation of the members of the mythical community that it encourages but also in that it allows the appearance of stability even as myth and narrative, and narrative elements such as the hero figure, change. As myth and its narrative adapt to changing apprehensions of time, to a changing world, to changing histories and interpretations of history, the constancy of ritual allows for the illusion of continuity, they “represent the stability acted out and re-enacted; by virtue of their repetition they tend to deny the passage of time, the nature of change and the implicit extent of indeterminacy in social relations” (Bottici 2007, p.257).

However, ritual is not just a coming together or a celebration. Ritual as understood in the mythical triad is very much a controlled process, with its origins in the veneration at the tomb of the hero (Nagy 2013). Popular celebrations such as the carnival of the Middle Ages, created periodic occasions at which the usual social hierarchies and rules of comportment were cast aside, where through play, mockery and celebration society could be celebrated and societal constraints could be mocked and challenged (Bakhtin 1984, p.81). Early carnival was thus a play against power and the creation of a performative space of freedom; by giving a forum to voices other than and often in contradiction to authority it allowed for an expression of the folk in an otherwise strictly feudal society (Bakhtin 1984). In modern times, however, such carnival came to be recognised as a threat to political authority, especially as populations built up in the new urban centres. Political actors in the modern initiated policies

and practices that would turn carnival into ritual; state-sanctioned affairs that could not only be controlled but that would also serve to contribute to the upholding of the myth of the nation.⁹

One of the narrative elements that differentiates carnival or spectacle from ritual is the presence of the hero. Myths, in Raglan's analysis, come about to describe ritual and ritual comes about as the repetition of what an ideal king once did. The hero in Raglan's analysis of myth is the representation of this ideal king that once was (1990, pp.113- 114) and his role in narrative and ritual allows for a community to be constantly born and re-born into the ideal. However, one of the most common ritual practices – in both classical myth and, as seen in Chapter V, in the performance of the myth of the nation – celebrates not the life but rather the death of the hero. This is the ritual at the tomb of the hero. The death of the hero was a validation and a completion of the life of the hero; “it was if ‘meaning’ could not be ‘meaning’ without the hero’s death and tomb” (Nagy 2013, Hour 15). The fact of tomb, a place accessible to the hero’s worshippers, public or audience, is essential both to the legend of the hero (for his entry into immortality and ascension to infinite time) and for the ritual practice of those the hero represents or inspires, who long to be close to their hero and who are made ‘blessed’ by their contact with his place of remembrance (Nagy 2013, Hours 11 & 14). “The physical reality of where you do the lament, where you do rituals of making contact with the dead, especially dead heroes, [is] all-important” (Nagy 2013, Hour 4). The hero figure thus gives meaning to the ritual, makes it more than empty practices and consequently gives it greater significance in its role as enactment and perpetuation of myth.

However, this hero-based conceptualisation of ritual in the perpetuation of myth has the effect also of maintaining or elevating the hero-figure, whether the actual character of the idea of hero. If the ritual is the manifestation of the (mythical) collective consciousness and if the ritual is dependent on the hero-narrative then the hero can be identified as being central to both the experience and the maintaining of the collective consciousness. There is also the question within this of whether or not the hero-worship and the mythical enactment of the ritual are conscious or unconscious. This is perhaps an element that sets our modern iteration of myth apart: a denial of the mythical nature of our modernity leads us to claim or presume the secularity of our ritual practices and thus blinds us to the hero worship and the mythical creation that in earlier mythical societies was overt and assumed.

⁹ See not only Bakhtin (1984) in the role of the Church in writing carnival into the official calendar but also David Harvey's (2003 ,pp.204-218) study of the political instrumentalisation of spectacle in the Paris of the Second Empire.

The strategic political use of monumental and ritual sites, as explored in this thesis, can therefore be seen in the light of this tension between history and memory. The success of history as dominant narrative of identity requires that subversive factors in memory be removed (*Ibid.*, p.24). This is achieved in the political discursive strategies of identity (re)production by accounting for memory in the official practices of the state, controlling spontaneous memory by providing sites of memory that can be written or performed into the historical narrative (Nora 1989, p.8). In the logic of modernity, where memory could be challenged history cannot. The rituals of the nation-state can therefore account for memory through the politics of commemoration, an action that despite that which the word itself suggests, links more to history than to memory, for “commemoration is part of the ritual of forgetting” (Mbembe 2002, p.24), it strips memory of its vitality and consigns it to a past. The narrative appropriation of sacred sites, as suggested in the introduction to this chapter and as analysed further in the next, thus allows for memory and history to be reconciled in service of the myth. As I explore in this thesis, history as performed through the monument or at the official ritual site is a history that has subsumed memory; it is a “scholarly history, inseparable from the memory of the nation” (Pomain 1984, p.222). This is not memory as local but history as absolute, a history that mobilises individual memory in service of a collective history. “The greater our origins, the greater we become. For the object of our worship through the past is none other than ourselves” (*Ibid.*).

CHAPTER II: THE HIDDEN PRESENCE OF THE SACRED

The Museum as Political Power in Struggles over Identity

Remembrance of things past is not necessarily the remembrance of things as they were
Marcel Proust

*Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past.*
T.S. Eliot

The Musée de Corse is a museum in and of the heart of Corsica. Situated in the hill-top citadel that dominates the skyline of the island's historical capital of Corte, the museum's mission is to enable a personal discovery of Corsica, to encourage the visitor to create her own impressions rather than to prescribe an "encyclopaedic vision" of the island's culture and history¹. The introduction to the museum's permanent exhibition acknowledges the inevitably political character of the traditional museum – its selections, its ordering, its tellings offering a particular narrative of history – and in this acknowledgement seeks to set itself otherwise. Not only is history not particular, the Musée de Corse tells us, but we should also not forget that both history and the museum are always in the making.²

However, while the Musée de Corse seeks to present what might be termed a post-modern approach to the museum and to the presentation of cultural history, it does so forgetting the inexorable modern-ness of the museum, a modern-ness, as I explore here, inscribed in both its origins and its influence. The museum encapsulates the resolution of memory and history, a resolution central to the logic and narrative of the modern nation-state. It is this power to resolve, and sometimes reconcile, history and memory without apparent contradiction that makes of the museum not only a cultural but also, in so far as the two can be distinguished, an innately political actor. Just as history is a process of inevitable selection and omission so too is the museum always a decision-making, a decision-making that is inescapably and, as the discussions of this chapter illustrate, often expressly political. In telling the past, the museum allows for claims to be made about the present. In exhibiting a cultural present, the museum allows for plans to be made for the future. In this, the museum

¹ Museu di a Corsica, <http://www.musee-corse.com/index.php/fre/Nos-expositions>

² The second of the museum's permanent exhibitions is entitled *The Museum in the Making/Le Musée en train de se faire* (the official English translation as 'The Museum in Motion' loses both the idea of the museum as a production and the idea of it being able to produce itself).

provides a site both physical and discursive for the staking of identity claims in the nation-state as it is today.

In this chapter, I explore recent attempts by French leaders to exploit this power of the museum in struggles over and for identity. By placing these attempts – of which I focus primarily on the stories of the now-abandoned Maison de l’Histoire de France and of the recently reclaimed Musée de l’Histoire de l’Immigration – in historical and theoretical context I not only identify the particular sources and mechanisms, both physical and representational, of the power of the museum but also lay the basis for the analyses of the subsequent chapters. In uniting the mythical characteristics identified in the previous chapter – its importance in the narrative construction of the nation, its role in the writing of the Great Man and its ritual character – as well as having the ability to reconcile history and memory in its telling of history, the museum provides an analytical basis upon which to structure the research of this thesis into the contemporary political strategies of identity (re)production.

This exploration of the museum as actor in discursive strategies of identity is conducted in three stages. In the first, I briefly examine the history and politics of the archetypal museum of the Louvre in Paris, an exploration that enables me to create the historical and analytical context for my study of the contrasting political journeys of two more recent museum projects: the aforementioned Maison de l’Histoire de France and Musée de l’Histoire de l’Immigration. The second section is structured around these two museum stories, enabling me to contrast the museum politics of France’s most recent presidents, Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande, and to analyse how the physical and representational site of the museum creates the possibility for competing visions of national identity to be presented under the one banner of ‘France’. This examination of the contemporary politics of the museum produces new insights into the manner in which cultural sites function in political discursive strategies today as privileged sites of identity representation and (re)production, not only in the particular national context of France but also in the broader context of the modern nation-state.

The theorising of the museum that I carry out in the concluding section supports these broader conclusions on the power of monumental and cultural sites in identity politics; moreover it facilitates the analysis of the subsequent chapters by drawing out further characteristics and mechanisms of the museum that permits it to operate as a privileged site of identity (re)creation. I employ theoretical approaches including Michel Foucault’s heterotopia and Henri Lefebvre’s work on absolute spaces to show that the particular power of the museum lies not only in its cultural significance and its ability to manipulate the past in

a particular relationship of rupture and continuity but also, and most significantly, to operate as a sacred space that is both in and outside of the logic of modern space and time. The character of the museum as sacred space enables it, therefore, to operate both as physical manifestation of the modern nation-state and as mythical representation of a nation's identity.

MUSEUM STORIES

The Museum as Privileged Site of Identity: Providing Historical Context

Introducing the Louvre – The Story of a Modern Museum

In the beginning was the Louvre. Today the most visited museum in the world, the Louvre as museum was born out of a desire not to preserve history but instead to break with it or, rather, to create a history that was otherwise. A new history necessarily forged from the remains of the history to be usurped. In the making of the Louvre Palace as a dedicated museum, the edifice and art works that had served to reinforce the privileged position of the monarchical ruling class in both the narrative and politics of France were turned to the new purposes of the Revolution, facilitating a telling of the history of the nation that suggested simultaneously a long-prepared destiny and a rupture with the exclusive history of the aristocracy.

The royal palace of the Louvre became in 1793 a new resource for the citizenry: the Muséum Central des Arts. The art now on display for all both as “a pedagogical tool for the people” that located the artistic heritage of the country in the new narrative of the nation-state (Maleuvre 1999, pp.9-10) and as a political symbol of the success of the Revolution in wresting both culture and power from the ruling classes had shortly before known a very different definition. Not only had it been the preserve of the aristocratic and artistic elite (artistic ‘salons’ had been held in the Louvre since the time of Louis XIV) but furthermore art under the monarchy had been experienced not as artefact but as a part of lived existence. Contrast, for example, the salons of Louis XIV or the artistic patronage of Madame La Pompadour, mistress of Louis XV, with the revolutionary project of considering both historical and contemporary art not as personal or shared expressions of pleasure but as “monuments of the sciences and arts”, to be studied, to be learned from, to be mobilised in both the narration and creation of a historical identity for the Revolutionary nation-state.³ Throughout Europe in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as “the nation

³ See Boylan (1996) on the reports of David and Boissy d'Anglas produced in the early days of the museum projects of the Revolution

became the legitimate vestal of memory and of the past's ruins" (Maleuvre 1999, p.9) the modern museum was to become simultaneously proof and instrument of this legitimacy and of this politicising of memory.

This challenge of creating a history that both drew on and broke from the past manifests concretely in another museum of the era, the Museum of French Monuments, established by mediaevalist and essayist Alexandre Lenoir in 1795 in an effort to halt the destruction of tombs and monuments of pre-Revolutionary France. The tombs and monuments that Lenoir put on display in the Museum of French Monuments were objects never previously considered as art nor as artefacts worthy of being viewed or visited in an exhibition. Indeed it was the need to overcome this resistance to history-as-art that led the museum to initiate new practices of chronological exhibition (McClellan 1999, pp.155-156), an emphasis on the chronological narrating of history that corresponded with the new political and narrative sensibilities of the era, as discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Furthermore, in their (dis)placement in the museum these monuments not only reinforced the impression of a new beginning by emphasising a rupture with the past but they were also to contribute to the awakening of a "new historical sensibility" (Theis 2009, p.33). The Revolution may initially have felt itself free and independent of a national past (*Ibid.*, p.32); the new century, however, was to expose this freedom from history as a void to be filled, with the modern museum emerging as one of the principle mechanisms of filling this void.

The publicising of the previously personal in the museum not only signalled a change in the relationship of a general public to cultural institutions but also served to alter significantly the experience of the objects of art themselves. In a theme to which I return later in this chapter – notably in my consideration of the identity politics of the Musée de l'Histoire de l'Immigration and the Musée du Quai Branly – the museum's act of removing the work of art from a lived experience and making of it an exhibit, a historical testimony, is an act of some political significance, be this fully intended or not.

The work of art in a museum is an object whose relationship with the world has been changed. It has been taken from the "profane" world (Malraux 1953), where it was of and with the body, the person, the society, and has become something to be looked at. An artefact: once produced but no longer productive. However, once the artefact is transformed into unproductive product the political role passes to the museum, which becomes a site not only of preservation but also of production. The museum becomes, as Didier Maleuvre describes it, a place where history is manufactured (1999, p.12). The museum places history firmly in the past and presents it as something no longer present: "the museum forces art to

abnegate history, that is, to relinquish the power of truth-making” (Maleuvre 1999, p.43); the art in the museum is in the service of a story already told. The museum, therefore, depoliticises its contents by taking them from their lived context but – as was the case of the Louvre in its revolutionary years – in depoliticising the cultural object, in robbing it of its own role as a political actor, the museum creates the potential for new politics of culture. Now, however, the agency comes from elsewhere; not from the objects-in-context but rather in the decisions made in presenting these objects out of their original context.

A Monument in Times of Crisis – The Story of the Louvre continued

While this chapter explores how political leaders have sought and continued to seek to harness this agency in their cultural policies and in the associated public discourse – notably by presenting the story told in and by the museum as a historical forerunner of current or future action – considering the history of the physical site of the Louvre can also help us understand how the power of the museum in struggles over French national identity today is not only representational but also physical. That the Louvre had representational significance as a Revolutionary museum was not least by virtue of its situation in the heart of Paris, while the very stability of the Louvre as a fixity of the Parisian landscape contributed in no small part to the Revolution’s ability to present its narrative through the museum as a political rupture in a cultural historical continuity. If the contents of the museum wrested from their lived context facilitated a transformation of memory into shared history and therefore enabled the Louvre to declare a rupture with the aristocratic past, the museum also created an implied continuity in the overall narrative of Frenchness by proudly displaying evidence of the cultural genius of the country (and later, under Napoléon as he plundered the art collections of conquered countries, of its imperial ambitions and successes).

In a similar fashion, the presence of the Louvre as a physical site throughout almost a millennium of French history makes it possible to be call upon it as a symbol of uncontested Frenchness. However, while the Louvre might have been a constant physical presence in Paris it was far from a stable one – undergoing numerous and violent transformations from its genesis as a mediaeval fortress to its eventual realisation as a grand palace, designed no longer to awe in its strength but rather to impress through its beauty. Nonetheless, just as the “museum conveys upon artefacts [...] the aura of fate” (Maleuvre 1999, p.12) so too in the narrative of the museum as it has carried into our era has the Louvre been ascribed a certain historical inevitability. In one of his speeches at the site, then French president François

Mitterrand spoke of “returning the Louvre to its destiny as a museum”,⁴ a destiny that Mitterrand in many ways developed as a personal mission. For despite its rich history, the Louvre as we know it today is perhaps less the Louvre of the Revolution or of Napoléon (the museum being renamed the Musée Napoléon during the emperor’s reign) than of Mitterrand.

Mitterrand presented his redevelopment and reorganisation of the Louvre museum – the ‘Grand Louvre’ project that was launched in 1983 – as being very much in a historical tradition of architectural reinvention of the site⁵. However, as part of his wider architectural vision for Paris Mitterrand’s redevelopment of the Louvre, characterised by the famous Louvre pyramid designed by I.M Pei, was to be a renewal not only of the museum but, through the museum, a renewal of the cultural prestige of France, “a political action seeking to restore France’s means of – or, better still, inspirations of – grandeur”.⁶ The grandeur of France had suffered considerable setbacks both internally and externally with the end of Les Trentes Glorieuses’, the thirty glorious years of prosperity that had followed the end of the Second World War, and the relegation of France to a secondary player on the international scene in the bi-polar tensions of the Cold War. Therefore, Mitterrand’s plans for the architectural renewal of Paris – plans centred around the Louvre but that included other museums also, such as the museum of science and technology at la Villette, the Musée d’Orsay and the Institut du Monde Arabe – were “a way of telling the people of France that they should, that they can believe in themselves”.⁷

In contrast to that which we see in the next section, Mitterrand’s architectural vision and discursive representation of the Louvre were not particularly related to an internal contestation of national identity; instead, Mitterrand was more interested in asserting the particularity of French identity by creating a possibility for the present to claim a place in what he presented as a prestigious historical and cultural lineage. The pyramid of the Louvre was not only a new addition to a tradition of monumental architecture but it was also an effort, as Mitterrand makes clear in his public declarations on the subject, to earn for France a

⁴ Original reads: “*Rendre le Louvre à sa destination de musée*”. Allocution de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, sur le grand Louvre et sur l’aventure humaine et artistique de sa modernisation. 18 November 1993. Available at <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/937012700.html>

⁵ Allocution de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, sur l’histoire du palais du Louvre et la construction de la pyramide. 14 October 1988. Available at <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/887026700.html>

⁶ Original reads “*une action politique qui tend à restituer à la France les moyens de sa grandeur, mieux encore, l’inspiration de sa grandeur*”. Interview de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, accordée au “Nouvel Observateur”, sur les grands-projets d’architecture pour Paris. 14 December 1984. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/857000900.html>

⁷ *Ibid.* Original reads “*Ils sont une façon de dire aux Français qu’ils doivent, qu’ils peuvent croire en eux-mêmes*”.

place among the important architectural actors of the late twentieth century⁸. The physical legacy of Mitterrand's monumental reimagining of the Louvre was especially important in his efforts to reassert, both home and abroad, the prestige of French identity. In the tradition of the urban development projects of Napoléon Bonaparte⁹ and of Baron Haussmann (who was instrumental in the physical creation of Paris as known today), Mitterrand sought to make an "inscription"¹⁰ upon time, declaring that "posterity loves to engrave itself in stone".¹¹ "To shape the gaze, the memory, the imagination of generation after generation":¹² this was what Mitterrand sought to achieve with his architectural project of the Grand Louvre, not merely – as he was quick to state – to secure his own legacy¹³ but also to reassert through this grand project the grandeur of France.¹⁴ The pyramid of the Louvre would follow the tradition of monuments of France-past by inscribing itself not only in the external landscape of the city but also in the internal landscape of the French psyche.¹⁵

The consideration of the historical role of the Louvre in the official assertion of identity in France not only creates a basis from which to explore the politics of newer museums but the now-established position of the Louvre museum also permits us to explore how the cultural heritage of the Louvre is employed in contemporary political discursive strategies of identity. If Mitterrand's emphasis was on the physical legacy of the site, his success through his architectural project of securing for the Louvre its "destiny" as museum of the nation created the platform for his successors to speak of and from the Louvre in the vocabulary of an identity well-formed. Notable in this regard is current French president François Hollande, a politician who has on occasion, notably during his election campaign, sought to set himself in the mould of Mitterrandian statesmanship (Wieder, 2012). During his period as head of state the Louvre will have launched two satellite museums, one in Lens in the north of France, the other in Abu Dhabi. In the speeches that he has given on the subject of these other Louvres, President Hollande has emphasised the universal nature of Louvre-as-museum. In the case of Louvre-Lens – an architectural and cultural project located in one of the most economically disadvantaged areas of France – the expansion to the North of France

⁸ *Ibid.* "I suffered in observing that most of the great architectural gestures have, since the First World War, occurred outside of France" (*J'ai souffert d'observer que la plupart des grands gestes architecturaux se passaient plutôt à l'étranger depuis la première guerre mondiale*).

⁹ Whose legacy both the form – the conquest of Egypt having provoked a fashion for Egyptian motifs in French architecture and design – and the situation (in the museum's Napoléon Courtyard) of the Louvre pyramid recall

¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹ Original reads: "*La posterité aime s'inscrire dans la pierre*". *Ibid*

¹² Original reads: "*Modeler le regard, la mémoire, l'imagination des générations et des générations*". *Ibid.*

¹³ And even this would have been in keeping with the grand plan of French identity-as-grandeur by continuing a tradition of national history as told through the personalities of Great Men, as discussed in Chapter IV.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Op.cit.* note 5

was an act by which the Louvre “deepened its universal dimension, a universality that has been a vocation of the museum since 1793”¹⁶. In speaking of the Abu-Dhabi project two years later, Hollande declared the Louvre to be “the Museum of the Universal. Universal in its collections, universal in its visitors, universal in its ambition”.¹⁷ The Louvre itself was, of course, inimitable, could not be transposed or relocated.¹⁸ The spirit of the Louvre, however, the transcending cultural power of the museum that endowed it with its universal character: this, Hollande told his audiences, was not only transportable but in its transportation had a universally positive role to play, not least in its conception of culture.¹⁹

However, culture as conceived by the Louvre had different roles in different circumstances. In the Louvre-Lens culture was an investment – and not least an economic investment, the president emphasises – for the future. This culture would not only awaken regional pride (pride in the region as well as pride in “the collective conscience, the international standing” that the Louvre represented)²⁰ but would also attract tourism, providing not only an economic influx but also a sign of confidence in the region. The museum, in this telling, was the (re)assertion of certain values: loyalty to a certain history, equality of access to culture, and confidence in the future.²¹ These values of the museum were especially important in a traditionally industrial region experiencing significant economic and social difficulties, a region both geographically and socially removed from the capital.

The culture thus evoked by the Louvre-Lens was called upon to play a somewhat different role than that of the Louvre-Abu Dhabi. Whereas the universality as highlighted by the president in the case of the Louvre in Lens was envisaged as a centripetal universality, gathering together the different people of a socially fragmenting region, the universality called up by Louvre Abu Dhabi was, unsurprisingly given the very different geographical and political location, that of a culture always opening outwards. The Abu-Dhabi project not only enabled France to “consecrate with culture” a political, economic, diplomatic and military

¹⁶ Original reads: “*Le Louvre approfondit ainsi sa dimension universelle. Elle est sa vocation depuis 1793*”. Discours du Président de la République lors de l’inauguration du Musée Louvre-Lens. 4 December 2012. Available at: <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-du-president-de-la-republique-lors-de-l-inauguration-du-musee-louvre-lens>

¹⁷ Original reads: “*Je rappelle que le Louvre, c’est le Musée Universel. Universel par ses collections, universel par sa fréquentation, universel par son ambition*”. Discours lors de l’inauguration de l’exposition “Naissance d’un musée, Louvre – Abu Dhabi”. 29 April 2014. Available at: <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-lors-de-l-inauguration-de-l-exposition-louvre-abu-dhabi-naissance-d-un-musee/>

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Op. cit.* note 16

²⁰ *Ibid.* Original reads “[La culture] *participe aussi de notre conscience commune, de notre rayonnement international*”.

²¹ *Ibid.*

relationship²² but also allowed Hollande to speak of culture as something that unites rather than distinguishes, a theme that, as will be seen below, recurs often in Hollande's speeches. This particular employment of culture, serving initially to distinguish his government's approach from the identity politics of his predecessor Nicolas Sarkozy and later to counter the rhetoric and acts of extremism (of both extremist Islamic actors and of the far-right), is marked in Hollande's other Louvre speeches.

Just as the opening of a Louvre in Abu-Dhabi was an act that would – in representing all of human genius, all the great cultures and civilisations – represent progress for all humanity²³ so too was the opening of a department of Islamic Arts in the Louvre in Paris to serve as an act of cooperation, “an act of culture, an act of confidence, an act of peace, and a political act”.²⁴ In the beauty of the Islamic arts now housed at the Louvre was to be found the truth of Islam – a truth that, as told through the cultural artefacts of the collection, was as universal as the values of the museum in which they were displayed.²⁵ The museum of the revolutionary era had created an institution that facilitated the telling of the present as a rupture with an unsuitable past; in turn, the revolutionary museum, once established in the grand narrative of history, provides a stability that enables it to serve as privileged site of identity. Therefore, the stability of the Louvre as an “institution of the Republic”²⁶ enables, as in the case of Hollande's speech on Islamic Arts, history as told by the Louvre to represent a break from the present, to be mobilised in an effort to tell a new present with the evidence of the past. The site and spirit of the Louvre, therefore, have created for Hollande a discursive position that presumes an acknowledgement of a cultural-political identity upon which further policy or identity discourse can be based. In François Hollande's relationship with the Louvre, then, we can not only identify an instrumentalisation of the political power of the museum, as explored further below, but can also begin to establish the importance of cultural sites and cultural rhetoric in contemporary discourses of identity in France.

²² *Op. cit.* note 16

²³ *Ibid.* Original reads “*Chaque fois qu'un grand musée ouvre ses portes, c'est si rare, et permet d'associer tout le génie humain, toutes les grandes cultures, toutes les grandes civilisations, c'est un progrès pour l'humanité tout entière*”.

²⁴ Original reads: “*C'est cet acte-là que nous avons posé ensemble, un acte de culture, un acte de confiance, un acte de paix et un acte politique*”. Discours du Président de la République lors de l'ouverture du nouveau département des Arts de l'Islam au Musée du Louvre. 18 September 2012 Available at: <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-du-president-de-la-republique-lors-de-l-ouverture-du-nouveau-departement-des-arts-de-l-islam-au-musee-du-louvre/>

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

A Tale of Two Museums: Museum Politics in Contemporary France

That this idea of the museum as a privileged site of identity is both accepted and valued by political leaders in France today can be illustrated in a tale of two museums: the first the never-realised project of the Maison de l'Histoire de France and the second the belatedly inaugurated Musée de l'Histoire de l'Immigration.

Maison de l'Histoire de France: a house without a home

François Mitterrand was not the only president of France's Fifth Republic to leave a cultural legacy of a national museum: from Georges Pompidou there is the eponymous centre of modern art in the Beaubourg area of central Paris while Jacques Chirac's personal architectural and cultural project was the Musée du Quai Branly, considered in more detail later. "For each presidency, a cultural symbol", it seems (Salor 2012). If Nicolas Sarkozy was to break this trend by leaving office without having secured a similar easily-identifiable cultural legacy, it was not for want of effort. In the most significant speech that he gave on cultural policy during his presidency, in Nîmes in January 2009, Nicolas Sarkozy spoke of a culture that was not exactly the grandeur of Mitterrand before him nor the project-of-humanity of François Hollande after him. This culture – this 'universal' that France could offer through its museums and culture sites – was, as with the Louvre, a culture both physical and representational, a culture once again tied into collective identity and values; however, Sarkozy's discourse on culture was distinguished by a marked difference to that of either Mitterrand or of Hollande. Not only in the insistent repetition of the word 'identity' throughout – such explicit references were to be expected in the context of the president's broader policies and discursive patterns – but also that where Mitterrand emphasised grandeur and Hollande humanity, Sarkozy spoke of civilisation. "We invest in culture because it is essential, it is our civilisation that is at stake".²⁷ This was a culture that proclaimed itself ready and willing to enter into dialogue and exchange but one less formed through engagement than one arriving at this engagement already formed.²⁸

²⁷ The original reads: '*On investit dans la culture parce que c'est essentiel, c'est notre civilisation qui est en jeu*'. Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Président de la République, sur les priorités de la politique culturelle. 13 January 2009. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/097000104.html>

²⁸ A culture that, for example could, "through its grand institutions, help to open up Islam in certain Muslim countries and thus avoid catastrophe" ("*Que la culture française, par l'intermédiaire de ses grandes institutions, aide à l'ouverture de l'Islam dans certains pays musulmans, pour éviter la catastrophe*"). (*Ibid.*) The cultural complementarity was, in contrast to the relationship described by Hollande at the opening of the department of Islamic Arts at the Louvre, very much understood as being in one direction only. Less a complementarity, in fact, than a contrast. The "open" culture of France in contrast to the "occlusion" of certain countries (*Ibid.*).

The logical consequence of such an absolute view of culture was an absolute vision of history, a vision that, as he announced in the same Nîmes speech, President Sarkozy wanted made concrete in a new museum. A museum of French history. “Because the history of France is a whole, it is a coherence”.²⁹ Whereas the museums of France had, up till then, told the history of France through artefacts or objects of, for example, science, art, war, or domestic or public life, Sarkozy wanted a museum that would no longer tell history through these means nor in a manner that he characterised as being in the tradition of successive French presidents apologising for the tragic incidents of the past, nor yet still as a history of distinct instalments and incidents, some glorious some less so. Sarkozy instead sought to establish a museum that would tell a total history, a project that in this telling would reinforce the cultural identity of France.³⁰

Although the speech in Nîmes represented President Sarkozy’s primary public announcement of his plans, the idea of a grand museum of French history had been several years in the imagining (see Bakouche and Duclert (2012) for a detailed chronology). However, if the idea of a museum as presidential project and expression/assertion of national identity was, as can be seen in the story of the Louvre, hardly a novelty, the expressly and overtly political nature of Sarkozy’s museum project (to be called the Maison de l’Histoire de France) set it apart from other national museums. The Committees of the Revolution, Presidents Pompidou, Mitterrand and Chirac – they all had ideas to express and expressed these ideas through the politics of the museum: the Revolution turning art into artefact in a historically charged location, Mitterrand renewing grandeur in his architectural renewal of the Louvre, Pompidou and Chirac (in the Centre Pompidou and the Musée du Quai Branly respectively) building radically new buildings around existing objects and artefacts. Ideas and identities expressed through and formed in the dual mechanism of rupture and continuity so well captured in the museum. Sarkozy, in contrast, began and ended with the idea. His Maison de l’Histoire had neither form nor content: it was driven solely by an idea.

This radically overt political instrumentalisation of the historical and cultural is documented not only in the reports on the museum project commissioned by the president but also in official correspondence from Sarkozy to his ministers of immigration and of culture. A 2007 *lettre de mission* to new Minister for Culture and Communication Christine Albanel, in which Sarkozy designates the Minister’s portfolio of cultural promotion as a project of cooperation not only with the Minister of Education but, more surprisingly, also with the

²⁹ *Ibid.* Original reads: “Parce que l’histoire de France c’est un tout, c’est une coherence”

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Minister for Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development,³¹ proves to be a forerunner of a 2009 *lettre de mission* to the incoming Minister for Immigration, Eric Besson, in which this relationship between culture and immigration-integration-identity is expanded upon: “the promotion of national identity should be at the heart of your work”.³² Not only was the minister, therefore, to “reinforce the place of the emblems and symbols of the Republic, of its language, flag, anthem, of the values contained in the motto of “Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité”” in schools and in public places but he was to work with the Minister for Culture on the project of the Musée de l’Histoire de France, a project aimed at “bringing our national identity to life for the wider public”.³³

The Maison de l’Histoire was, according to one of the reports commissioned by the president, needed not only to reinforce identity and to bring it to life but also to break away from previous policies of denying a History-of-France in favour of a privileging of memory; a “regime of memory” to which Parliament and politicians had “let themselves be taken hostage”, policies that had frayed the link between the French people and their history by celebrating the victories of rivals rather than those of the French military and nation (by “preferring Trafalgar to Austerlitz”), a tyranny of memory in which memories were no longer transformed into a shared history but where instead the proliferation of diverse memories undermined the greater historical narrative of the nation (Lemoine 2008, pp.9-10). The Maison de l’Histoire would give “shape and visibility” (p.15) to a rival, restorative policy of history as grand narrative – not an uncontested history by any means but a history the continuity and totality of which should go uncontested. The history of France so understood was the history of the Nation-State (Lemoine 2008, p.41), a history the facts of which were undeniable, where divergent opinions and interpretations might be welcome but which opinions and interpretations could only begin from these undeniable facts and not elsewhere.

This certainty of a history was intended to underpin the creation of a museum that would permit France to enjoy a renewed relationship with this history and, by this, could serve to restore what was perceived to be the country’s ailing identity (pp.9-17). A later report (Hébert 2010) is notably more tempered in its language and in its mission statement

³¹ Lettre de mission de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Président de la République, adressée à Mme Christine Albanel, ministre de la culture et de la communication, sur les priorités de la politique culturelle. 1 August 2007. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/077002415.html>

³² Original reads “*La promotion de notre identité nationale doit être placée au cœur de votre action*”. Lettre de mission de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Président de la République, et François Fillon, Premier ministre, adressée à M. Eric Besson, ministre de l’immigration, de l’intégration, de l’identité nationale et du développement solidaire, sur la mise en œuvre de la politique d’immigration. 31 March 2009. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/097001053.html>

³³ *Ibid.* Original reads: “*Vous prendrez part, aux côtés du ministre chargé de la Culture, à la mise en place du Musée de l’histoire de France, qui contribuera à faire vivre notre identité nationale auprès du grand public.*”

yet nonetheless reiterates the vision of the Maison de l'Histoire as returning history to the position that it had lost, a rehabilitation that would grant history its “essential role in the formation of the civic spirit” (Hébert 2010, p.16). By the time the draft proposal for the museum was published, in June 2011, the language of museum as instrument of identity had been tempered still further. However, the Maison as described in this document was more an evocation of the politics of the museum than a physical manifestation of the museum as traditionally understood. The emphasis was on the significance of the museum rather than on its contents (in fact, the Maison was to have no particular collection of its own). This was a museum that would tell rather than show.

While descriptions of the eventual contents of the museum might have been vague, there was much more certainty of vision in the concept of the Maison as lived resource: as the lynchpin in a network of museums, as a pedagogical actor, as a research centre, its aims brought to life in a series of commemorations, celebrations, competitions, campaigns, promotions (Maison de l'Histoire de France 2011). As discussed in chapters I and V, ritual is an essential part of the bringing-to-life of any myth. Indeed, the power of the museum owes something to its own ritual nature: the air of pilgrimage, the prescriptions and proscriptions of entry and access, the respectful silence before what were not only objects of admiration but also almost objects of worship. However, the rituals envisaged in the project of the Maison de l'Histoire had the air of empty ceremony: less a bringing to life of an already-there or already-told than an effort to create a ‘there’ or a ‘told’ through ritual practice. Much like the Maison de l'Histoire itself, in fact: the physical summoned in service of an idea rather than the idea taking advantage of an already-physical. This absence of a physical ‘already’ in the project of the Maison de l'Histoire may explain the insistence on housing the museum in an “emblematic site”,³⁴ a “symbolic location”.³⁵ Such a historically significant site would provide the continuity so important in the Maison’s conception of history, a continuity that would also balance the political rupture that the Maison sought to effect. At the earlier stages of the project the site of the Invalides was preferred.

The Invalides, near the centre of Paris, had the potential to be the emblematic location sought for the museum, not only because of the physical prominence of the situation in the city of the Invalides but also because of the historical and cultural context of the building, from which association it was hoped that the Maison de l'Histoire would benefit (Lemoine

³⁴ Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Président de la République, sur la grotte de Lascaux, la protection du patrimoine et sur la future Maison de l'histoire de France, Les Eyzies (Dordogne). 12 September 2010. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/107001923.html>

³⁵ *Op. cit.* note 27

2008; Rioux 2010). This preference for the Invalides was a central component in the 2008 report by Hervé Lemoine, one of the early drivers of the museum, for whom situation in this site “full of history” would enable the Maison de l’Histoire to become a keystone in a wider political historical project (Lemoine 2008, pp.9-12). The enthusiasm that Lemoine evinced in his report for the particular symbolism of the Invalides site was due not least to the particular vision that was being advanced for the new museum. The Maison de l’Histoire at this stage of its imagining was not only to be the “great museum of history that France required” (*Ibid.*, p.2) but was also to be a museum of a history that was explicitly civil and military. Therefore the links with historical and contemporary defence politics³⁶ were very much to be welcomed. Indeed, this 2008 report envisaged the museum as being under a joint-mandate of the departments of Culture and Defence. The advantage of the location of the Invalides in placing the Maison de l’Histoire very much within a military understanding of the history of France corresponded with the project’s then-vision of the history of France being told as the history of the nation-state. However, as the project proceeded and as disquiet began to be expressed in the media at its overt “exaltation” of identity through history³⁷ the emphasis was shifted away from the links with defence and the military.³⁸

This new desire to play down the military elements of the project along with more practical considerations (see Rioux 2009a; Hébert 2010) was to contribute to the eventual decision to locate the museum in another central and historically charged location: the Hôtel Soubise, one of the sites housing the National Archives. However, before looking at the choice of the Hôtel Soubise in more detail, it is worth mentioning – especially in light of the study of the figure of the hero in Chapter IV – another one of the perceived advantages of housing this project of grand history in the Invalides: the link with Great Men of French history. The history evoked by the buildings of the Invalides complex was a history of a particular value. It was the history of heroes. Louis XIV, Napoléon, de Gaulle: that the Invalides has particular associations with not only these emblematic leaders but also with other celebrated figures of the nation-state (Hervé Lemoine mentions, *inter alia*, Vauban, Foch and Clemenceau) would set the museum in a site that would permit it to sit in the

³⁶ The Invalides houses the Army Museum as well as the tombs of Napoléon and of many other celebrated figures of French military history and major parts of the site fall under the authority of the Ministry of Defence.

³⁷ See the opinion piece entitled ‘La France au musée de l’histoire’ by historians Daniel Roche and Christophe Charle, published in *Le Monde* on 8 February 2009. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2009/02/07/la-france-au-musee-de-l-histoire-par-daniel-roche-et-christophe-charle_1152209_3232.html

³⁸ Indeed, the 2009 Rioux report included the association with the military among the drawbacks identified with the Invalides as a location for the museum: “installing the museum of the history of France in the Invalides would give to the museum too military a character” (Rioux 2009a, p.25).

lineage of Great Men and thus endow the site with “a considerable potential coherent with the principles on which the creation of the [museum] is based” (Lemoine 2008, p.33).³⁹

Various practical considerations were to lead, as mentioned above, to the Hôtel de Soubise, a building of the National Archives situated in the central Marais district of Paris, finally being named as the chosen location for the new museum. This decision was made possible by the opening of a new Archive complex in Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, a suburb of the capital, and was a choice both practical⁴⁰ and symbolic, with the symbolism coming from the implication of the archives as source and site of creation of the history of France (Hébert 2010, p.31). It was also a choice that was to contribute to the ultimate failure of the project. Already under fire from historians and academics as “political and ideological”⁴¹, as a “fixed vision of history” designed to “sell nostalgia”,⁴² as a “dangerous”,⁴³ “neo-nationalis[ti]c” project⁴⁴ of “impure and political origins”,⁴⁵ the Maison de l’Histoire received a further setback when a large number of National Archive employees at the Hôtel de Soubise, opposed to the decision to locate the new museum at the site, staged a partial occupation of the building for a period of several months (from September 2010 to January 2011).

Not only did the striking staff wish to preserve the identity of the site as central to the workings and history of the National Archives⁴⁶ but they also sought to protect and retain one of the archival resources located at the Soubise site: a Musée de l’Histoire de France (known since 2006 as the Musée des Archives Nationales). Very little attention had been given to this museum, which was much more modest in dimension and mission than the Maison de l’Histoire that had been proposed to usurp it. The Musée des Archives Nationales had been considered somewhat dismissively by Jean-Pierre Rioux in his 2009 report on potential sites for the new museum, quite possibly because of its modest character and its rather old-

³⁹ It should be noted, however, that a later report, by Jean-François Hébert (2010), noted that there could be an advantage in choosing instead a site with no such association with personality; the example he gave was of the Hôtel de la Marine, which, he surmised, would give a different character to the museum by being associated with great events rather than with great individuals.

⁴⁰ As described by President Sarkozy in September 2010. *Op. cit.* note 34

⁴¹ Cited in ‘Maison de l’histoire de France: Le soupçon de l’identité mythifiée’, Audrey Salor, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 20 March 2012. Available at: <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/politique/election-presidentielle-2012/20120318.OBS4039/maison-de-l-histoire-de-france-le-soupcon-de-l-identite-mythifiee.html>

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ ‘La Maison de l’histoire de France est un projet dangereux’, an opinion piece in *Le Monde* (21 October 2010) signed by eleven well-known historians and researchers. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2010/10/21/la-maison-de-l-histoire-de-france-est-un-projet-dangereux_1429317_3232.html

⁴⁴ ‘Le Sarkozysme historique, par N. Offenstadt’, *Histoire pour tous*, 25 April 2012. Available at: <http://www.histoire-pour-tous.fr/education/179-metiers-histoire/4097-le-sarkozysme-historique-par-n-offenstadt.html>

⁴⁵ Cited in ‘Maison de l’histoire de France: de la genèse à la polémique’, *Histoire pour tous*, 3 February 2012. Available at: <http://www.histoire-pour-tous.fr/dossiers/232-histoire-generale/3956-maison-de-l-histoire-de-france--de-la-genese-a-la-polemique.html>

⁴⁶ ‘La Maison de l’Histoire de France embourbée dans une guerre de positions’, Florence Evin, *Le Monde*, 25 September 2011. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2011/09/24/la-maison-de-l-histoire-de-france-embourbee-dans-une-guerre-de-positions_1577253_3246.html; ‘Archives nationales: reprise de l’occupation’, 9 March 2011. Available at: http://www.liberation.fr/culture/2011/03/09/archives-nationales-reprise-de-l-occupation_720428

fashioned presentation but also, perhaps, because the history of this museum was, in contrast to that envisaged by its replacement, a history that was shown rather than told. The Musée des Archives bore witness to a history that was always being literally written, since unsurprisingly the collection in the museum of the archives is largely documentary.

The ground floor exhibition of the existing museum traces the history and politics of producing and recording script and places these in the particular history of archival practice in general and of the National Archives in particular. In the rooms on the level above the visitor is introduced to the work of the archive. The atmosphere is built and a sense of the sacred evoked in document-lined rooms reproducing the work-place of the archivist, the sense of entering a Foucauldian heterotopia – the accumulation of generations of time in this one place – enhanced by proximity to and the display of original and facsimiles from the official archival collection: documents dating back to the Middle Ages, proofs of life from throughout France’s history. Transcriptions from the trials of Jeanne d’Arc, letters signed by Napoléon and by Marie-Antoinette: in showing, the museum of the archives tells in the way that Nicolas Sarkozy hoped his museum might. Might, but never would, for in August 2012 the government of François Hollande announced, for financial, practical and political reasons, the cancellation of all plans for a Maison de l’Histoire de France. The grand narrative failing to displace the endless stories of a limitless storytelling.

Musée de l’Histoire de l’Immigration: Reinvention by Museum

This is a tale of two museums. The chronology of the second museum – the Musée de l’Histoire de l’Immigration, which is housed in the Palais de la Porte Dorée in Paris – overlaps that of Sarkozy’s failed project. In this second case, too, contestations of identity are to the fore. And just as the previous tale was ultimately to involve more than one museum, so too does the narrative of the Musée de l’Histoire de l’Immigration become a broader museum story.

The idea for a national museum of immigration was born out of an increasing political and social awareness during the last years of the twentieth century of the desirability, and perhaps necessity, of confronting rising tensions of identity and immigration in France. The Socialist government of the time under Prime Minister Lionel Jospin (governing in cohabitation with a centre-right president) was to prove receptive to pressure from academics and activists calling for a state initiative to explore and promote the positive artistic, social and economic results of a rich history of immigration, an initiative that could be developed, it was hoped, under a new Socialist presidency (Vaillant 2014). The concept endured even

through the victory (presidential and legislative) of Jacques Chirac in 2002, not least, perhaps, because this victory was secured only after the considerable shock delivered to both the political establishment and France's self-image as land of the universal values of liberty, fraternity and equality by the success of Front National leader Jean-Marie Le Pen in reaching the second round of the presidential election.

The project for a museum of immigration, known at the time as the Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, was officially launched in July 2004 by Chirac's prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin. This decision to proceed with the museum in spite of difficulty and opposition was a decision, Raffarin declared, born of political and moral conviction, an illustration that the government, and country, had "chosen integration into the nation over differentiation between peoples"⁴⁷. The museum would encourage immigrants and their children to know immigrant memories as shared memories of the nation, would serve to combat any stigma around issues of immigration, would advance an understanding, born of the values and principles of the Revolution, of France as always united and universal. It would be a clear statement that there was but one France to which all its peoples belonged.⁴⁸

By the time the museum was ready to be opened to the public, France's Elysée Palace had a new occupant. Nicolas Sarkozy, minister for the Interior under Chirac, had triumphed in the 2007 presidential election. Raffarin's rhetoric of "confronting the truth of history", of recognising the contributions of immigration to France's heritage and society, of acknowledging that French identity was also an identity of immigration,⁴⁹ was not in line with a political project launched under President Sarkozy that included plans for DNA tests of certain new immigrants and that sought to increase the rate of deportations from France. The new museum of immigration was, then, to be largely ignored by the Sarkozy government and, unusually for a national museum, received neither official inauguration nor official visit by either president or prime minister.

When Minister for Immigration, Eric Besson, whose predecessor Brice Hortefeux had visited the museum in a non-ceremonial capacity only, represented the government at the launch of a new media library two years after the museum was opened he was met with a hostile and heckling crowd, in its number many representatives of undocumented and immigrant residents of the country. While the government might have wished to play down

⁴⁷ Original reads: "*Nous avons fait le choix de l'intégration à la nation plutôt que la différenciation des populations*". Déclaration de M. Jean-Pierre Raffarin, Premier ministre, sur la création d'un musée dédié à l'histoire de l'immigration intitulé "Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration", 8 July 2004. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/043002182.html>

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

the representational significance of the museum, its opponents were more than ready to seize upon the symbolism of the site in expressing their resistance to the state's immigration and social policy. Some months after the demonstrations against Eric Besson's presence at the museum, the Cité Nationale de l'Immigration was occupied by undocumented workers calling on the government to honour a commitment to the regularisation of several thousand undocumented workers in France, an occupation that was to last four months (from October 2010 to January 2011, paralleling the staff occupation of the Hôtel de Soubise during the same period). The second great museum project of twenty-first century France was proving, then, to be as much a physical and representational site for contestations of identity as was the ill-fated Maison de l'Histoire.

So it was and so it might have remained: the story of a little-known, little-loved museum on the outskirts of France's capital. Until, that is, a decision was made by subsequent president François Hollande to inaugurate officially the museum (now known as the Musée de l'Histoire de l'Immigration), seven years after it had been opened. In December 2014, in an event televised, streamed and blogged live by leading news and media organisations, President Hollande spoke for nearly an hour at an inauguration never expected to take place. Hollande spoke of a museum that was "more than a symbol", that was "a message of confidence in our country, in what we are and what we can achieve"⁵⁰. The mission of the museum, as Hollande saw it, was not too far removed from that envisaged by Sarkozy for his Maison de l'Histoire de France: to tell the history of the nation through the museum and to promote a certain (re)assertion of identity a 'certain idea of France'⁵¹. However, quite apart from the ideological differences with his predecessor, Hollande's evocation of a history of France represented an overt contradiction of Sarkozy's grand narrative by explicitly emphasising the value and role of memory. Not only was the museum itself a work of memory but its great strength was to be its ability to evoke diverse

⁵⁰ Original reads "*Ce musée est plus qu'un symbole. C'est un message de confiance dans l'histoire de notre pays mais aussi dans ce que nous pouvons faire*". Discours d'inauguration du Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration, 15 December 2014. Available at: <http://www.eylsee.fr/declaration/article/discourse-d-inauguration-du-musee-de-l-histoire-de-l-immigration>

⁵¹ "To evoke to histoire of immigration is to evoke the story of France; this is history, this is our history (*Evoquer l'histoire de l'immigration, c'est évoquer l'histoire de France, c'est l'histoire, c'est notre histoire*)"; "All [these immigrants] fought for France, but for a certain idea of France. For a universal France, open to the world, a France capable of promoting ideas of progress" (*Tous s'étaient battus pour La France, mais pour une certaine idée de la France. Pour la France universelle, la France ouverte au monde, pour la France capable de promouvoir des idéaus de progress*)"; "[This] museum [...] helps us to understand that generations of immigrants have made up the face of France. A face [...] that unites and brings together. A nation should be proud of itself and sure of its destiny [...] it is when this destiny is shared that this great nation of France can resist everything, can enhance the best and conquer the worst (*[Ce] musée [...] nous fait comprendre que [des générations d'immigrés] ont fait le visage de la France. Un visage qui [...] unit, rassemble et fédère. Un Nation doit être fière d'elle-même et sûre de son destin [...c'est quand son destin est partagé que cette grande Natioan qui s'appelle la France peut résister à tout pour faire le meilleur et conjurer le pire*)", *Ibid.*

memories⁵². In an even more marked contrast to the history-identity discourse of the Maison de l'Histoire, Hollande declared the memory of the Nation itself to be capricious, contestable: "Now ungriving, now generous. [A nation's memory] has its own particular rhythms and too often views the past through the eyes of the present".⁵³ Hence, for Hollande, the importance of the work of historians and of the museum was to ensure, in contrast to what was sought by Sarkozy in his museum project, that history was not told in service of the present but rather that the present take its lessons from the past revealed in the museum.

However, although Hollande may not have sought to manipulate history in the manner of his predecessor, his instrumentalisation of the museum was no less political. It should be remembered that not only was President Hollande under no obligation to stage an official inauguration for the museum but it was also not particularly expected of him. Indeed, where Sarkozy's actions were remarkable in that he, against tradition, neglected to officially launch a new national museum, in many ways Hollande's were equally as remarkable in deciding on an official ceremony seven years after the fact. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to conclude that President Hollande made a considered decision to stage this ceremony, that he chose for express reasons to speak from the physical and representational site of the Musée de l'Histoire de l'Immigration. This decision fits with the president's patterns of discursive practice; François Hollande in the first years of his mandate made significant and repeated use of occasions and sites of culture and memory in his public declarations, to a degree that exceeds the memorial practices of any other of the presidents of France's Fifth Republic (Wieder 2015). This arises in some part, of course, from temporal coincidences such as the centenary of the Great War. However, when one considers express choices such as those made in the case of the Musée de l'Immigration and the ceremonies of the Panthéon (considered in detail in Chapter V) and the fact that Hollande has taken advantage of cultural launches to address situations of crisis (e.g. his speech at the opening of the Paris Philharmonia after the Charlie Hebdo attacks⁵⁴ and that at the Louvre after the attack on the Bardo museum in Tunis⁵⁵, though this latter was again influenced by coincidence of events), it appears indeed that the president privileges cultural and historical sites in his discursive

⁵² "C'est un lieu où il convient de mener un travail [...]long [...], obscur parfois, de mémoire"; "C'est une grande réussite de ce musée que d'évoquer toutes ces mémoires", *Ibid.*

⁵³ Original reads: "*Tantôt elle est ingrate, tantôt elle est généreuse. [La mémoire d'une Nation] a ses propres rythmes et regarde trop souvent le passé avec les yeux du présent*". *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Discours lors de l'ouverture de la Philharmonie de Paris, 14 January 2015. Available at: <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-lors-de-l-ouverture-de-la-philharmonie-de-paris/>

⁵⁵ Discours au département des antiquités orientales du Musée du Louvre, 18 March 2015. Available at <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-au-departement-des-antiquites-orientales-du-musee-du-louvre-2/>

practice. Considering the case of the immigration museum helps in understanding why this might be.

Firstly, cultural sites such as those of museums enable the head-of-state to introduce or address policy decisions and positions by placing them, through the representational significance of the museum, in a lineage and narrative of French history and identity. This can be clearly observed in the speech at the Musée de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, which – after an introduction considering the contributions of immigrant lives and memories to French society and identity – consisted largely of a discourse on the government's immigration policy in what was the president's first speech on the contentious issue of immigration. A second attraction of the museum as site of public declaration for Hollande is that, as explored in a bit more detail below, its cultural significance allows the president to make further identity claims: claims, this time, for his particular identity as head-of-state and president of the nation. Not only did the speech at the Musée de l'Histoire de l'Immigration create for President Hollande the opportunity, especially in a context where the economic policy of the Socialist government was moving closer to that of its centre-right rivals, to distinguish the character of his presidency from that of his predecessor and possible future opponent Nicolas Sarkozy but it also gave the possibility of establishing his identity as an orator – one of the qualities so admired in previous emblematic presidents such as de Gaulle and Mitterrand, a quest for an identity of oratorical grandeur that can also be identified in the later ceremonies of the Panthéon (Merchet 2015).

Examining the story of the Musée de l'Histoire de l'Immigration not only sheds light on discursive strategies on exploiting the past in identity politics of the present, however; it also permits us to understand how museums can use the present to reform the past to political ends, by using the museum's character of rupture-and-continuation as seen in the section on the Louvre above. The immigration museum was not only a new museum, it was also the reinvention of an old. An old and discredited museum that told a story that no longer stood well with the identity of twenty-first century France. The building in which the new immigration museum is housed is not a purpose-built site but is instead one with a charged history.

The Palais de la Porte Dorée is situated at the periphery of Paris: a monstrous art deco building constructed for the Colonial Exposition of 1931. The Exposition's main attractions, spread over an area of more than 100 hectares, were displays of both people and objects from France's colonies exhibited in reproductions of indigenous buildings and villages in what was intended as a demonstration of France's imperial power and as well as an illustration of its

enlightened approach to Empire, celebrating rather than denying the culture of the peoples it had conquered. When the Exposition came to an end the Palais remained open as the Musée Permanent des Colonies, a museum that the government of France's Third Republic hoped would be the equal of the Imperial Museum in London and Belgium's Museum of the Congo in promoting the values and benefits of the country's colonial policies. Attitudes were fast changing in the interwar period, however, and in 1935 the Musée Permanent des Colonies was rebaptised the Musée de la France d'Outre-Mer (the Museum of France's Overseas Territories). New name, same contents. However, after this early acknowledgement of changing tides in public opinion, the political awareness of the museums' administrators stagnated even as the relationship of France to its soon-to-be-former colonies underwent radical alteration. The celebration in 1954 of the life of Maréchal Lyautey, a colonial administrator and symbol of France's colonial regime who had been very much involved with the 1931 Exposition, and the museum collection's constant reminder of the arrogance of imperialism resonated badly with the French public in a time when the country's role in the colonies, especially those of Algeria and Indochina, and its relationship with its colonial subjects had been very much called into question. Public interest in and respect for the museum hit a low point from which two subsequent name changes – to the Musée des Arts Africain et Océaniens in 1960 and to the Musée Nationale des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie in 1990 – did little to rescue it. The unloved and seldom visited museum closed in 2003, having never been able to rid itself of the shame of its colonial origins.

The decision to locate a new museum of the history of immigration in France in such a historically loaded site was, therefore and as acknowledged by Prime Minister Raffarin in his 2004 speech, a controversial one.⁵⁶ However, as can be seen in Raffarin's speech, it was a decision that, in provoking a rupture with the past by creating a completely new museum in this historical site, enabled for the tainted colonial past to be accounted for as history and thus removed from the present. A reflection, then, of the rupture-continuity of the Louvre of the Revolution, where this time the depoliticising action was performed on the building rather than on the contents.

A similar depoliticising move was, nonetheless, to be performed elsewhere on the contents of what had once been a colonial museum. Much of the collection of this discredited museum was to end up in Jacques Chirac's signature cultural project of the Musée du Quai Branly: a new museum in a new building in the centre of Paris. What President Chirac

⁵⁶ *Op.cit.* note 47

presented as a mission to restore to the arts and civilisations of all the continents their depth and complexity”⁵⁷ a leading critic of the new museum saw instead as a reduction of social, cultural and historical complexity to “an ideal Africa, reduced to its works of art” (Sergent 2007, p.116). By preferring “beautiful” objects and by choosing to present them as such rather than as useful components, beautiful or not, of a lived experience, the Musée du Quai Branly was, by this criticism, committing a fault against history and, by extension, against the truth of the present (Sergent 2007, pp.112-116). Indeed, an illustration of Didier Maleuvre’s observation on the power of the museum to neutralise through aestheticisation might be found in President Chirac’s declaration in his inauguration address that the museum was to be “an incomparable aesthetic experience as well as an indispensable lesson of humanity for our time”⁵⁸.

The curation of the museum’s artefacts as objects of art presented the mission of Quai Branly as the “celebration of the luxuriant, fascinating and magnificent variety of the works of mankind” and thus presented France, the creator of this celebration, as an international actor of dialogue, equality and exchange, a France committed as always to universality but a France that had also over the course of its history learned to value diversity in identity⁵⁹. Furthermore, in an echo of what has gone before, it was declared that the architecture of the new museum would facilitate a “rupture with a certain limited and unjust vision of the history of humanity”,⁶⁰ that same limited and unjust vision that had found expression in the former colonial museum, in all its incarnations, at the Palais de la Porte Dorée.

This depoliticisation through architecture was another of the critiques by historian Bernard Sergent, who deplored that the design of the new building was designed to evoke “emotion and enthusiasm”⁶¹ rather than to adhere to modern principles of the museum as the site of explorations of the truth (Sergent 2007, p.114). Once again the museum was performing the function of placing history firmly in the past and presenting it as something no longer present, refusing the museum’s contents their role as social actors and witnesses by

⁵⁷ Original reads: “*Il ambitionne de restituer, dans toute leur profondeur et leur complexité, les art et les civilisations de tous ces continents*”. Allocution de M. Jacques Chirac, Président de la République, à l’occasion de l’inauguration du Musée du quai Branly. 20 June 2006. Available at: <http://www.quaibrantly.fr/fr/actualites/actualites-par-rubriques/archives-des-actualites/m-jacques-chirac-president-de-la-republique-a-inaugure-le-musee-du-quai-branly/allocution-de-m-jacques-chirac-president-de-la-republique.html>

⁵⁸ Original reads: “*Une incomparable expérience esthétique en même temps qu’une leçon d’humanité indispensable à notre temps*”. *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Original reads “*Le musée du quai Branly célèbre la luxuriante, fascinante et magnifique variété des œuvres des hommes*”; “*Une nation de tout temps éprise d’universel mais qui, au fil d’une histoire tumultueuse, a appris la valeur de l’altérité*”.

⁶⁰ Original reads: “*Il viendra rompre une certaine visions, tronquée et injuste, de l’histoire de l’humanité*”. Déclaration de M. Jacques Chirac, Président de la République, sur le chantier : le projet du musée du quai Branly. 15 October 2004. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/047000179.html>

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

fixing them in the role of artefact, the fixed evidence of a no-longer-present (Maleuvre 1999, p.43). The art in the museum is in the service of a story already told. Indeed, in the change of message effected through the physical displacement of the museum's artefacts can be detected a parallel with Chirac's own relationship with France's former colonies, especially those in Africa, in an overseas policy that saw the president conduct relations with African countries in much the same way as his predecessor had done, while now presenting these relationships as partnerships rather than the politics of empire or neo-colonialism (Wonyu 2007). The France told to the world by this museum was "the bearer of a message of peace, tolerance and a respect for others".⁶²

SACRED SPACES: THEORISING THE MUSEUM

The exploitation by political leaders of the museum as a privileged site of identity can, as the discussion thus far has illustrated, be linked to the role of the museum as an actor in and of history, facilitating a process of rupture and continuity that enables new or renewed claims to be made in the name of a historical tradition. However, the analysis of the cases above suggests that the power of the museum as a strategic tool in identity discourse goes beyond this historical significance. In this section I identify the mechanisms of power emerging from the analyses of the museum politics above as falling under the two headings of cultural (representational) and spatial (physical). The first of these, the museum's significance as a site of culture, can further be considered as containing the two themes of 'cultured' and 'culture', the former specific (though hardly unique) to the case of France with the latter being of more universal application.

Museum as Cultural Symbol

In 2007, when TIME magazine proclaimed the "Death of French Culture"⁶³ it provoked angry responses from intellectuals and media commentators in France. For if, as François Hollande proclaimed at the inauguration of the Louis Vuitton Foundation (a museum and gallery designed by architect Franck Gehry and located at the edge of the Bois de Boulogne in Paris) in October 2014, "culture is at the heart of that which constitutes

⁶² Original reads: "*le porteur de ce message, un message de paix, de tolérance et de respect des autres*". *Op.cit.* note 56

⁶³ Proclaimed on the cover of the edition of TIME dated 3 December 2007. The article, by Donald Morrison, to which this headline referred was entitled 'In Search of Lost Time'.

[France's] society and gives it [its] singularity"⁶⁴ then an attack on France's culture was an attack on the core of the nation's identity. Culture – the idea of being cultured – is perceived as important not only to the identity of the nation; there is an expectation too that the president, ideally conceived as incarnation of the values of the Republic, should be a cultured individual. During his presidency, Nicolas Sarkozy was the source of not-infrequent criticism and ridicule for faults in his spoken French⁶⁵ and for his perceived lack of culture – confusing, for example, the name of a French philosopher with that of a national footballer and the name of a clothing chain with a classic work of literature.⁶⁶

Indeed, the importance that a French president be cultured was one of the secondary themes of the 2012 presidential campaign⁶⁷. The cultural significance of the museum, therefore, could enable a political leader to portray him/herself as upholding the cultural values of the nation – and perhaps by extension as embodying these values – and would therefore facilitate the speaker positioning him/herself in an already understood discourse of a particular French identity. Nicolas Sarkozy's hour-long speech in Nîmes in 2009 on the cultural priorities of his presidency⁶⁸ is a significant example of this, providing an illustration that Sarkozy understood that the establishment or reinforcement of a cultural identity was an essential basis for the realisation of his political identity projects – those understood better in the vocabulary of immigration and integration than of culture and heritage. This, of course, is supported most concretely by the then-president's plans for a museum of national history, as explored earlier. That Sarkozy's successor François Hollande placed similar faith in the political cultural power of the museum is attested to by this latter's fondness for museum inaugurations, occasions such as that offered by the reopening of the Picasso Museum in Paris in October 2014 that create the opportunity for declarations that "the prestige of France is the prestige of its culture, its creations. The prestige of France is its openness to the world, to have fear of nothing, not to be introverted, closed in upon itself. The prestige of France is to believe that tomorrow will be better".⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Original reads: "*En France, la culture est au cœur de ce qui fait notre société, notre singularité*". Discours du Président de la République - Fondation Louis Vuitton, 20 October 2014. Available at: <http://www.elysee.fr/videos/discours-lors-de-l-039-inauguration-de-la-fondation-louis-vuitton/>

⁶⁵ 'Quand Nicolas Sarkozy malmène le français,' Juliette Cua, *L'Express*, 15 June 2009. Available at: http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/quand-nicolas-sarkozy-malmene-le-francais_767160.html

⁶⁶ 'Quand Nicolas Sarkozy rend hommage à "Stéphane Camus"', *FranceTV Info*, 30 April 2012. Available at: http://www.francetvinfo.fr/france/quand-nicolas-sarkozy-rend-hommage-a-stephane-camus_89657.html

⁶⁷ 'Un président doit-il être cultivé?', Raphaëlle Bacqué, *Le Monde*, 25 March 2012. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/election-presidentielle-2012/article/2012/03/25/un-president-doit-il-etre-cultive_1674340_1471069.html

⁶⁸ *Op. cit.* note 25

⁶⁹ Original reads: "*Le rayonnement de la France, c'est le rayonnement de sa culture, de sa création. Le rayonnement de la France, c'est son ouverture au monde, c'est de n'avoir peur de rien, c'est de ne pas se replier, se recroqueviller. Le rayonnement de la France, c'est penser que demain sera meilleur.*" Discours à l'occasion de la réouverture du Musée

The speech given by François Hollande at the opening of the Paris Philharmonia five days after the attacks on the Charlie Hebdo offices includes both this aspect of the museum as permitting a “cultured” president to speak from a privileged position of identity and the second characteristic of transcendence-through-culture. While in this speech – in a rallying cry of national unity – Hollande accentuated the specific identity of France as culturally exceptional⁷⁰ he also emphasised the transcendent power of culture. Those who attacked Paris had done so with the aim of attacking culture, because culture was free, human, an openness to be contrasted with the insularity of those who had tried to terrorise the city. However, Hollande promised, culture – a culture inherent to the character of Paris – would always triumph, it would “reunite, reconcile, bring together. Culture is a connection between individuals, a bridge between worlds, an uninterrupted chain linking past, present and future”.⁷¹

In this transcendental cultural power, the museum functions as a sacred space – a place that enables the individual to be both in space and outside the logic of modern space, that creates for the individual a communion across both space and time, as suggested by Hollande’s quote above. This ‘sacred’ character of art and culture can be understood in terms of Henri Lefebvre’s ‘absolute’ and ‘abstract’ space, where modernity by making of space a dimension rather than a creation of time creates an abstract space that is neutral and homogeneous (Lefebvre 1991, pp.285-287), much in the manner of the museum depoliticising its objects in the political and physical move of removing them from their original context.

The power of art and culture is to restore this ‘absoluteness’ to space, to grant it the temporal and social character of the pre-modern when, as Benedict Anderson wrote in his *Imagined Communities*, collective identity was experienced as a community along time (e.g. in the Messianic time of pre-modern secularisation) rather than a community in space (e.g. in the secular communities of the nation-state) (Anderson 2006, pp.22-36). Lefebvre posits that it is in art that the traces of the absolute can be found – that through art can be evoked an outside-of-all-places that would otherwise be denied in the logic of modern space. The fantasy of art, Lefebvre claims, is “to lead out of what is present, out of what is close, out of

national Pablo Picasso. 25 October 2014. Available at: <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-a-l-occasion-de-la-reouverture-du-musee-national-pablo-picasso/>

⁷⁰ “This is France: a land of culture, of curiosity, capable of drawing people from all over the world [...] This is France. Exceptional cultural resources, unrivalled. [...] This is a cultural resource of universal vocation (*Voilà ce qu’est la France: une terre de culture, de curiosité, capable d’attirer partout, du monde entier [...] Voilà ce qu’est la France. Des équipements culturels exceptionnels, inédits [...] un équipement culturel à vocation mondiale*)”. *Op. cit* note 33

⁷¹ Original reads: “*La culture doit réunir, elle doit reconcilier, elle doit rassembler. La culture, c’est un trait d’union entre les individus. C’est un pont entre les mondes. C’est un fil ininterrompu entre le passé, le présent et l’avenir*”. *Ibid.*

representations of space, into what is further off” (p.231). Therefore, sites of art and culture act representationally much as sites of worship such as the church or temple do: they function as sacred sites where space and time are experienced poetically, even mystically, not least in the idea of a collective mission or destiny that, as has been seen in the museum examples here, can often be suggested by or read into the museum. However, where this sacredness and this poetic communion across time is overt in sites of worship and official religion, the fact that the museum is ostensibly a creation and reflection of the modern permits the sacredness of the museum to operate as a “hidden presence” (Foucault 1997, p.2.) This “hidden presence of the sacred” creates the potential for the museum to be employed as we have seen in this chapter: as a privileged site of identity (re)creation, especially since identity as represented and expressed in the nation-state has, owing as much to emotional and traditional ties as to administrative organisation, this same character of the sacred. Therefore, the cultural power of the museum operates by providing a site in which the religious and the political can interact in an exchange of the attributes of power, providing a mechanism by which “the authority of the sacred and the sacred aspect of authority are transferred back and forth, mutually reinforcing one another in the process” (Lefebvre 1999, p.227).

Museum as Monument

However, as we have seen throughout the examples of this chapter, the museum operates and is employed in political strategies of discourse not only by virtue of its artistic or culture representational character but also through its physical presence. The physical character and location of a museum building has, as we have seen in the examples from the Louvre through to the Musée du Quai Branly, proven to be hugely important in the representational and discursive power of the museum and can, I would suggest, be best understood as a power that is both monumental and architectural.

The monumental influence of the museum space is very much linked to Lefebvre’s notion of art and culture as operating through the power of sacred space; the monument is distinguished from the building by this same virtue of being poetically outside the time of the modern world. The museum as monument can serve to (re)inforce the identity of the nation-state of which it is a product by providing a comfort in the face of modern fears of mortality, “because it seems eternal, because it seems to have escaped time. Monumentality transcends death” (Lefebvre 1991, p.221). This character of monument as somehow operating in a different logic of time enables it to function also as a site of ritual, a function that, as is explored in depth in Chapter V, is intrinsic to the experience of collective identity. In the

monument is a coming-together of the social, the possibility of transcending the everyday in an action of gathering. The significance of the museum-as-monument in modern time is especially important in that in its sacred character and in its established role as an element of the modern national landscape it both contravenes and reinforces the logic of the modern, serving also to reconcile the private and the public identity of the modern individual by offering “each member of a society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage” (*Ibid.*, p.220).

The monumental power of the museum can be understood also in terms of Foucault’s heterotopia, a place mythical and real, a place that is ‘other’ in contrast to most modern sites in being both in space and outside of all places (Foucault 1967, pp.3-4). Heterotopias such as the museum are not only generative of their own time (*Ibid.*, p.6) – for example, in the museum’s creation of a special relationship between past, present and future – but are also characterised by systems of opening and closing “that both isolate[] them and make[] them penetrable” (*Ibid.*, p.7). Just as Foucault’s heterotopias owed their sacred character – their ‘otherness’ – to the “system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them sacred” (*Ibid.*, p.7) so too does the particular nature of the museum make “a visit to the museum [...] a way of paying ritual respect to a collective identity” (Maleuvre 1999, p.107). Monumental space – the space of the museum – is a space determined not only by what it contains but also by how it is performed (Lefebvre 1991, p.224). In the “rarefied atmosphere” of the museum (Maleuvre 1999, p.105) we are invited – encouraged – to sacralise art, to look upon it as history, as truth-telling. Just as entering a church can result in the worshipper entering a different logic of space, so too is the visitor to the museum always simultaneously here-in-space and elsewhere. It is ceremonial character of the museum that turns the nation, as Didier Maleuvre claims, “from a geopolitical entity [into] a mythic body, an emanation of the wisdom and reason of history itself” (1999, p.108). Yet when we visit the museum we see it as a visit, not a worship. The restrictions on entry and the proscriptions on certain behaviour – our voices are always hushed in the museum – we take as practical necessity and polite convention. Our acceptance of the museum as a common component of the modern urban landscape leads us to ignore all that is ceremony and ritual in its space, encourages us to presume that this space is secular without ever recognising in it – and in our behaviour in it – elements of the sacred. This again is the hidden presence of the sacred that permits political leaders speaking from the physical or representational site of the museum to claim a

privileged position in relation to the sacred authority of the museum and thus also to the sacred authority of the identity of the nation that the museum represents.

The second physical or spatial characteristic of the museum that leads to its being employed as a privileged site of identity is its own identity as architectural creation. As was seen most clearly in this chapter in the consideration of Mitterrand's legacy of the Louvre, the architectural gesture can be a mechanism for the assertion of the singularity or 'grandeur' of a particular national identity. "We speak even today of those who built the cathedrals"⁷², Mitterrand declared when asked about his grand architectural plans for Paris. The physical contribution of a grand new architectural project – such as the pyramid of the Louvre or the Arch of La Défense – places the political initiator not only in the tradition of those cathedral builders but also in a lineage of great figures of modern France's urban and architectural identity, figures such as Napoléon, Baron Haussmann (prefect of Paris under Louis Napoléon) and Claude-Marius Vaisse (prefect of Lyon during the same period) who not only sought to mould the practices and character of the people through architectural organisation but who also, especially in the case of Napoléon, sought to inscribe themselves through architectural gestures in the landscape and narrative of the nation's great cities. These architectural inscriptions were not only in service of urban planning or of personal glory but were also designed to regulate the collective behaviour of citizens, to defuse disaffection and avoid aggressive collective manifestations of emotion by providing the leisure resources of parks, museums and public spaces and by providing monumental architectural sites that could serve as centres for regulated ritual and celebration within a narrative provided by the nation-state (Horne 2002; Musée Carnavalet 2015).

However, as seen in the studies here, the primary national museum projects of the new millennium have been based on existing rather than new architectural creations. Although economic concerns are undoubtedly a significant factor in this trend, I would argue that this preference for the old – illustrated most clearly in Sarkozy's plans to house his new museum of French history in a historically significant site – is also a response to the particular crises of identity of the time. When Mitterrand declared his "profound conviction" that there existed a "direct relationship between the grandeur of architecture, its aesthetic qualities and the grandeur of a people"⁷³ he was speaking in a context where the threats to identity came from without, where national identity was being undermined by the loss of international prestige. In the current context, and under the presidencies of Sarkozy and

⁷² Original reads: "*On parle toujours des bâtisseurs de cathédrales*". *Op. cit* note 5

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Hollande, the threat has been internal; identity has been contested and attacked largely from within. Historical buildings are therefore preferred as they facilitate assertions of continuity and stability while Mitterrand's grand gestures are the gestures of an identity seeking to assert itself externally rather than resolve itself internally. This is supported, I believe, by considering museum politics outside of Paris. The major cultural architectural projects of recent years – the Louvre-Lens, the Pompidou-Metz, the MUCEM in Marseilles – have been carried out in regional France, projects that, as we saw earlier with the Louvre-Lens, have had the aim of addressing economic and social concerns through the assertion of regional pride. This again corresponds, I would contend, to Mitterrand's description of a specific identity asserting itself in a wider context rather than the situation of the national museums of the capital today where the concern is rather to triumph in internal struggles for identity.

STRATEGIES OF IDENTITY IN NON-MONUMENTAL SPACES

The examination in this chapter of the politics of the museum has provoked a new and enhanced exploration of how monumental sites function as privileged sites of identity representation and (re)production in contemporary discursive strategies. Not only has this analysis provided a greater understanding of the hidden power of museums and other monumental sites in the identity politics of contemporary France but it also, and as a result, provides mechanisms by which to conduct the analysis of subsequent chapters, especially that of chapters IV and V in which the investigations of identity politics in contemporary France are structured around the sacred sites of Jeanne d'Arc and the Pantheon respectively.

However, these new insights into identity not only enable us to understand the spatial and narrative tactics of contemporary political leaders in the discursive (re)production of nation as inevitable identity today but they also encourage us to consider the ways in which the modern nation-state is facing challenges as the primary means of being or belonging in the world. This chapter demonstrated that the physical and representational characteristics of the museum have a great role to play in political discursive strategies of identity in the context of the nation-state, and in this case in the particular national context of France, thus highlighting the importance of the particular spatial logic of the modern to this (re)production of modern collective identity. This raises questions, however, of the impact to the identity politics and strategies of the nation-state of changes to either practices or conceptualisations of space.

For example, to the modern practices of space that grant the museum its particular power as a 'sacred site' are being added new spatial practices, ones that subvert the spatial

conventions of modern abstract space in a manner very different to that of the museum or monument. The ambitious architectural projects of, for example, Facebook, Amazon, Apple and Google bear witness to a spatial practice whereby corporate buildings are departing dramatically from traditional architectural aims in creating sites that are both and simultaneously of work and leisure, built spaces that seek to provide a total lived experience rather than serving one limited aspect of an individual's identity. The architecture of these sites subverts the modern conventions of inside and outside while the intended performance of their spaces challenges the conceptions of public and private that have been central to modern experiences of identity⁷⁴. These are buildings that are not merely functional and/or aesthetic but are being conceived with the express intention of altering patterns and practices of living and thus of influencing how people experience their identities in space.

The strategies of identity (re)production exposed in the study of contemporary instrumentalisation of museum spaces also encourages us to consider how the political construction and promotion of a collective identity that is experienced in and through the nation-state might respond to changing conceptualisations of space. I am thinking here in particular of the identities created and expressed in cyber-space, where the architectural language recalls that of the physical world but where the physical sites of ritual and collective identity considered in this chapter and in more detail in Chapter V are not available. What then for the organisation and cohesion of identity? What, also, of the social and political impacts of such ways of understanding and experiencing identity, ways that lie not only outside the traditionally dominant identity of the nation-state but ways that also operate outside the spatial logic of modern nation and society?

⁷⁴ See for example Vella, M., 2015, 'See the Massive Monuments Silicon Valley is Building', *TIME*, 23 April 2015. Available at: <http://time.com/3814971/silicon/valley-facebook-building>

CHAPTER III: NATION AS NOVEL

The Role of Narrative Genre in Political Strategies of Identity

The historian will tell you what happened. The novelist will tell you what it felt like

E.L. Doctorow

The story begins like this: Once Upon a Time. Once upon time there was a hero. Once a time there was a war. Once upon there was love and death, a quest, a loss, a victory. Once a time there was a beginning. Follow me until the end.

The nation, told through its history and through its lore, is a story like any other. Once upon a time. But the nation, this place of our belonging, is also always a telling like no other. The particular challenge of the nation is to tell itself in the present, to narrate itself as both a historical past and a future present. Hence the importance of museum spaces in providing an absoluteness of space that enables all these times to be reconciled and to be experienced in a simultaneity unthreatening to the temporal-spatial logic of the nation's modernity. However, such monumental spaces can be effective as (re)producers of national identity only when infused with and embedded in a convincing temporal narrative. In this chapter I explore the narrative tactics that facilitate strategies of identity evocation and production in political discourse, an exploration that not only creates a deeper understanding of these strategies and of the role of narrative in identity politics but that also provides the tools and insights upon which the analyses of the two subsequent chapters can be built.

This chapter examines the narrative component of myth, focussing on the particular traits that characterise narratives in the myth of the modern nation, especially the understanding and representation of time, place and the individual. While the previous chapter explored the role of cultural spaces as privileged sites of identity (re)production in modern politics, this chapter looks at the narrative tactics that create the possibility for these sites to be called upon in the mythical formation of the nation. I make the claim that the particular narrative form of the myth of the nation is that of the modern novel, supporting this claim with an examination of the common socio-political and intellectual origins and impulses of both nation and novel. I also emphasise the particular relationship of real and represented that has been constituted and reinforced through the modern nexus of nation and novel, with the exploration of this characteristically modern relationship of real and

represented creating greater insight into contemporary discursive strategies of identity (re)production.

This study of the dominant narrative tradition of the modern Western nation-state not only opens up the possibility of borrowing techniques from the literary form of the novel to apply to the analysis of political discursive constructions of narrative's mythical companions of hero and ritual but it also permits me to situate strategies of identity (re)production in contemporary France in a longer narrative tradition, that of the *roman national* (literally 'national novel'). Considering the influence of this novelistic telling of history – made popular in the era of the Third Republic and experiencing a resurgence in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century – in political articulations of nation and 'Frenchness' enables me to investigate the modern narrative relationship of real and represented in the specific French national context, showing how the relationship of novel and nation should be understood not only as that of the narrative representing the real but also of the real being formed through its narrative representations.

Understanding the narrative form of the nation in terms of the modern novel suggests the possibility of applying tools and techniques of literary criticism to the analysis of modern politics of identity. I identify Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope and Bertrand Westphal's geocritical approach as two such literary techniques that facilitate the close examination of the particular relationship of real and represented in political identity discourses and that also provide new ways of understanding the dynamic spatio-temporal balances of narratives and experiences of collective identity. That both the chronotopic and geocritical approach also consider time and space as being in constant productive interaction rather than as distinct coordinates or properties also makes them ideal for application to the problem of the elusive mythical character of modernity, especially in the context of the 'Galilean' scandal of a modern space that is reduced in modern logic to a geometric descriptor. The chapter concludes by looking beyond the narrative genre of the novel. If, as contended in this chapter, the emergence of the novel resulted from and contributed to the same social and intellectual dynamics upon which the political project of the nation-state was based, then an exploration of new and emerging narrative forms can aid us in understanding where and how new identities and myths of belonging are being formed.

INTRODUCING THE NARRATIVE

Macro & Micro: Stories Big and Small

Let me begin with a story.

In 2011, with his project for a Maison de l'Histoire de France the target of polemic and ridicule, French President Nicolas Sarkozy stood in front of one of France's most celebrated provincial cathedrals and spoke of the importance of his country's built heritage, a heritage of cathedrals and castles both incarnate of and incarnating the identity of France. A heritage that ensured, the president said, that no-one could traverse the country without coming face-to-face with the nation's history.¹ An architectural memory to be preserved. This concretisation of collective memory enabled President Sarkozy to revisit and reinforce his themes of history as a story of origins, of the past as a continuum to which France owed its particular nature and to tie this with his own presidency by returning, once again, to an advocacy of his maligned museum project. However, an analysis of this speech permits insights into political discursive strategies of identity beyond those covered in the earlier examination of museum politics. From this speech structured around questions of built heritage can be gathered insights into narrative tactics employed in political discursive strategies of identity. Not only was Nicolas Sarkozy able to advance a particular telling of the nation by placing the cathedral of and from which he spoke in the broader – continuous, inviolable – story of France but he also drew upon the cathedral itself to tell a more particular, pointed story.

In its first telling in this speech, the cathedral of Puy-en-Velay is presented as an element of a broader narrative that includes and is shaped by the caves of Lascaux, the cathedral of Chartres, the art of Picasso, the philosophies of the Enlightenment². This, again, created the possibility for President Sarkozy to persist in the telling of identity, origins and 'Frenchness' that had characterised and was to continue to characterise the oratorical approaches of his presidency. At the end of the speech, however, the president shifts his narrative approach. The cathedral from which he is speaking is no longer presented as a component in the continuum of history but instead becomes the nucleus of a new, micro

¹ Original reads: "*Ces paysages qui nous entourent font partie intégrante de l'identité de la France. [...] Ces paysages du Velay incarnent la France au même titre que le Mont Saint-Michel, le Pont du Gard, la Cité de Carcassonne ou le Château de Versailles. [...] Personne ne peut parcourir notre pays sans rencontrer son Histoire*". Discours du Président de la République au Puy-en-Velay, 3 March 2011. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/117000580.html>

² All named by President Sarkozy as elements of the "moral, political, artistic and cultural heritage" that the people of France should embrace "politically, morally and politically. (*"...de l'assumer, ce patrimoine, de l'assumer intellectuellement, de l'assumer moralement et de l'assumer politiquement. Il n'y a aucune raison pour que nous soyons les seuls dans le monde à ne pas assumer notre patrimoine moral, politique, artistique, culturel"*). *Ibid.*

narrative. The story Sarkozy tells in the final passages of his speech in Puy-en-Velay is that of the pilgrims of Velay, the devout who had passed by and paid homage there on their way to Santiago de Compostela, “men and women from all over Europe. Who did not speak the same language but who shared the same faith”³. In this recounting, the town of Velay, with its “tradition of welcoming and protecting the weakest and most vulnerable”⁴ becomes a metaphor for the spiritual heart of France. And by writing himself into this story – taking up, literally, a pilgrim’s staff and mounting the steps to the cathedral as had those men and women before him – Sarkozy creates conditions that permit him to offer this micro-narrative as more than a metaphor, that enable him to speak instead of a lived reality: “I came here today to say to you that France has an identity of which we should be proud, but also that here, in Puy-en-Velay – perhaps more so than elsewhere – it becomes clear that France also has a soul.”⁵.

This nesting of narratives – the micro within the macro – leads to the cultural, artistic, political and, tellingly, moral heritage⁶ that is assumed in and by the macro narrative of French identity being identified, in the micro narrative, as a specifically Christian identity. Those men and women of different lands, speaking different tongues: their encounters were a communion under Christianity. The cathedral of Puy-en-Velay testifies that the multiple cultural influences that combined to create the identity of France and the multi-secular traits that characterised the story of the nation were born of a resolutely Christian past⁷. Therefore, when President Sarkozy stated in Puy-en-Velay that “the Republic, my dear compatriots, is secular”⁸ it is clear that this secularity as he would have it understood is built on the basis of a Christian tradition, the narrative representations of his speech permitting him to make implicit claims about the nature of the real. The explorations of narrative techniques carried out in this chapter will enable us to understand better how Sarkozy could affirm this political preference as a historical truth.

As illustrated by the example of President Sarkozy’s speech in Puy-en-Velay, the narrative approaches to the telling of nation can be considered as operating on two levels. The first is the macro level; that is, the assumption, acceptance and instrumentalisation of a story

³ *Ibid.* Original reads: “des femmes et hommes sont venues de toute l’Europe. Ils ne parlaient pas la même langue mais ils partageaient la même foi”.

⁴ *Ibid.* Original reads: “La tradition d’accueil et de protection du Velay à l’égard des plus faibles et des plus vulnérables”.

⁵ *Ibid.* Original reads: “J’étais venu vous dire que la France a une identité dont elle doit être fière, mais ici, au Puy-en-Velay, peut-être un peu plus qu’ailleurs, il est évident que la France a aussi une âme.” *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.* E.g.: “La France a toujours été à la confluence de plusieurs influences culturelles [...] C’est lui, notre patrimoine architectural, artistique, qui inscrit notre pays dans le « temps long » d’une histoire multi séculaire. [...] La chrétienté nous a laissé un magnifique héritage de civilisation et de culture : les présidents d’une République laïque.”

⁸ *Ibid.* Original reads: “La République, mes chers compatriotes, est laïque.”

of nation. It is such an assumption that Sarkozy drew upon in his Velay speech when he spoke of France's heritage, identity, soul and it is the same assumption that permits a president to declare "This is what it is to be France"⁹ and another to offer "France's role in the face of history" as justification for military mobilisation.¹⁰ This is the Once Upon a Time, the grand narrative of origins and destinies. I demonstrate in this chapter that this macro narrative is in the particular narrative tradition of the *roman national* – a romanticised, novelistic telling of national history that emerged in late-nineteenth century France – and conduct an examination of this particular narrative tradition that will lead me to identify narrative techniques that not only offer new insight into political strategies of identity production but that also, as applied to the themes of hero and ritual in subsequent chapters, enable us to understand how and where identities are being formed in the twenty-first century.

The second level, the micro level, is the story within the story: the detailed, the personal, the near, the tangible. The story of the pilgrims of Puy-en-Velay. More than just an instalment in the grand or macro narrative, the micro narrative is a story in itself, one not only formed within a wider narrative but one that, operating from within, can create the limits and conditions of possibility for this wider narrative in which it belongs. Think of the museums of the previous chapter, acting as micro narratives in competing tellings of the French nation. The micro narrative can, and very often does, have a further and more immediately political function, being employed – as illustrated both in the speech above and in the examples throughout the chapter – as metaphor or allegory in the justification or discursive "selling" of policy decisions, embedding in this way decisions of the present in narratives of the past. President Sarkozy's employment of the micro and macro in his Puy-en-Velay speech serves as a template for the explorations of this chapter, where my examination of the theory and practice of both narrative approaches enables me to identify the narrative and discursive techniques at work in strategies of identity (re)production, techniques that I will apply to the analyses of the themes of hero and ritual in the subsequent chapters.

⁹ "Voilà ce qu'est la France", François Hollande, Discours lors de l'ouverture de la Philharmonie de Paris, 14 January 2015. Available at: <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-lors-de-l-ouverture-de-la-philharmonie-de-paris/>

¹⁰ "La France est décidée à assumer son rôle, son rôle devant l'Histoire". Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Président de la République, sur l'application de la résolution du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU exigeant un cessez le feu immédiat et l'arrêt des violences contre les populations civiles en Libye. 19 March 2011. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/117000703.html>

MACRO NARRATIVES

Nation and Novel

Introducing the Novel

Let me tell you a story. The story of Guy Môquet. “He was thoughtful, he was profound, he was great [...] a young member of the Resistance, shot at the age of 17 by the occupying German forces”.¹¹ In a series of speeches from his time as Minister of the Interior to the early months of his presidency, Nicolas Sarkozy spoke repeatedly of this otherwise unremarkable young man who had lain down his life for his country, of “the grandeur of a man who gave his life for a cause bigger than he”¹². In order that the youth of France might know the story of Guy Môquet and could thus live their lives after the example of the young French man who had sacrificed himself for the good of his country and for the cause of freedom¹³, Sarkozy decreed that the letter written by the young Résistance fighter to his parents before his death be read in classrooms around the country every year on the anniversary of his execution, “to honour him who had so done so honourably by France”.¹⁴

Sarkozy’s exercise – which, lacking any great conviction or cooperation on the part of teachers and educators, was destined to end in the failure of an unremarkable whimper – was illustrative not only of the president’s agenda in launching a debate on and promoting a certain understanding of national identity but also of a larger tradition of history-telling in French politics and society. In using the educational system to promote a personified ideal of Frenchness, Sarkozy was accused of drawing on the traditions and techniques of the *roman national* in advancing a particular agenda of identity and politics (Azéma 2007; Soulé 2009; De Cock 2010), the *roman national* being that “patriotic narrative” promoted by historians of France’s Third Republic and promulgated through the nation’s education system (Beyer

¹¹ Original reads: “*Il était sérieux, il était profond, il était grand*”; “*ce jeune résistant de 17 ans fusillé par les Allemands*,” Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, ministre de l’intérieur et de l’aménagement du territoire, président de l’UMP et candidat à l’élection présidentielle, sur les qualités des jeunes et sur leur avenir. 18 March 2007. <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/073001049.html> ; and Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, président de l’UMP et candidat à l’élection présidentielle, sur l’union, facteur d’un Etat fort et sur sa volonté de servir la France grâce aux valeurs de la droite républicaine et au civisme des Français, 10 April 2007. Available at <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/073001416.html>

¹² Original reads: “*la grandeur d’un homme qui se donne à une cause plus grande que lui*”. Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Président de la République, sur la résistance à l’occupant nazi pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale et le devoir de mémoire. 16 May 2007. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/077001739.html>

¹³ Original reads: “*celle d’un jeune Français qui s’est sacrifié pour son pays et pour la liberté et qui est un exemple pour tous les jeunes Français*” Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, président de l’UMP et candidat à l’élection présidentielle, sur l’union, facteur d’un Etat fort et sur sa volonté de servir la France grâce aux valeurs de la droite républicaine et au civisme des Français. 10 April 2007. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/073001416.html>

¹⁴Original reads: “*le jeune Français qui faisait honneur à la France et qui de surcroît doit être honoré par tous*”. Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Président de la République, sur la Résistance et sur sa politique de réforme, au Petit-Bornand. 18 March 2008. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/087000900.html>

2015). This novelistic telling of history is the macro narrative of a French national identity, the presumption that there is a story of a France that is inviolable and absolute, the *certainie idée de la France* of de Gaulle.

Tell me a story. *Raconte-moi une histoire*. In the French language, history and story share the same word: *Histoire*. However, the term *roman national* (literally: national novel) – a term coined in the late twentieth century to describe a nation-based approach to history made popular the century before – suggests more than history’s confusion of real and recounted. The lexical reference to this particular telling of national history as a ‘novel’ is not accidental. That the term ‘national novel’ is usually preferred over ‘national narrative’ (*récit national*) is due in part to this particular style of history telling – with its roots in the early years of France’s Third Republic (1870-1940) and the fallout from the failure of the Second Empire, the loss of Alsace to the new German state and the internal confrontations of the Paris Commune (1871) – as a “vision of a country’s past not as the basis for historical analysis but rather as a great romantic novelistic narrative, with definite structure, a beginning, an end, heroes and villains” (Blanc et al., 2013). However, the preference for this novelistic approach to history can be properly understood only by placing it in a broader historical and intellectual context. In considering in this section the interdependent relationship between the modern nation and the literary form of the novel I show how in the era of the novel the boundaries of real and represented have grown ever more unclear. This exploration of the mutually constitutive relationship of lived life and literary expression leads me in turn to highlight approaches from literary criticism that can – and, I argue, should – be applied in political analysis.

Challenging Epic Completedness

In his *Imagined Communities* (1991) Benedict Anderson famously linked nation and novel not only on the grounds of the scientific and technological developments that brought about both but also in the understanding and management of time common to both political and narrative form. The modern novel – with its portrayal of relationships simultaneous in time as opposed to the epic and religious narratives of relationships simultaneous along time – both reflected and contributed to the changed and changing “apprehensions of time” (Anderson 1991, p.22) that characterised the political and social nature of new national consciousnesses. Whereas the epic had been the dominant form of religious time the novel was to be “the genre of human time” (Kliger 2011, p.50), not only reflecting in its form the new apprehensions of time but also tying into the mythical function of the nation by

providing “narrative mechanisms that might be called upon to repair the rift [between truth and time]” (Ibid, p.11).

Similarly, in his work on the contrasting forms of epic and novel, philosopher and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin wrote that “the forces that define [the novel] as a genre are at work before our very eyes: the birth and development of the novel as a genre takes place in the full light of the historical day” (Bakhtin 1981, p.3). The novel not only emerged from the political, social and intellectual developments that were central to the Enlightenment era and the birth of the modern but was in many ways inseparable from the socio-political changes that it both portrayed and contributed towards. Just as the advent of print technology, the improvements in literacy levels and the move towards the use of the vernacular in publication were to be instrumental in the spread and development of the modern ideas of the Enlightenment, the increasing reproducibility and accessibility of print across the Western world was to affect hugely the way in which stories were told and transmitted. The “dispassionate and scientific scrutiny of life” (Watt 1957, p.11) that was central to the intellectual projects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was to impact also and equivalently on forms of literature and modes of story-telling. In parallel with the scientific questioning and rejection of the traditional philosophical and social dominance of transcendent religious thought, the ideal, distant irreality of the epic form declined in resonance in a new age of knowledge-through-experience. This was very much a mutually constitutive relationship, with the undermining of the ideal, epic, authoritative narrative calling into question the idea of epic and authoritative structures of governance. That the novel’s emergence was inextricably linked to the technological and social advancements of the time was to result in this developing and increasingly dominant narrative form functioning also as a social actor (Finkelstein & McCleery 2005, pp.50-61; Anderson 1991). In encouraging an increasing and increasingly diverse reading public to see itself differently through new narrative recountings of identity and relationships, the novel as emerging mode of narrative affected and effected politics both in its capacity to spread ideas and also in the new consciousness of the individual that it promoted.

The traditional form of the epic was a narrative reflective of a world understood as fully formed, a place of epic completeness and of temporal stability (Lukács 1971, p.29), in contrast to the fragmented novel where meaning is still immanent and always open to politics, broadly understood (Kliger 2011, p.1). The writers of the modern novel were “the first great writers in our literature who did not take their plots from mythology, history, legend or previous literature” (Watt 1957, p.14) and in this the novel form was, like the new

political thought and its manifestation in the political structure of the nation-state, a genre always in the making, formed in and of the new political, intellectual and technological climate (Bakhtin 1981, pp.3-40).

In this climate of emerging, developing and forming, the modern novel rejected the “timeless universals” (Watt 1957, p.23) of classical literature; instead the novel genre reflected for the first time in literature current socio-political realities.¹⁵ In the epic, events unfolded as if predetermined or mapped out, with the Fates deciding. In contrast, in the novel actions were seen to have consequences, the present always formed by the occurrences of the past (Finch 1997, p.46). The time of the novel, therefore, was no longer the time of a higher plane or another era; it was a chronologically unfolding time, mirroring the temporal experiences of the reader, with the lives portrayed in the novel measured by time rather than, as in more ancient narratives, portrayed by values (Watt 1957, p.22). The novel, therefore, gave a narrative that was immeasurably closer to lived experience than anything that had gone before, differing structurally from the texts of an older world by putting “a firmer stress on politics and on the historical specificity of given circumstances [...]. [H]istory in literature is no longer to be ‘generalised’ [...] nor glamorised” (Finch 1997, p.39).

Between Art and Rhetoric

For Mikhail Bakhtin, the particular nature of the novel was in its ability to function both artistically and rhetorically while still representing a break from traditional forms of artistic writing and never being “reducible to rhetorical discourse” (Bakhtin 1981, pp.260-269). This ability to function artistically while retaining a relationship with rhetorical modes of writing is characteristic of the particular interaction of novel and nation explored in this chapter and explains also how the novel genre came to be the dominant form of narrative in the myth of the nation, with the balance of rhetoric and artistic prose in the novel allowing for a romantic evocation of nation while simultaneously resonating with the socio-political, philosophical and intellectual thought and writing of the modern era. The novel has proven to be “the literary form that most closely satisfies [modern] wishes for a close correspondence between life and art” (Watt 1957, p.33). Furthermore, the ‘dialogic’ and ‘heteroglossic’¹⁶ nature of the novel, in contrast to earlier artistic forms like poetry and epic, once again

¹⁵ See for example Finch (1997, p.42) on the narrative representation in Balzac’s *Le Père Goriot* of the particular challenges of life in nineteenth-century Paris.

¹⁶ Dialogism and Heteroglossia were terms employed by Bakhtin, especially in his ‘Discourse in the Novel’ (one of the four essays of which *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981) is composed), to describe both the constant interaction of meaning in novel (interaction between utterances and interaction also between utterance and context) and the multiplicity of utterances and diversity of voices permitted in the novel, as compared to the “monoglossic” authority of poetic or epic narrative forms.

corresponded to the emerging political consciousness of the modern era of nation-state by facilitating a multiplicity of identities, voices and viewpoints within the one artistic work, making possible the contribution and inclusion of many to and in the one, over-arching narrative.

In retaining the power of the artistic in its newly realistic narrative style, the novel form also helped provide some of that which the Enlightenment movement from which it emerged had taken away. “The *roman* is deployed where reason and philosophy fail, where haughty truths must be brought closer, rendered accessible to human beings” (Kliger 2011, p.6). The new intellectual and social movement had brought new light in its philosophy but this self-determining, scientific philosophy had also stripped the individual of the comforts of the dominantly religious life, of its structures of morality and of life beyond death. The ability of the novel to tell life artistically in this new intellectual climate enabled illumination and meaning to be sought and found – if only temporarily – in the literary narrative, especially in narratives that were confessional, semi-autobiographical or that could be confused as being such (Matlock 1997, p.32). “What draws the reader to the novel is the hope of warming his shivering life with a death he reads about” (Benjamin 2006, p.373)

The power of the modern novel to evoke artistically while leaving behind the transcendent authority of the pre-modern was adopted into nationalistic approaches to the telling of history, especially in the *roman national* of French history-writing as introduced earlier. This particular novelistic approach to telling history as the story of a nation is encapsulated in Ernest Lavisse’s *Histoire de France*, a text first published in 1884 and designed for use in the French classroom, the cover of which declared: “Child, you find on the cover of this book images of the flowers and fruits of France. In this book you will learn about the History of France. You should love France, because nature has made this country beautiful and its history has made it great”¹⁷. The influence of the novelistic literary form on texts of national history is exemplified in Lavisse’s *Histoire*, its structure confirmedly chronological in the new tradition of the novel, with France presented as a succession of dates and events that could be read as so many causes and consequences culminating in the eventual outcome of France.

For its critics, this teleological version of history is a narrow, exclusive and dangerous narrative that, in an echo of the museum politics of the previous chapter, subjects other

¹⁷ “*Enfant, tu vois sur la couverture de ce livre les fleurs et les fruits de la France. Dans ce livre tu apprendras l’Histoire de France. Tu dois aimer la France, parce que la nature l’a faite belle et son histoire l’a faite grande.*” *Histoire de France* by Ernest Lavisse was first published in 1884 by Librairie Armand Colin.

memories, identities, narratives to its over-arching story of nation, an instrumentalised, official history that “nationalised French Bretons, Corsicans, Basques, West Indians, through this story of a common Gaulish origin, through a lineage of great kings starting from Clovis and Charlemagne to a Revolution that was to be celebrated as a Messianic coming” (Citron 2014). However, for its defenders and champions these same characteristics of teleology and chronology are the strengths of the *roman national*.¹⁸ For these political writers of history, history constructed as national narrative performs an important social function, producing a clear picture of the past that not only facilitates a better construction of the future (Gallo 2008) but that also promotes and preserves social cohesion by giving the individual a sense of place in the world (Polony 2007; Gallo 2011). For the proponents of the *roman national* the nation remains the basis of the world system and thus the source and repository of identity and belonging. These writers of history seek to “reconnect with the *roman national* [...] because many French people, deep down, still believe in France. Because they have nothing else to believe in” (Chevènement 2014), they seek to “revive” and “reinvigorate” the novelistic, national narrative of history because “to know [the country] as a nation is to have a concept of grandeur” (Gallo 2011).

The *roman national* is a particular manifestation of the novel genre in the politics of national identity, an exceptionally, overtly political instrumentalisation of the narrative characteristics of the novel form. However, consideration of this particular and particularly overt novelisation of history and identity not only provides an insight into some of the discursive strategies employed in identity (re)production in contemporary France – Nicolas Sarkozy’s projects of the reading of Guy Môquet’s letter and the proposed establishment of a museum of French history being obvious examples (indeed, one of Sarkozy’s former speech-writers and advisors, Patrick Buisson is considered as being among the historian-writers of the newly resurgent *roman national* (see Blanc et al., 2013) – but also serves as a brash illustration of the relationship between nation and novel that, as is explored here, manifests in more nuanced form in the continuing and continuous interaction of real and represented in the construction of identity.

¹⁸ It is important to note that the term *roman national* is not used pejoratively. It is used warmly by the defenders of a national telling of history (e.g. writers and politicians including Max Gallo & Jean-Pierre Chevènement) as much as it is employed as a reproof by its critics (e.g. academic historians Suzanne Citron and Nicolas Offenstadt).

Exit the Hero

The modern conception and experience of time as reflected in the narrative of the novel form was to represent a break from traditional modes of story-telling in two ways. The first of these was the portrayal of the individual. The hero of the epic and of ancient genres was always the hero of the past, a past that, in contrast to the past→present→possiblefuture of the modern novel, was always otherwise and elsewhere, separate and removed from the present, giving the hero of the ancient narrative forms a completedness and a finished quality (Bakhtin 1981, pp.13-18). The hero of the modern novel, in contrast, can never truly be heroic; as explored further in the next chapter the portrayal of these new literary heroes as inhabiting the same time-and-value plane as the reader removed the heroic distance, placing the “hero” of modern literary narratives on the same spatiotemporal level as the reader (Bakhtin 1981, p.14). In a radical departure from the epic or religious stories of previous times, the novel told the story of the individual, a self-determining man or woman whose life and life experiences were unique but recognisable. It told of an individual who often suffered through the consequences of his/her own actions but whose actions were always his/her own, not guided by the capriciousness of the gods or by the hidden hand of fate (Watt 1957, pp.11-25).

In this, the emergence of the novel as genre reflects contemporaneous social and intellectual developments and the “growing tendency [from the Renaissance onwards] for individual experience to replace collective tradition as the ultimate arbiter of reality” (Watt 1957, p.14). The democratisation of writing, especially from the nineteenth century onwards, contributed to the emergence of this novel individual consciousness, encouraging new practices of narrative and writing in which there was, for the first time, “an ‘I’ that no longer referred solely to the elite”.¹⁹ Heroes of these new narratives were, therefore, no longer the kings, warriors, messiahs of traditional narratives²⁰ but could be drawn from the proletariat, the middle class (Finch 1997, p.46); they were flawed individuals, their lives presented as an actual, always possible happening. This “distintegrat[ion] [...] of epic wholeness” (Bakhtin 1981, p.37) was to create – or to contribute to the creation of – the new relationship of public and private characteristic of the modern.

Nicolas Sarkozy’s discursive employment of Guy Môquet in his strategies of identity (re)production – a policy that, as seen above, provoked accusations of a political

¹⁹ History of Writing’ – Permanent Exhibition. *Musée des Archives Nationales, Hôtel Soubise, Paris*. <http://www.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/fr/web/guest/parcours-permanent>. Consulted 22 November 2014

²⁰ See Chapter I for more on the traditional hero typology.

instrumentalisation of the romantic narrative techniques of the *roman national* – conforms to the literary genre of the novel in the construction of a narrative around an ‘ordinary’ individual. However, this narrative choice by the former French president could, in fact, be considered as a departure from the French historical-novelistic tradition of the *roman national*. The main point of divergence of the *roman national* from the novel genre from which it borrows its narrative approach is in its portrayal of the hero. One of the characteristics of the *roman national* is that in its novelistic telling of history it hangs its stories around lead characters that resemble the traditional heroes of epics, e.g. kings, warriors, saints. However, rather than suggesting a mode of history-telling adheres to the tradition of epic narrative, this specific trait of the *roman national* instead serves to illustrate that the emergence of the novel as the dominant form of narrative in the modern era not only altered modes of story-telling in society and politics but also enabled stories of the pre-modern to be adapted into the modern by drawing on the particular characteristics of the novel genre. While the figure of the *roman national* might be the traditionally exceptional hero of epic and pre-modern narrative and society – e.g. Charlemagne, Clovis, Jeanne d’Arc, Napoléon – the manner in which these figures are recounted in the *roman national* bears more resemblance to the narrative style of the modern novel. These heroes of the *roman national* are not the removed absolutes of the epic past but are, like the hero of the new modern novel, flawed, human, set apart not by their exceptional characteristics but rather by the choices that they make and the actions they take. Therefore the Richelieu of Max Gallo (one of the most well-known and commercially successful of the writers working in the style of the *roman national* today) is “multifaceted, sensitive, damaged, sick but also ruthless and formidable”²¹. Another leading proponent of the novelistic portrayal of history, Stéphane Bern – writer and presenter of the books and television series *Secrets d’Histoire* – tells history by providing the reader or viewer with an view into the daily lives of the great figures of the past, removing the ‘epic’ distance of the traditional hero and turning the kings, warriors and saints into recognisable individuals of everyday life.²² Indeed, among those who considered the early novel to be a pedagogical tool and authorship to be a moral responsibility, this ability to render the Great accessible to the common man and woman was

²¹ The blurb – a quote from the author – used in the book’s publicity campaign. The review used to promote the book (*Richelieu – La Foi dans La France* (Éditions XO, Paris, 2015)) declares it to be “a biography in the style of the most passionate novel”. See: <http://www.xoeditions.com/livres/richelieu>

²² A style that led a media observation organisation (ACRIMED) to criticise it as a telling of history that was “half way between celebrity gossip and a monarchist manifesto”. Blaise Magnin (ACRIMED), ‘« Secrets d’histoire », le magazine royaliste de France 2?’, 21 July 2014. Available at: <http://www.acrimed.org/Secrets-d-histoire-le-magazine-royaliste-de-France-2>

one of the strengths and duties of the modern novel. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose novelistic works were laced with pedagogy, urged the authors of the still-new narrative form to “bring your models down a bit, if you want people to try to imitate them. To whom do you vaunt purity that has not been sullied? Well! tell us about purity that can be recovered; perhaps at least someone will be able to get your meaning” (cited in Klinger 2011, p.7).

The ability to adapt epic figures to modern story-telling helps the *roman national* to function as a particularly political telling of history, biased not only towards a national recounting of history and identity but biased also towards a particular political recounting of nation. Jules Michelet – he who had paved the way for Lavissee’s *Histoire de France* by initiating a modern history that was not only national but also consciously ‘human’²³ – had described the existence of ‘two Frances’ of the nation: the Republican France of the Revolution and the conservative France of the aristocratic tradition. A divide that was emphasised through the Revolution but that endured after – emerging violently in, *inter alia*, the crises of Vichy and the Dreyfus case – even when the conservative faction had wrapped itself in the flag of the Republic. The *roman national* style of history telling has, in its most extreme forms, tended to be adopted primarily by this latter faction (though not exclusively; as can be seen in the subsequent chapters France’s Socialist left also draws on the techniques not only, as one would expect, of the novel but also on occasion on those of the particularly romantic approach of the *roman national*),²⁴ and therefore the structuring of narratives of nation around the hero figures of kings, warriors and saints facilitates a telling of history that privileges not only nation as the natural form of identity but also a certain conception of this nation. France as not only as exceptional but also as superior, a France, also, of a Christian and aristocratic heritage. However, using techniques of the novel form creates the possibility for the writers of a gloriously national past to retain in their narrative some of the epic consciousness, to preserve the idea of completedness and inviolability characteristic of epic narrative while adapting it stylistically to the narrative style of the modern. This conception of national identity might resemble more the epic as described by Bakhtin than it does the “banal consciousness” (Finch 1993, p.39) of the modern novel form – it is the historical narrative of the Maison de l’Histoire de France rather than the celebration of memory of the

²³ Before Michelet had embarked on the task (the “arduous labour”) of producing his great works of national history, France – or at least so the great historian himself alleged – had never been truly known. “[France] possessed annals, but no history at all. Eminent men had studied her [...] None of them had yet embraced the living unity of the innate and geographic elements which formed her. I was the first to perceive her as a soul and as a person” (Michelet 2013[1869], p.139).

²⁴ Indeed, Jean-Pierre Chevènement whose defence of the *roman national* is quoted in the section *Between Art and Rhetoric* above was a Socialist minister under both François Mitterrand and Lionel Jospin (prime minister under cohabitation during Jacques Chirac’s presidency).

Musée de l'Immigration – however, as I show in the following sections, in their strategies of identity (re)production these two tellings of nation both rely on the relationship of real-and-represented particular to the modern novel in advancing their competing conceptions nation and identity.

A Novelistic Sense of Place

The new relationship of public and private that emerged in the modern can be identified not only in narrative representations of the individual – e.g. the isolation of the private lives of Balzac and Flaubert's new, everyday heroes unfolding against the public events and spaces of their time – but can also be seen to have been experienced spatially, a spatial experience that was captured in Baudelaire's wanderings through the streets of Baron Haussmann's newly conceived and engineered Paris where the individuality of Baudelaire's *flâneur* was emphasised by his passage through the newly open public spaces and in his encounters with the newly (re)constituted crowds of the city. However, even as the ideas of 'public' and 'private' became more defined in the individual's consciousness of him/herself in society, so too did identification of the boundaries of public and private become increasing difficult, as social and political planning sought to tie the newly private individual to the 'public' of the nation-state. In French socio-spatial experience this increasing "porousness" (Harvey 2003, p.221) of public and private can be seen in the effects of Haussmannian urban planning and politics. The introduction and development of new public spaces – both recreational and commercial – encouraged the newly private individual to live his/her life publicly, a social experience enacted through the politics of the new spatial planning: "Haussmann's boulevards shaped the modern city, opening intimacy to publicity across Paris, but they also promoted state control of the physical whole and the populace" (Cuff 2003, p.46). This contradiction and confusion of public and private was reflected in the narrative form of the novel, the experiences recounted becoming ever more private even as the novel form itself became ever more public (Bakhtin 1981, p.123). The political confusion of public and private, a confusion central to the discursive strategies of identity (re)production considered in this thesis, also operated through the cultural and spatial politics of the modern museum, as explored in the previous chapter:

Even in the public sphere of the museum, art is meant to be consumed privately. [...] The bourgeois social sphere has all but reversed the meaning of individuality and publicness: the public arena is where the individual is asked to be extremely repressive of public expression of the self, of publicness" (Maleuvre 1999, p.103).

This confusion of public and private is at the heart of the second break from traditional modern of story-telling and is crucial to our understanding of the novel as the narrative form of the modern nation-state, especially as concerns the narrative representations of space and place and the individual's understanding of him/herself as formed through the social experience of particular spaces and places. In ancient, epic and traditional forms of story-telling – those narrative forms in which the individual's agency was diminished both socially and narratively – space and place facilitated rather than formed. These stories unfolded in “abstract expanses of space” where “what happen[ed] in Babylon could just as well happen in Egypt or Byzantium and vice versa” (Bakhtin 1981, pp.99-100). However, while these traditional narratives offered place as something interchangeable, general and vague the “distinctive capacity” of the modern novel was to “put man wholly in his physical setting” (Watt 1957, pp.26-27), to provide a range and level of physical detail that not only encouraged the reader to recognise the world recounted as ‘real’ but also that contextualised the character's origins, circumstances and decision-making (and contributed to the consequences of such decision-making) (Finch 1997, pp.39-44; Unwin 1997, p.10).

This emphasis on narrative construction of place, on locating the novel's protagonists in a setting that is detailed and recognisable, is mirrored in the discursive tactics of the writers of the *roman national* in their promotion of an identity that was both national and French. As Ernest Lavisse was introducing the history of France to the nation's schoolchildren with images of the country's nature, fruit and flowers another writer (Augustine Fouillée, writing under the pseudonym G. Bruno) was telling the story of France as a geographical exploration. *Le Tour de la France par Deux Enfants* is the fictional story of two brothers – newly orphaned both by the death of their father and by the loss of their homeland of Lorraine to the neighbouring nation-state – who embark on a trip of exploration around France. The book recounts the history of France through the brothers' experiences and impressions as they visit the towns, villages, monuments and countryside of the country, spending time with locals and sampling regional cuisine as they travel. It is a quite openly pedagogical story-telling, designed to improve knowledge of and encourage love for France through the fictional narrative of a journey across France, the details of this journey permitting the reader, through the protagonists, to see and to touch that which was France (Bruno 1904, p.ii). The importance of physical landscape and the details of space as employed in *Le Tour de la France* were, as we have already seen, central to the emergence of the novel as the dominant form of fictional narrative; however, the importance of the specificity of space in narrative was reflected also in the development of modern historiography. The idea of knowing the

nation through its physical landscape emerged with the practice of a novelistic telling of history in the nineteenth century (Rioux 2009b, p.46) but was also a central element of the approach to the academic history practiced by the Annales school of historians – especially Paul Vidal de la Blache and Fernand Braudel – into the twentieth century.

The twenty-first century manifestations of the *roman national* continue this modern tradition of telling the history of France through stories of space not only in the traditional form of printed text but also through novelistic narratives presented through newer media²⁵. Lorant Deutsch – one of the celebrity and non-academic historians accused by a number of his academic counterparts as being a politically biased ‘historical watchdog’ (Blanc et. al, 2013) enjoyed huge commercial success with his *Métronome* book and television series in which he explored the history of the nation by employing the conceit of a journey through the city’s metro stations. In Deutsch’s *Métronome*, history unfolds chronologically, with each century told as a stage in the author’s passage through succeeding metro stops. Indeed, the interactive website that accompanied the televised version of the book goes even further in this chrono-spatial approach in plotting the city of Paris as a tempo-spatial layering, each temporal period corresponding to a new spatial layer in the history of the city²⁶.

Another popular practitioner of the *roman national* style of history, Stéphane Bern – mentioned earlier in relation to the romantic and novelistic construction of historical figures – makes similar use of physical sites as narrative centres in his history-telling. In the series *Le Monument Préféré des Français*, Bern polls the French public on the physical and historical sites that matter most to them, constructing the socio-historical stories of his programme around the results. This particularity of the modern of knowing identity – narrative or social – through experiences and representations of space is at the core of the political relationship of novel and nation, the novel offering in its physical descriptions and depictions of place “a world which is recognisable, indeed verifiable, to the point where there is possible confusion of the fictional and the real” (Unwin 1997, p.6).

Real and Represented in Stories of Identity

In presenting a narrative view of the world closer to lived existence – in the consequential, chronological experience of time, in the hero’s flawed human character and in the physical realism of the story’s setting – than had done any earlier mode of story-telling,

²⁵ Bearing out Bakhtin’s contention that “in an era when the novel reigns supreme, almost all the remaining genres are to a greater or lesser extent novelised” (Bakhtin 1981, p.5).

²⁶ <http://www.france5.fr/metronome>.

the modern novel brought about a unique relationship of real and recounted. This is the particularity of the novel as literary form: that it initiates and bears witness to a “correspondence between the literary work and the reality that it imitates” (Watt 1957, p.11). In the era of the modern novel this relationship between reality and its representation in the literary text became a mutual interaction in a way that was not true of earlier interactions of narrative and socio-political identity. The realistic depictions of time, space and character in the modern novel worked to create a confusion of the real and fictional that “blur[red] the division” between real and recounted and enabled the novel to “engage the real” in a manner that was unique to this narrative form (Unwin 1997, p.6), its air of “total authenticity” (Watt 1957, p.32) allowing the reader to find a new kind of reality in the novel (Finch 1997, p.52).

However, the idea that narrative is not passive but leaves its mark on lived existence was not exclusive to the modern. Even though the particularly close relationship of real and represented explored here was unique to the novel genre, the recognition that “we are subject *to* narrative as well as being subjects *of* narrative”, that “we are made by stories before we ever get around to making our own” (Kearney 2002, pp.153-154; emphasis in original) is an ancient one, and central to the narrative character of earlier myths of collective identity, including the Western Classical and Christian traditions. Indeed, mimesis was one of the five narrative pillars as classified by Aristotle, where he identified the ability of narrative to portray the world as not only causing new light to be cast on the truths of human existence but also as enabling story-telling to re-enact the world in a manner that encouraged new experiences of reality: “[Mimesis] remakes the world, so to speak, in the light of its potential truths” (Kearney 2002, p.131).

In both ancient and modern narrative, however, it is recognised also that although story-telling enjoys an interactive relationship with life, the boundaries between the two remain distinct. In considering Aristotle’s theories of narrative, Richard Kearney surmises that “most people recognise when they are passing from the real to the imaginary or back again – without the need for formulas like ‘once upon a time’ to signal the transition” (Kearney 2002, p.134). Even in the novel genre – where, as we have seen, the confusion between real and represented is heightened to a degree that can result in a blurring of the division between the two – the boundary between story and life is never fully erased. Bertrand Westphal, whose theory of Geocriticism (considered in more detail in the next section) explores the particular ability of the novel to affect experiences of space and place in the real world, is categorical in stating that although the boundary between real and recounted is porous in modern literary forms to an unprecedented degree, “reality has an essence that

fiction cannot subsume” (Westphal 2011, p,86). Similarly, Mikhail Bakhtin – whose work on the correspondence between the novel and the reader’s experience of the world has guided this chapter and is especially prominent in the following section – although emphasising the particularity of the modern novel in creating a mutual interaction of and exchange between real and represented world, cautions against confusing the represented world with that outside the text (Bakhtin 1981, pp.253-54). For Kearney, there is a further division involved in the recounting of history, leading him to stress the importance of recognising the “distinct referential claims” of fiction and history (Kearney 2002, p.135), the former dealing in possibility and encouraging the suspension of disbelief while the latter – although never a complete telling of what was – in referring to verifiable evidence and in adhering, to the most part, to certain scientific standards, functions as a truthful representation of the real. The confusion of real and represented in the modern novel also sets it apart from other narrative forms, such as theatre and drama, in that it gave new interpretative autonomy to the reader. The author might not be dead, as Barthes claimed, but the spread of literacy ceded some of the story-telling power to the reader, permitted the reader alone with his/her book to experience the story personally and individually in a manner that was not possibly with earlier forms of oral and folk fiction or with the collective experience of dramatic arts and theatre performance.

The political story-telling considered in this thesis, however, is neither history nor fiction. The specificities of discourses of national identity are, firstly and as already explored in detail, that these discourses are constructed with the modern techniques of the novel and therefore offer “more sharply than any other literary form” (Watt 1957, p.11) an extreme confusion of real and represented and, secondly, that the narrative of these political discourses – the museum discourses of the previous chapter or the stories of Puy-en-Velay, Chambon-sur-Lignon, Guy Môquet, Jeanne d’Arc and the Pantheon of this and the following chapters – is neither history nor fiction but somewhere in between. To rework the epigraph that opened this chapter, these political discourses both tell us what happened and what it felt like. They are both novel and history. The nation denies the ultimate distinction of reality and fiction insisted upon by Kearney, Bakhtin and Westphal by being both truth and fiction, the one inextricable, indistinguishable from the other, a narrative both lived and created. The nation-state is a real entity that influences and indeed structures our daily lives; however, in its offering of a shared past and a collective identity it is also a representation, an emotive telling. Our belonging to a nation is, therefore, a constant story-telling in which the boundaries between the real and imagined are not only porous or permeable but constantly

shifting, fading and re-emerging. This confusion of the fact and the fiction in the story of the nation facilitates discursive strategies of identity (re)production where the boundaries between real and represented are blurred to political ends. Applying techniques from literary theory to the analysis of political discourses of identity helps to uncover the ways in which these strategies operate, thus exposing the manner in which political discourse draws on the novelistic narrative of our time in order to present the represented as the real. This new understanding enables us, in turn, to wonder what might happen to both political strategies of identity (re)production and the (re)creation of collective identity away from the myth of the nation-state should the novelistic narrative of nation cease to be dominant in society and story-telling.

Building upon this understanding of an interaction of real and represented in the relationship of nation and modern novel, the following section considers in more detail Bertrand Westphal's geocentred approach to literary criticism and Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of a chronotopic balancing of time and space in novelistic narratives, two techniques that explore the role of place and the construction of space in creating a narrative confusion or interaction of real and represented. These techniques encourage us to engage more deeply with the discursive politics of space introduced in the museum studies of the previous chapter by investigating the narrative power by which "in the temple, in the city, in monuments and palaces, the imaginary is transformed into the real" (Lefebvre 1991, p.251).

MICRO NARRATIVES

Representing the Real

Let me tell you a story. A story again of Nicolas Sarkozy as he stood on the cathedral steps in Puy-en-Velay. In painting in his speech an image of the women and men who had made the pilgrimage to the town in earlier times and in describing these individuals as united not by language but by faith the French President was not only evoking the macro narrative of the *roman national* of French national identity – as he had done with his earlier references to Versailles, Lascaux, Carcassonne, Picasso and Matisse – but was also exercising a particular tactic of real-and-represented. As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the narrative of the pilgrims of Puy-en-Velay that President Sarkozy presented in his speech permitted him to make claims for the secular identity of France, portraying through the story he told of them a secularity that was, originally and ultimately, specifically Christian. This narrative locating of the contemporary secular identity of France in the nation's Christian

tradition was not, however, just another instalment in an overarching political production of identity. The speech in Puy-en-Velay was made in March 2011; President Sarkozy, a year away from the next presidential election, had launched a political debate on secularism in French society two weeks earlier. It was necessary, the then-president said in one of his earlier public pronouncements on the issue, to “re-evaluate both the principle of secularism and its application to take into account the evolution of society”²⁷. This re-evaluation of one of the Republic’s key principles – a public process of re-evaluation that was to culminate in April 2011 in an official government event entitled ‘Secularism: living better together’²⁸ – was provoked by what Sarkozy, who had since his time as Minister for the Interior emphasised the question of religion in national identity, called “the issue of Islam and our Muslim compatriots [...] There is, clearly, a problem. Our Muslim compatriots should be able to live and practice their religion in a manner comparable to anyone else in the country [...]. However, this must be a French Islam and not an Islam in France”²⁹. This debate on the France’s cherished principle of secularism could also be framed, as the president himself acknowledged, as a debate on the multiculturalism in French society³⁰ and emerged in a political context that had seen, firstly, the president – in his decision to adopt a policy of “neither...nor...” in electoral cases where there was a run-off between Socialist and far-right candidates – move away from the traditional evocation of a ‘republican pact’³¹ by which the centrist parties had in the past united against the rise of the *Front National* and the far-right, and in which, secondly, Marine Le Pen – a newly politically credible opponent to Sarkozy’s right – had engaged in a polemic against Muslim Street prayer several months previously. Sarkozy’s ‘re-evaluation’ was thus in line with the other debates on national identity and immigration launched during his presidency: aimed at consolidating, gaining or regaining conservative votes. The narrative possibilities offered by the sacred site of Puy-en-Velay allowed the president to present the Christian heritage of secular France as implicit, without making any explicit reference to the political debate that he had launched back in Paris. By

²⁷ Original reads : “[C’est] nécessaire de réévaluer le principe de laïcité et son application, pour tenir compte des évolutions de la société”. ‘Débat sur la laïcité: Sarkozy fixe ses objectifs’, *Le Figaro*, 2 March 2011. Available at: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2011/03/01/01002-20110301ARTFIG00679-debat-sur-la-laicite-sarkozy-fixe-ses-objectifs.php>

²⁸ My translation. Original title is ‘*Laïcité: pour mieux vivre ensemble*’.

²⁹ Original reads : “Cela pose la question de l’islam et de nos compatriotes musulmans. (...) Il y a, clairement posé, un problème. Nos compatriotes musulmans doivent pouvoir vivre, pratiquer leur religion comme n’importe lequel de nos compatriotes. (...) Mais il ne peut s’agir que d’un islam de France et non pas d’un islam en France”. ‘Laïcité : trois heures de débat pour clore deux mois de polémique’, *Le Monde*, 5 April 2011. http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2011/04/05/laicite-trois-heures-de-debat-pour-clore-deux-mois-de-polemique_1503022_823448.html#WGsPZDGuTAEw6eJ.99

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ The foundational belief in the universal rights of (wo)man and the values of liberty, equality and fraternity as essential to the character and administration of France.

nesting the micro narrative of a millennium of pilgrims united physically and spiritually by their Christian faith in the macro narrative of a historically inevitable and always glorious nation, Sarkozy was presenting a poetic representation of what he wished to claim as a particular ‘real’ of France.

During his period as president of France, Sarkozy’s predecessor Jacques Chirac had also engaged with the issue of the nation’s secular identity, introducing in 2004 a law banning the display of religious symbols – including the Muslim hijab and the Christian crucifix – in public schools. In July of that year Chirac gave a speech in Chambon-sur-Lignon in the Haute-Loire region, a village that had given refuge and protection to Jewish civilians hunted and persecuted by the Vichy regime. Chambon-sur-Lignon, the president declared in the opening of his speech, was “a site heavy with history and emotion” where “the nation’s soul was affirmed” a site where “the conscience of the country was advanced and incarnated”³². Chambon-sur-Lignon was – like the cathedral at Puy-en-Velay – a *lieu de mémoire*, a site of memory that served as “a symbol of a France that was true to its principles, true to its heritage, true to its nature”³³. In a manner similar to that employed by Sarkozy, Chirac in his speech nested the story of women and men of another time – brave men and women who had placed their values of tolerance, solidarity and fraternity over concerns for their own safety³⁴ – in the macro narrative of France. Just as the newly sacred location of Chambon-sur-Lignon – a site infused with history and emotion by the acts of its brave former inhabitants³⁵ – granted President Chirac the possibility of evoking the macro narrative of France as that of a country “loyal to its history, its roots, its culture” where this history and culture were composed of the values of universality, humanity, fraternity and generosity,³⁶ the micro narrative of the inhabitants of the site enabled the president to tell a story of contemporary France, a story in which these values manifested themselves though the country’s policies of secularism.³⁷ Not only did the heroic example of the people of Chambon-sur-Lignon recall all

³² Original reads: “*Nous sommes ici [...] dans un lieu chargé d’histoire de d’émotion. Ici, dans l’épreuve, c’est affirmée l’âme de la nation. Ici, s’est avancée et s’est incarnée la conscience de notre pays*”. Allocution de M. Jacques Chirac, Président de la République, à l’occasion de son déplacement dans la Haute-Loire, 8 July 2004. Available at: http://www.jacqueschirac-asso.fr/les-grands-discours-de-jacques-chirac/?post_id=2354

³³ *Ibid.* Original reads: “*Le Chambon-sur-Lignon est un lieu de mémoire. Un lieu de résistance. Un lieu symbole de la France fidèle à ses principes, fidèle à son héritage, fidèle à son génie*”.

³⁴ *Ibid.* Original reads: “*Bravant tous les périls, ils ont fait le choix du courage, de la générosité et de la dignité. Ils ont fait le choix de la tolérance, de la solidarité et de la fraternité.*”

³⁵ *Ibid.* Original reads: “*un lieu chargé d’histoire et d’émotion*”.

³⁶ *Ibid.* Original reads: “*Une France [...] fidèle à son histoire, à ses racines, à sa culture. Une France de l’audace et de la solidarité. [...] Une France généreuse, qui refuse l’égoïsme, le repli sur soi, l’exclusion, la discrimination. Une France ouverte et accueillante, unie dans sa diversité, qui porte avec fierté son idéal de justice et de paix en Europe et dans le monde. [Une] France fraternelle.*”

³⁷ *Ibid.* Original reads: “*La République est le bien commun de tous, de chaque citoyen, à égalité de droits et de devoirs [...] La laïcité permet à chacun de vivre et de pratiquer, en toute sécurité, en toute sûreté, sa religion.*”

that was best about France and the French people but it also served as an example for how the citizens of France should live their lives in twenty-first century France. The actions of the women and men who had lived in this village sixty years earlier were told by Chirac as stories of that which his audience should be today, open and tolerant. “The example of [Chambon-sur-Lignon] shows us that it is the actions of each individual and the solidarity of all that, day after day, give human communities their strength and exceptionalism”³⁸. Rooting the stories of civic responsibility in the physical and historical site of Chambon-sur-Lignon allowed Chirac to bring the heroic story of the past into the present. In the speech he transitions from the purely historical narratives of Vichy France to the parallel challenges of the present-day nation, where “the victory of tolerance and honour is a fragile one, part of a never-ending battle”³⁹, finishing with the exhortation to each French woman and man to “wear with pride our heritage”, “to remember a still-recent past [and] be loyal to the lessons of history”⁴⁰, lessons that, in the logic of the president’s speech, supported the removal of religious symbols from public schools⁴¹. Through the story of the humble, anonymous people of Chambon-sur-Lignon President Chirac advanced –as Sarkozy was later to do in Puy-en-Velay – a representation of his own “certaine idée de la France”⁴². Furthermore, the representative possibilities offered by the story of Chambon-sur-Lignon created the possibility for the head-of-state to make claims for the ‘real’ identity and values of French society, an identity that in this case saw a civic education – free of the symbols of religion, promoting instead a tolerance through unity and equality of opportunity – as being at the heart of French republicanism⁴³.

³⁸ *Ibid.* Original reads: “L'exemple du "Plateau" nous montre que c'est l'engagement de chacune et de chacun et la solidarité de tous, jour après jour, qui font la force et l'exemplarité des communautés humaines”

³⁹ *Ibid.* Original reads: “Le combat pour la tolérance et pour l'honneur est une conquête fragile et toujours recommencée.”

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* Original reads: “je leur demande de toujours porter avec fierté notre héritage [...] je leur demande de se souvenir d'un passé encore proche. Je leur dis de rester fidèles aux leçons de l'histoire, une histoire si récente.”

⁴¹ *Ibid.* Original reads: “La laïcité permet à chacun de vivre et de pratiquer, en toute sécurité, en toute sûreté, sa religion. Elle permet à l'école publique, lieu d'acquisition et de transmission des valeurs que nous avons en partage, d'être ouverte à tous et à toutes les sensibilités. C'est pourquoi elle doit être défendue: l'école publique doit être à l'abri des influences et des passions”

⁴² Chirac finished his speech at Chambon-sur-Lignon with this phrase made famous by General de Gaulle.

⁴³ Chirac’s credibility in making this speech – in presenting the new policy as one of tolerance and peaceful cohabitation rather than as a targeting of the traditions of the Muslim community, who were to be most affected by it – was perhaps reinforced by another of his most well-known and remembered speeches, another spatially referential speech made nine years earlier. In 1995, at the commemoration of the round-up of French Jews for deportation at the Vél d’Hiv (the Vélodrome d’Hiver in Paris) in 1942 Chirac became the first French head-of-State to acknowledge the atrocities of the Vichy regime not only as the terrible but isolated acts of those implicated in the Vichy government but as a failure of the French state and nation. This was a hugely significant moment for France’s Jewish citizens – who had protested when, at the 50th anniversary of the Rafle de Vél’ d’Hiv, then-president Mitterrand had refused to recognise the responsibility of the French Republic in the terrible acts of the time – and for the interpretation of French history, as can be seen in the story of the Maison de l’Histoire de France and the references in both Sarkozy’s speeches and the preparatory reports to what they considered as the pitiful tradition of apologising for France’s past.

The rhetorical construction of a physically-rooted history leading to a telling of the present and a consequent (implicit or explicit) call for future action that characterises both these speeches can be clearly traced in one of François Hollande's later museum speeches. In October 2015, Hollande officially inaugurated the new Musée de l'Homme in Paris, an anthropology museum that had been shut down six years previously after much of its collection had been taken, along with the collection of the former Musée Nationale des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie at the Palais de la Porte Dorée, to form part of the collections of the new Musée du Quai Branly in Paris and the Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée (MuCEM) in Marseille. Hollande quoted at the outset the founder of the Musée, Paul Rivet, who had sought to create a museum that would testify to the universality of the individual: "Humanity is an indivisible whole, not only in space but also through time"⁴⁴. Hollande's story of the museum, therefore, became in the Musée de l'Homme a story of universality.

In the early narrative of the inauguration speech the president recalls the history of the museum and tells the story of Rivet and his contemporaries, who in founding the museum in a "time of crisis" (the original museum was officially inaugurated in 1938 after opening as part of the Universal Exposition in 1937) sought, by promoting the dignity of all mankind through the study of man, to counter a tendency of the time to view others as curiosities rather than peers and to oppose trends towards treating other civilisations as animal artefacts to be gazed at: a combat of science and knowledge against ignorance that was to continue in the years following the war.⁴⁵ In these early stages of the speech, Hollande emphasised the message of the museum as being that of the universal nature of humanity and the human: "This museum is an ode to the unity of humanity. The museum offers a voyage of discovery of mankind, [exploring] the singularity of man as well as its universality. All of humanity coming together"⁴⁶. The emphasis is not only on the exceptional character of the French nation ("The museum epitomises the spirit of France, that is, the universal ideal. France is universal, thus it is in France that this museum dedicated to mankind is to be found"⁴⁷) but

⁴⁴ "*L'humanité est un tout indivisible, non seulement dans l'espace mais aussi dans le temps*". Cited by François Hollande at the inauguration of the museum : Discours à l'occasion de l'inauguration du Musée de l'Homme, 15 October 2015. Available at <http://www.elysee.fr/videos/discours-a-l-occasion-de-l-inauguration-du-musee-de-l-homme/>. Original citation by Paul Rivet, see: <http://www.museedelhomme.fr/fr/presentation>

⁴⁵ Discours de François Hollande à l'occasion de l'inauguration du Musée de l'Homme, 15 October 2015. Available at: <http://www.elysee.fr/videos/discours-a-l-occasion-de-l-inauguration-du-musee-de-l-homme/>

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Original reads: "*Le [...] message du musée [...] c'est un hymne à l'unité de l'humanité. Ce que le musée offre, c'est un voyage à la découverte de l'homme, dans son singularité aussi que dans de plus universel. Toute l'humanité dans le rencontre.*"

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* Original reads "*Le musée de l'homme incarne l'esprit français: c'est-à-dire l'idée universelle. La France c'est l'universel ; et donc c'est en France qu'il y a – pas simplement en France – mais en France qu'il y a ce musée dédiée à l'humanité.*"

also on the unity and mutual dependence of mankind. Whether humankind does good or evil to humanity, the president said, depends on the choices that we make in life. The message of the museum is therefore, that no being – neither individual nor state – can live an isolated life; the museum tells us that if we wish to participate in humanity we must know how to behave as social beings.⁴⁸

Just as Sarkozy's story of the pilgrims of Puy-en-Velay and Chirac's story of the brave inhabitants of Chambon-en-Lignon transitioned into a narrative of the France of today, reinforcing portrayals of the 'real' concerns and character of lived existence in twenty-first-century France through the discursive representation of a France of the past, Hollande's speech drew on the historical narrative of the site of the Musée de l'Homme to transmit a message of contemporary reality. It becomes clear as the speech progresses that the unity of many for the greater good does not refer solely to the scientific challenges of the museum staff in the 1940s and 50s. Instead – in a manner more explicit than that of his predecessors in the earlier examples – Hollande uses the story of the Musée de l'Homme to construct a *fait accompli* for the present. The micro narrative of the museum, the story of this historical site – located again in a macro narrative of a presumed French identity, one that in this case is framed in terms of the universal spirit of the French national mission – becomes, therefore, a story of the present. The truth of the present day is to be found in the narrative of the past.

The truth of the present, in this particular case, is that of a France characterised by the same leadership through universalism that could be identified in the story of the Musée de l'Homme, a leadership through universalism that, the president explained, was to find its expression in the upcoming international climate change conference, to be held in Paris. It was no coincidence, Hollande declared that, just as the Musée de l'Homme had been born in a political era where an international approach was vital in the struggle of and for humanity, this second coming of the museum was occurring in the political context of unprecedented climate challenge, and in the specific context of the international conference, where only by working together could the nations of the world hope to save the planet and save humanity: “Not a coincidence but a historical continuity; at every stage in the life of the museum there has been an international event of great significance – an uninterrupted line joining our country to the other nations of the world, across ages and generations”⁴⁹. The scientific minds

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* Original reads: “L’homme est un être social. Personne ne peut vivre seul. Pas plus un pays qu’un individu [...] Donc c’est un message aussi à l’égard de tout ce qui veut être parti prenant de l’humanité, de savoir exactement comment se comporter dans une société.”

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* Original reads: “Coïncidence? Et je dis: non! Constance historique, qui fait qu’à chaque étape du musée il y a un évènement international de grande ampleur. Et j’y vois comme un fil jamais rompu, qui unit notre pays aux autres nations du monde, aussi à travers les âges et les générations”.

of France of eighty years ago had taken the lead in promoting an international, universal approach to the threats of their era; the France of the museum's renaissance would equally take the lead not only in promoting an international approach to humanity's challenge of climate change but also, in an acknowledgement of the rise of the far-right and ultra-nationalism in twenty-first century France, in advancing the values of an inclusive universalism over the narrow introversion of nationalism⁵⁰. The France told by the Musée de l'Homme was "a country [...] capable of casting light on the world [...] and spurring it into action for its future. Capable also of recalling – not least to its own citizens, who sometimes doubt the fact – that humanity is indeed an indivisible whole that cannot be separated, divided or opposed"⁵¹. Once again, the president used the narrative possibilities offered by a specific physical site to present an implicit inevitability of present identity and future action.

Geocriticism & the Chronotope

Geocriticism: Paying Attention to Place

The micro narratives of contemporary presidential discourse, therefore, draw on the novelistic confusion of real and represented, a confusion that, for some (e.g. Westphal 2011; Augé 1997) is exacerbated rather than alleviated as modern understandings of the space-time relationship are increasingly challenged, first in the twentieth century developments of theoretical physics and more recently in the blurring of spatio-temporal lines in cyberspace and in new modes of communication. We are then, perhaps and as Marc Augé concluded from his exploration of the "in-between" leisure spaces of late-twentieth century society (Augé 1996, 1997), in an era in which we can no longer clearly distinguish between what is real and what is fictional. The confusion of real and represented that began with the novel of the early modern has escaped from the confines of the literary form – in which, as discussed above, the boundary might have been blurred yet remained in existence – and has infected, or at least affected, our experience of our identities in space. If it is, as Mikhail Bakhtin claimed, that "in an era when the novel reigns supreme [...] all literature is caught up in the process of "becoming" [and] almost all the remaining genres are to a greater or lesser extent 'novelised'" (Bakhtin 1981, p.5) then the relationship of real and represented can no longer

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Original reads: "Le climat ... est la pire réponse pour les nationalistes [...] le monde est les solutions qu'il appelle c'est forcément une volonté internationaliste qui viendra pour en résoudre les contradictions ou pour en faire demain u sujet de fierté".

⁵¹ *Ibid.* Original reads: "Notre pays, qui est capable d'éclairer le monde, sur ses origines et de la mobiliser pour son avenir. Capable aussi de rappeler, y compris à ses propres citoyens qui parfois en doutent, que l'humanité est un tout indivisible et qu'on ne peut pas séparer, diviser ou opposer"

be seen as one of text and world; it is no longer clear – if ever it was – that the fiction resides only in the text and the reality in the world.

The power of the early modern novel was to bring closer fiction and the world, to enable the reader to identify with the real in the represented. Novelistic narrative was, therefore, that which ensured a smooth transition between reality and representation (Westphal 2011, p.90). In the (re)production of national identity the presidential discursive strategies that we have seen thus far serve this narrative function, they smooth the transition from reality to representation or from representation to reality. In the discursive strategies of identity, therefore, there is truly no text outside the text. However, as Hayden White remarked, “it does not matter whether the world is conceived to be real or only imagined; the manner of making sense of it is the same” (White 2001, p.235). In the politics of identity the real is that fiction that is lived into reality. Writing stories through and with physical sites facilitates, as we have seen, the transition between representation and reality; therefore to make sense of the mechanisms of these identity politics, to understand the role of space of real-and-represented, we need an approach that can capture both the narrative and the spatial in the discursive tactics of identity (re)production.

In his *Postmodern Geographies* Edward Soja regretted that the scientific knowability of space that was central to the philosophical and intellectual project of the Enlightenment subordinated space to time by ceding narrative power to history (Soja 1989, p.15). It was such a concern that drove Henri Lefebvre’s work in *The Production of Space*, the conviction that “in the space of power, power does not appear as such; it hides under the organisation of space” (Lefebvre 1974, p.370). In the previous chapter the particular power of cultural spaces was explored as lying in the ability of these spaces to shape – or to be used to shape – our knowledge and experience of being in the world by providing the ruptures and continuities of history, with their cultural power facilitating claims of exceptionalism or national particularity and their ‘absoluteness’ of temporally-infused space evoking the sensation of participatory transcendence amidst the otherwise ‘abstracted’ spaces of modern society (Lefebvre 1991, pp.285-289). However, the discursive strategies constructed around these physical sites suggest that something further is in play; the role of place is also, and perhaps overwhelmingly, a narrative one.

This narrative role of space can be first understood by thinking in terms of Lefebvrian production of space, an approach that creates deeper insight into how the use of place in the stories of identity written implicitly or explicitly into the political discourses explored in this thesis has empowered the speaker to harness the representational and productive power of

space. Space of the social world, Lefebvre wrote, is not given; rather, it is produced through the triple and interactive character of space as perceived, conceived and lived. While perceived space is the initial physical and perceptible layer of spatial practice and conceived space is that of urban planners, architects and scientist – i.e. representations of space that are not only physical but also infused with meaning in their conception – lived space is that space “directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols” (Lefebvre 1991, p.38). It is space as representational. Therefore, in order to harness spatial potential, to engage the power hidden under the organisation of space, it is necessary, Lefebvre wrote, “for [...] society’s practical capabilities and sovereign powers to have at their disposal spatial places: religious and political sites” (*Ibid.*, p.34), not only because control of such sites creates the possibility for the past to be portrayed otherwise and thus permits different presentations of the present (*Ibid.*, p.65) but also because this control of the representational power of space “is what permits fresh actions to occur” (*Ibid.*, p.73).

This understanding of space as produced and productive, as operating through both the physical and representational, underlies Bertrand Westphal’s geocritical approach to literary criticism. The geocritical approach is that of reading texts through their engagement with or representation of physical space; thus by considering the relationship between the text and the world as something beyond mimesis – as an interactive, interdependent relationship between referent and represented by which “the representation fictionalises the source from which it emanates” (Westphal 2011, p.76) and as a relationship not of distortion but of foundation (*Ibid.*, p.113) in which the space of lived experience is not only told by but is also formed by the literary representation – Westphal’s geocriticism both focuses on the interaction of literary text and physical world and “allows us [...] to explore how all ways of dealing with the world are somewhat literary” (Tally 2011, p.x). Although geocriticism is intended for the analysis of literary texts (and the interaction of these literary texts with the world), the novelistic nature of the narratives of national identity, as explored already in this chapter, and the particular ‘written-ness’ of presidential discourses, as further explored in the next chapter, suggest geocriticism as a suitable approach for the uncovering and analysis of political narrative strategies of identity (re)production.

Geocriticism considers the places of narrative to be virtual worlds, “that interact[] in a modular fashion with the world of reference, [where] [t]he degree of correlation between one and the other can vary from zero to infinity” (Westphal 2011, p.101), to a point where, as explored already, the border between referent and representation can become opaque or blurred (*Ibid.*, p.103). The text has not left the city unchanged. The Paris of which we speak

is always the Paris of fiction. It is always the Paris of Balzac, of Baudelaire. It is referent and imagined in one, dissoluble and indistinguishable, our encounters with its physicality never free of the influence of its narrative representations. But one does not have had to have read Balzac or Baudelaire to have the encounter with the city mediated by the representation. The representation has affected the real not only in our engagement with its literary representations but also in the very physicality of the city itself, from the names of streets, cafés, hotels and businesses.⁵² In Montmartre, the small square of Place Marcel Aymé is named after the author of *Le Passe-muraille*, a short story recounting the experiences of a man who possessed the power of passing through walls. The story ends with the protagonist caught in mid-passage through a wall, his power deserting him one night as he slipped away from his lover's bedroom. And there he is to be found still. In one of the walls of Place Marcel-Aymé – in the area of the city represented narratively though under its earlier name in *Le Passe-muraille* (the Place was given its new name twenty years after the death of the author) – there is a bronze statue of the story's hero, escaped from page to the world only to be caught forever in the brickwork of the site now bearing the name of his creator.⁵³

The interaction of literary place and its referent is not always so physical nor, indeed, so blunt. In *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces* Westphal also explores how the founding of a literary narrative around representations of places that can be recognised as 'real' in the world of the reader can facilitate an exchange of values across the borders of fact and fiction; in literary construction the morals (the permitted, prohibited and obligatory) and values (the good, bad and indifferent) of the fictional world are not restricted to that world but can bleed over into the real (Westphal 2011, p.87), setting up a relationship of mutual exchange between the referent and the representation in which the 'real' of the referent can easily be – and perhaps inevitably is – lost. For Westphal, the conclusion of his study of real and imagined spaces that “fiction can have an impact on reality, that there is an interaction between the referent and its representation” (2011, p.88) raises the issue of ethics; story-telling becomes an ethically-loaded undertaking and literary theory and criticism therefore have an important, and ethical, role to play in investigating the role of narrative in forming the real.

Insofar as fiction is written in the world, it takes on the double faculty both to report reality and, at the logical extreme, to exert influence over reality, or, more precisely, over the

⁵² The Hôtel Baudelaire – recently closed – was, perhaps aptly, an establishment somewhat less salubrious than the upmarket Hôtel Balzac on rue Balzac on the other side of the city.

⁵³ I am very grateful to Dr. Patricia García for the suggestion of this example, which she included in her lecture 'Paris Fantastique: The City and the Birth of the Modern Fantastic in the 19th Century', delivered in the Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris, on 24 November 2014 when Dr. García was the Liam Swords Foundation Scholar.

representation of reality. Does reality exist outside of the variable, non-Euclidian geometry of its multiple representations? In this sense, adopting a geocentred approach amounts to arguing that literary representation is included in the world, in an enlarged reality, and in infinitely adjustable space that is in direct contact with a plurality of discourses. (*Ibid.*, p.116)

This is, as stated previously, no longer the relationship of fiction imitating the real. Instead, influenced or exacerbated by, *inter alia*, ‘postmodern’ artistic and literary challenges to notions of real, it is the real that has learned to copy fiction (Augé 1997, p.69). Geocriticism, therefore, encourages us to “study[] artistic representations of geographical referents” (Westphal 2011, p.119) in order to enable us understand how the narrative interaction of real-and-imagined forms both our perceptions and our experiences of what is real. Borrowing the literary critical approach of focusing on the narrative construction of place therefore creates a means for me to explore the specific interactions of real and represented in political discursive strategies of identity (re)production.

The Chronotope: Making Narrative Events Concrete

In formulating his geocentred approach to literary criticism, Bertrand Westphal was influenced by the work of an earlier literary critic and philosopher: Mikhail Bakhtin. Bakhtin’s chronotopic approach – the *chronos* of time in a union with the *topos* of space – to the analysis of the novel was heavily influenced by the developments of theoretical physics at the start of the twentieth century, when the hitherto static knowability of space was being undermined by challenges to the Newtonian absoluteness of the spatial and the temporal. The theories of Relativity and Uncertainty of Einstein and Heisenberg revealed a time and space that could only ever be known in concert and forced a realisation that the known would never be independent of the knower. The conceptualisation of time and space as neither discrete nor perfectly quantifiable but as always present in a relationship of time-space was to find its literary equivalent in Bakhtin’s chronotope, which considered *chronos* and *topos* as being intrinsically connected, not only interdependent and inseparable but also dynamically engaged in a productive interaction. The chronotope, by Bakhtin’s initial definition, was “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (Bakhtin 1981, p.84). Bakhtin’s essay on ‘Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel’⁵⁴ showed not only how narratives could be considered as constructed around and characterised by their chronotopic centres but also how the analysis of the dominant

⁵⁴ Written in the years 1936-37, with the theoretical implications considerably developed in the ‘Concluding Remarks’ that the author added in 1973.

chronotopic centres of different eras and ages of narrative could “help us to appreciate the fact that, in the course of cultural history, transformations of time concepts and spatial representations reflect radical changes in cultural attitudes and lived experiences” (Bemong et al. 2010, p.v).

While Westphal might have been considerably influenced by Bakhtin’s theories of literary analysis, he also saw geocriticism as offering a development upon the earlier chronotopic approach. For Westphal, Bakhtin – as a formalist and modernist – had emphasised time over space in his literary analysis (Westphal 2011, p.27) and the particular spatial emphasis of geocriticism was to a degree a response to this perceived privileging. However, it is this very temporal element that leads me to adopt in this thesis a chronotopic approach to the analysis of political discursive strategies of identity (re)production. While geocritical theory enables the analysis of the mutual constitution of real and represented in political discourses constructed around or delivered at particular cultural, historical or artistic sites and places, the chronotopic approach encourages a broader view of narrative construction. In his analysis of the novel form throughout the ages in ‘Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel’, Bakhtin showed how each novelistic genre could be understood through its particular logic or experiences of time and space, and how this balance of *chronos* and *topos* in turn determined not only the logical limits of the narrative but also the character of the protagonists and their relationships with the physical world as understood in each particular novelistic genre. In the chronotope “time becomes, in effect, palpable and visible; the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins” (Bakhtin 1981, p.250). The chronotopic nature of novelistic discourse turns information into a narrative that tells us not only what happened but also what it felt like, “it is precisely the chronotope that provides the ground essential for the showing forth, the representability of events. And this is so thanks precisely to the special increase in density and concreteness of time markers – the time of human life, of historical time – that occurs within well-delineated spatial areas” (*Ibid.*).

The idea of chronotope as narrative centre, as “a centre for concretising representation”, as a force giving “body” to the entire narrative (*Ibid.*) has implications and applications that cross the disciplinary boundaries of literary theory. As employed most notably in the field of political geography, Bakhtin’s theory of the literary chronotope is called upon in the analysis of spatio-temporal relationships and tensions in the lived world (see, for example, Lawson 2011; Folch-Serra 1990; Gregory et.al, 2009). In historical analysis, too, “the notion of chronotope directs attention to the psychological, social, moral

and aesthetic, political, economic, and epistemological *ambivalences* of an age” (White 1987, p.244; emphasis in original).

For Bakhtin, the chronotope was characteristic not only of the novel but also of wider narratives of history and human existence (Bakhtin 1981; Lawson 2009; Keunen 2010), serving as a “bridge between the narrative and the here and now” (Lawson 2009, p.408). While Bakhtin stresses the distinction, “sharp and categorical”, between the world that serves as source of representation for a text and the world represented in a text⁵⁵ he nonetheless posits that once the world has been represented in a text, the worlds real and represented enter into a relationship of constant exchange and interaction. A relationship of observer and observed, where observation changes both parties and where there can be no return to zero.

However forcefully the real and the represented world resist fusion, however immutable the presence of that categorical boundary line between them, they are nevertheless indissolubly tied up with each other and find themselves in continued mutual interaction; uninterrupted exchange goes on between them, similar to the uninterrupted exchange of matter between living organisms and the environment that surrounds them. (Bakhtin 1981, p.254).

This is also true of political discourse or, in the specific case of this thesis, of strategic representations of a collective identity. The story that is told is presented as a representation of a reality; reality in turn is susceptible to what is presented to it as a representation of itself. Around the chronotope are built narratives that make possible the establishment and embodiment of truth claims (Lawson 2009, p.403); (s)he, then, who writes the narrative tells the truth.

Identifying the chronotopic relationships of a particular narrative or discourse can therefore lead us to a greater understanding of the construction of the real through strategies of narrative representation, just as was the case with the geocritical approach. However, and as we shall see, the concern with the particular dynamics of space and time in the chronotope also helps us to understand how the figure of the individual, and the relationship of the individual with the whole, is constructed through narrative. The setting of a chronotopic centre to a narrative is also a constraint on that narrative; it sets boundaries to its possibilities (Lawson 2009, p.395). Where with a blank page all stories are possible, once the narrative commences limits begin to be set within the logic of the unfolding, emerging world. The

⁵⁵ Stating, indeed, that, “We must never forget this, we must never confuse – as has been done up to now and as is still often done – the represented world with the world outside the text (naive realism); nor must we confuse the author-creator of a work with the author as a human being (naive biographism); nor confuse the listener or reader of multiple and varied periods, recreating and renewing the text, with the passive listener or reader of one's own time (which leads to dogmatism in interpretation and evaluation). All such confusions are methodologically impermissible.” (Bakhtin 1981, p.253)

chronotope generates relationships of time and space that make it possible to construct stories around its core but in establishing such particular relationships of time and space the chronotope also sets frames for its narrative. Therefore, even in the narratives of fiction and the novel, the chronotope does not permit reality to be renounced or evaded; instead the chronotope acts as “precisely the opposite, [it is] a concept for engaging reality” (Clark & Holquist 1984, p.278).

Whereas Bakhtin’s own definitions of the chronotope are somewhat abstract, a greater understanding of how chronotopic analysis can offer new insights into discursive constructions and (re)productions of identity can be obtained by considering the specific chronotopic examples that he cites. Bakhtin’s analysis of the adventure novel, both the early modern European adventure novel and the Greek adventure tales that had influenced this very early form of novel, identifies the chronotope of this genre to be “characterised by a *technical, abstract connection between space and time*, by the *reversibility* of moment in a temporal sequence, and by their *interchangeability* in space” (Bakhtin 1981, p.100; emphasis in original). The space of these adventure novels was similar to the epic spaces mentioned earlier in that their specifics of space and place have no narrative relationship to the life of the hero, they are alien (though not exotic) spaces that the hero encounters for the first time and with which the hero has no particular bond or relationship (*Ibid.*, p.101). The time of these adventure novels is similarly detached; it is not the consequential time of the later novel but rather the time of ‘suddenly’ and ‘at that moment’ (*Ibid.*, p.92), a time of random chance rather than of cause and effect. In this detachedness or interchangeability of both time and space, the early adventure novel is closely to the epic form that the modern novel considered in detail earlier. However, where it bears the distinctive mark of the novel is in the portrayal of the protagonist as an individual, private person, in contrast to the very public figure of more ancient narratives and epics. (*Ibid.*, p.108). Nonetheless, the chronotope of this genre – the abstract-alien world of coincidental rather than consequential temporality – yields an individual who is now totally private “deprived of any organic connection with his city, his own social group, his clan, even his own family. He does not feel himself to be part of the social whole” (*Ibid.*). By understanding the specific chronotopic nature of a particular novelistic narrative or genre, Bakhtin claim, we can in turn understand how an individual can be portrayed within the specific temporal and spatial logic, restraints and characteristics of that narrative.

The purely private individual resulting from the chronotope of the adventure novel is opposed by the Rabelaisian attempt to restore the “fully exteriorised individual” of the agora

(in which the “self-consciousness of an individual and his life was first laid bare and shaped in the public square” (*Ibid.*, p.131)). The Rabelaisian chronotope was one in which time was “perfectly *spatial* and *concrete*” in which “the agricultural life of men and the life of nature (of the earth) are measured by one and the same scale, by the same events; they have the same intervals. Inseparable from each other, present as one (indivisible) act of labour and consciousness” (p.208; emphasis in original), a chronotopic unification of space and time very different from that of the romantic-adventure tales. The Rabelaisian hero is a man formed by the chronotopic balancings of his narrative environment, he is a man of the earth with which his time is in sequence, a supremely physical man, his connection with space completely organic, in marked opposition to the detached relationship in the chronotope of the adventure novel. The hero in this earthy, grounded chronotope is therefore nothing more but than exaggeration of the ordinary man, an extreme public expression of the everyday.

Thus does the heroism of Rabelais’ great man differ categorically from all other heroisms, which oppose the hero to the mass of other men as something out of the ordinary due to his lineage, his nature, the extraordinary demands and the exalted value he reads into life and the world (he is different therefore from the heroic man of the knightly and Baroque novel, from heroism of the Romantic and Byronic sort and from the Nietzschean *Übermensch*) [...] As such, he is great in the space and time of the actual world, where interior is not opposed to exterior (as we know he is completely on the surface in the positive sense) (*Ibid.*, pp.241-242).

Just as the later modern novel was indissolubly linked to contemporary socio-political developments, the Rabelaisian novel provided both reflection and means of coming to terms with disruptions to prior spatiotemporal beliefs and conventions. Rabelais was writing in an era when the “mediaeval [world view of the] wholeness and roundedness of the world had been destroyed” (*Ibid.*, p.205). Rabelais’s innovative portrayal of the individual as being with the earth was, therefore, an effort to escape from the millennial beliefs of times as leading inevitably to the end of days. “A new chronotope was needed that would permit one to link real life (history) to the real earth. It was necessary to oppose to eschatology a creative and generative time, a time measured by creative acts, by growth and not by destruction” (*Ibid.*, p.206). The Rabelaisian chronotope created the conditions for the Rabelaisian hero to be written as in communion with the physical earth, thus restoring to time its productive nature. In this time of productive growth “maximally tensed towards the future” (*Ibid.*, p.207) and in the narrative emphasis of the organic and physical relationship of man to the space in which he found himself, Rabelais’ novel was reflective of the intellectual developments of the time, “the approaching era of great geographical and astronomical discoveries” (*Ibid.*, p.242) in

which increasing philosophical and scientific attention was being paid not only to the physical nature of the world but also to the physical relationship of man and world.

A further illustration that “a literary work’s artistic unity in relationship to an actual reality is defined by its chronotope” (*Ibid.*, p.243) can be observed from the earliest examples of the modern novel, especially in Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*. While *Don Quixote* could be considered as a successor to the adventure novel in terms of style – Don Quixote’s travels first parodying then appropriating the heroic journeys of earlier adventure and picaresque narratives – it could also be seen as the political successor to Rabelais in its contribution to the continuing emergence and development of the modern conception of individuality. The road on which Don Quixote sets out is superficially similar but chronotopically different to that of the adventure novel; this is not the alien space and coincidental time of before but, reflecting the merging socio-political, intellectual and scientific developments of the era, is an advancing, productive time. “By this time the road had been profoundly, intensely etched by the flow of historical time, by the traces and signs of time's passage, by markers of the era” (*Ibid.*, p.244). The chronotope of the road in this early modern novel is thus in communion with contemporary sensibilities by giving, firstly, a space that is recognisable as the representation of the space of the real world and, secondly, a time that, reflective of the temporal preoccupations of the era, is exploratory, advancing consequentially but indeterminately. The road of Don Quixote’s journey is “both a point of new departures and a place for events to find their denouement”⁵⁶, a chronotope in which the hero on his heroic quest “could encounter all of Spain – from galley-slaves to dukes” (*Ibid.*, p.244). The road of Don Quixote was one that, in marked contrast to earlier literary picaresque or adventure works, changed time as it advanced in space, ensuring that once he returned to his beginning, the knight would find it no longer the same place from which he had left. This chronotopic particularity of the road combined with the particular nature of the novel itself – published in two parts, with several characters in the second novel able to recognise the hero from the first published instalment of his adventures – encourages a new and increasingly nuanced exploration and representation of the role of the individual, and more specifically the narrative hero, in society:

⁵⁶ “Time, as it were, fuses together with space and flows in it (forming the road); this is the source of the rich metaphorical expansion on the image of the road as a course: “the course of a life,” “to set out on a new course,” “the course of history” and so on; varied and multi-levelled are the ways in which road is turned into a metaphor, but its fundamental pivot is the flow of time.” (Bakhtin 1981, p.244)

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza ha[d] already become mythical figures, to themselves and to others; and we now see these legendary persons acting in the real world. The relationship between fiction and history ha[d] been given a new twist. The romances had turned quasi-historical persons into fictitious characters; Cervantes ha[d] turned his fictional characters into authentic historical celebrities (Watt 1997, p.69).

These chronotopes are what might be considered major chronotopes or, in a parallel with what has gone before in this chapter, macro chronotopes, those that are broad and fundamental to their particular novelistic genres. In this way the narrative of nation could be declared as a chronotope in itself, a particular balancing of space and time that sets the boundaries to the possibilities of narrative belonging and that gives rise to particular notions of heroism and of the individual's 'natural' relationship to society. However, just as the speeches in this chapter have been considered as operating as both macro and micro narrative, "each such chronotope include within it an unlimited number of minor chronotopes. [...] In fact, [...] any motif may have a special chronotopes of its own" (Bakhtin 1981, p.252). Bakhtin gives the examples of the chronotopic salons of Balzac's city spaces,⁵⁷ where "webs of intrigue are spun, denouements occur" (Bakhtin 1981, p.246), where socio-public and private affairs coexisted and were confused in a reflection of the political realities of the age. There is also the oppressive chronotope of the provincial town, as in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, "a viscous sticky time that drags itself through space" (Bakhtin 1921 p.248). Just as Emma Bovary's dreams of personal and social advancement come into conflict with her situation as wife of a limited provincial physician so too is the cyclical, sticky time of the country town plotted against the very different time-space dynamic of the contemporaneous social and political changes of the wider France, producing the tension between the scope of Bovary's dreamed possibilities and the confines of her actual experience. In Dostoevsky can be found the recurrent minor chronotope of the threshold, the physical spaces "of the staircase, the front hall and corridors, as well as the chronotopes of the street and square that extend those spaces into the open air" (*Ibid.*, p.248) that produce temporal crises and moments of decision, of fall, epiphanies and renewals. "In this chronotope, time is essentially instantaneous; it is as if it has no duration and falls out of the normal course of biographical time" (*Ibid.*). The events structured or provoked by this micro chronotope feed back into the broader stories of Dostoevsky's inside and outside, his

⁵⁷ "In the parlours and salons of the Restoration and July Monarchy is found the barometer of political and business life; political, business, social, literary reputations are made and destroyed, careers are begun and wrecked, here are decided the fates of high politics and high finance as well as the success or failure of a proposed bill, a book, a play, a minister, a courtesan-singer; here in their full array (that is, brought together in one place at one time) are all the gradations of the new social hierarchy; and here, finally, there unfold forms that are concrete and visible, the supreme power of life's new king – money." (Bakhtin 1981, pp.246-247)

complementary structuring chronotopes of parlour and street (*Ibid.*, p.249). For Bakhtin, such chronotopes “are the organising centres for the fundamental narrative events of the novel”, the places where “the knots of narrative are tied and untied”. “To them belongs the meaning that shapes narrative” (*Ibid.*, p.250).

The advocacy of this chapter for a geocritical and chronotopic approach to analyses of political discursive strategies of identity (re)creation or (re)production is predicated on the chapter’s earlier arguments of the indissoluble relationship and mutual construction of novel of nation. However, the novel was, as we have seen, very much a product of what we have come to call the modern. It must be asked, therefore, what becomes of analyses of discursive strategies of identity (re)production should the novel cease to be the dominant narrative form of the nation?

The first response is that this time is not yet upon us. The novel genre has, of course, developed and expanded since the early modern novel of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The early realism has been supplemented and complemented by narratives of other and simultaneous spaces and times; however, that which distinguished the novel from earlier literary and narrative forms remains. Even in stories with complex temporal dynamics the chronological character of the modern novel prevails: the “because” and “therefore”, the cause and consequence of nineteenth century literature (Finch 1997, p.46) still dominating in much of twenty-first century writing. Just as Bakhtin observed that in the era of the novel all forms of narrative become novelised, it can be plausibly advanced that the novel genre is a manner of story-telling that has dominated to such a degree that even in the development of new technologies of telling stories, e.g. television and film, the narrative approach of the novel is still preferred. Indeed, a clear line can be drawn between the successful television series of the early twenty-first century and the social impact and narrative structure of the popular serials and novels of the nineteenth century (Metcalf 2012). From this point of view, the changing technologies of story-telling – the supplanting of the print technology that was so important for the genesis and evolution of the modern novel with visual story-telling, for example – might alter in certain ways the transmission and reception of narrative yet does not change the genre of story-telling. As Ian Watt wrote in his *The Rise of the Novel*, the realism of the novel is not in the specific stories that it tells but rather in the manner in which it tells these stories, a manner that has remained fundamentally unchanged since Don Quixote set out on the road.

However, there is another response, which I consider not as contradictory but as complementary. We might still indeed be in the era of the novel yet the sensation of being on

the brink of another, rival narrative sensibility is tangible. Bakhtin, in his consideration of how the novel came to be the dominant social and literary narrative form, explained the transition from epic to novel in terms of memory and knowledge. Whereas the world as expressed in pre-modern story-telling was an experience based on the power and primacy of memory, in modern times narrative influence was wielded by knowledge rather than by memory. In the era when the epic reigned as preferred or canonical literary form it was memory:

that serve[d] as the source and power for the creative impulse. That is how it was, it is impossible to change it: the tradition of the past is sacred. There is as yet no consciousness of the possible relativity of any past. [...] The novel, by contrast, is determined by experience, and practice (the future). In the era of Hellenism a closer contact with the heroes of the Trojan epic cycle began to be felt; epic is already being transformed into novel. (Bakhtin 1991, p.15)

Similarly, when Walter Benjamin, in his work 'The Storyteller', regretted that "the art of storytelling is coming to an end" (Benjamin 2006, p.362) he ascribed this decline to the conquering of 'information' over memory, knowledge and experience. "Every morning brings us the news of the globe, and yet we are poor in noteworthy stories" (Ibid, p.365). Benjamin, writing in the 1930s, was referring to a dissemination of information much slower than that of this century yet it is easy to interpret today's narrative dynamics as an accelerated version of the shift from story to information that he observes:

By now almost nothing that happens benefits storytelling; almost everything benefits information. [...] The value of information does not survive the moment in which it was new. It lives only at that moment; it has to surrender to it completely and explain itself to it without losing anytime. A story is different. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time. (Benjamin 2006, pp.365-366)

Just as the transition from memory to knowledge impacts upon the role of the individual in both narrative and society so too, Benjamin wrote, does the triumph of information over storytelling alter the individual's experience of the world. By this view, while the development of new technologies might possibly only offer new media through which to tell further novelistic stories, as a new place of temporal and spatial uncertainty digital content should also be considered as having the potential to constitute a break both in our telling and in our way of telling. It remains to be seen if developments in story-telling through digital and new media are beginning to present a separation from, or are merely enabling further retellings within, the history of modernity and from its organising of particular and universal in the space of the nation-state.

The argument that new technologies are not merely a development on the modern development of the printing press and the later improvements in word processing and text distribution would see these technologies as representing and encouraging a break with the writing practices of the past. Digital technologies and the new spatiotemporal environment of cyberspace give rise to practices of reading and writing, e.g. anonymous writing, crowd sourcing, fan fiction, that encourage a new confusion of public and private, of particular and universal, as the distinction between author and reader is eroded and with it the clear lines of authority. Where once narrative had a moral as well as communicative function, as explored by Benjamin in his reflections on the figure of the story-teller, this function has to a considerable degree been weakened by the growth in information, the explosion of words, and by the empowerment of the reader (Benjamin 2006). Paradoxically, the changes in written culture and reading habits, which first saw the opening from private to public and the creating of bonds across shared readership and knowledge, are seeing the individual once again turn in on him/herself. As we shall see in the following chapter, in a world where each reader bring his own authority to a text, where authors are legion and frequently anonymous, the role of the author or speaker of a novelistic discourse in providing a narrative of identity, in dictating the deontic and axiological constraints of the story is undermined. Therefore, it might be that in writing still in the style of the *roman national* the political leaders today are addressing a public that is ever dwindling, as narratives and identities begin to be created otherwise and elsewhere, in a manner and with results that are not yet clear.

These concerns are explored in the following chapters. As well as considering how the novelistic approaches of literary criticism can peel back the constitutive layers of political discursive strategies of identity (re)production, the possibility that the very narrative foundations upon which both these discursive strategies and the identity of nation that they seek to (re)assert are being undermined throws up new questions of the fundamental understanding of national identity as a belonging to a long tradition of mythical construction, belief and practice. Therefore, underlying the explorations of the following chapters is the question of whether as ways of telling stories change narratives of identity also change. If the novel is no longer dominant, what of the nation-state with which it has been locked in mutual formation? More particularly, the following chapters look at the particular shared characteristics of nation and novel that I identified here as the portrayal of the hero and the sense or experience of place. In the mythical triad of the nation these elements of hero and place find their expression in the Hero and Ritual of Chapters IV and V. Therefore, in these chapters I explore not only how hero and ritual are changed and adapted in political

discursive strategies to balance the mythical triad – e.g. when narratives of nation are called into question or diminish in resonance – but also how changing practices of hero and ritual both effect and are affected by new and emerging narratives and narrative genres of identity.

CHAPTER IV: AN END TO THE HERO'S JOURNEY

The Narrative Strategy of the Hero in the Story of the Nation

The first and foremost condition for an aesthetic approach to this world is to understand it as a world of other people who have accomplished their lives in it – that is, to understand it as the world of Christ, of Socrates, of Napoleon, of Pushkin

M.M. Bakhtin

Pity the land that needs a hero. When the title character of Bertolt Brecht's *Life of Galileo* spoke those words it was in response to the despairing cry of a student. "Pity the land that has no heroes", thus pronounced Galileo's apprentice Andrea, distraught at his master's public recantation of his work and beliefs. This chapter explores the tension between Andrea's lament and Galileo's assertion, a tension in which lies the hero-politics of the nation-state as it advances in the twenty-first century. The story of the nation is, as seen in Chapter I, that of a land that can never be without its heroes. By focussing on the mythical hero figure, this chapter therefore explores not only how the character of hero is employed in political discursive strategies of identity (re)production in contemporary France but also what the study of changing patterns of narrative heroism can tell us about changing experiences of collective identity and belonging. As the narratives of twenty-first century space-time bring the protagonists of our story-tellings ever closer to us, making them ever more familiar, ever more accessible, can these protagonists still lay claim to or be ascribed the role of hero? And if contemporary stories of nation can no longer offer us the figure of the hero as transcendent and aspirational then can the narrative of nation still hope to offer a mythical belonging? This chapter is structured around these questions and concludes with a consideration of what it might mean for experiences and understandings of identity not only as the narrative figure of the hero is undermined but also as notions of heroism are increasingly defined otherwise and elsewhere than by and in the myth of the nation.

Pity the land that needs a hero. The first section of this chapter considers this need for a hero by focussing on political discursive strategies of identity (re)production structured around the two heroic figures of Jean Jaurès and Jeanne d'Arc. A geocritical analysis of the discursive exploitation of the character and legacy of Jean Jaurès reveals not only how the grounding of political discourses in particular locations facilitates the evocation of heroic

narratives but also how the novelistic interaction of real-and-represented is engaged in the creation of narrative protagonist as well as in the production of national space. The accompanying analysis of the use of Jeanne d'Arc in political identity (re)productions takes a complementary chronotopic approach. Whereas the chronotopic examples of the previous chapter showed how the specific spatio-temporal interactions of a narrative could determine the nature and scope of action of the hero – e.g. in his/her relationship to the physical landscape and to the particular flow of time of a narrative's chronotope – this section explores how a focus on the figure of a hero can help us to understand a story's chronotopic logic and thus its limits of possibility. Following the figure of Jeanne d'Arc in political discursive strategies enables me to identify how the centring of chronotopic narratives of identity around the virgin warrior martyr enables the writing of rival national truths and how contrasting narrative characterisations of Jeanne d'Arc thus facilitate the setting of non-contiguous and competing boundaries of possibility and belonging. The analysis of the heroic evocations of Jaurès and Jeanne d'Arc also encourages me to consider the elements necessary to raise a heroic narrative from story to myth and to explore what changing patterns in the political instrumentalisation of these heroes can tell us about contemporary pressures on and challenges to the modern mythical identity of nation.

Pity the land that has no hero. The section second of the chapter considers what happens when the hero dies, looking at the difference in our stories when changed or changing spatio-temporal relations remove the conditions necessary for the writing of the mythical hero. The effect of this possible death of the hero on social patterns and narratives of collective belonging is explored through two different narrative responses to the death of the hero: the response of traditional narrative forms to the loss of the mythical hero and the rise of the formerly antagonistic or lesser narrative characters of fool and villain to fill the space left by traditional mythical protagonist of hero. These two strands of analysis in turn offer insights into both the manner in which strategies of identity (re)production can be adapted in an order to maintain the identity myth of nation even as its mythical components are undermined and also the potential for the emergence of new, non-mythical ways of adapting to changing spatio-temporal realities. The chapter concludes with a look at the relationship between author and hero in modern narrative forms and suggests that changing practices of writing are altering the author's capacity to write her/himself heroically in and through the narrative and thus should be a concern for political discursive strategies of identity (re)production.

HEROIC NARRATIVES IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICS

Representing the Real: Jean Jaurès in Political Discourse

The Hero is Dead: Long Live the Hero

The first time they buried Jean Jaurès they rallied behind his coffin. It was the time of the *Union Sacrée*, the sacred union in which the traditionally divided ‘two Frances’ came together in national solidarity in the face of German aggression. Jean Jaurès, leading figure of French socialism and founder of *L’Humanité*, the newspaper of the French socialist and workers’ movement, was assassinated in the centre of Paris on 31 July 1914 by ultra-nationalist Raoul Villain, three days before Germany declared war on the French nation. The funeral of this great figure of French politics thus gave the political leadership of France the opportunity to unite in national solidarity in the first days of the country’s mobilisation against the foreign aggressor. The cortège that followed Jaurès to his resting place was an incongruous one, a procession in which the red flag of the international workers’ movement was borne aloft beside republican tricolours, a ceremony at which ultra-nationalist and anti-Dreyfusard Maurice Barrès stood alongside leading figures of parliament and government as together they listened to the funeral oration delivered by trade union leader and human rights activist Léon Jouhaux¹. In this time of extreme turmoil, Jaurès’s funeral ceremony provided the opportunity for the political class to present a physical manifestation of the *union sacrée* and to offer a show of national force and community of purpose to a fearful public. Jean Jaurès became the figure and personality around whom this sacred union could be formed and consolidated (Ben-Amos 1990, p.50). The story of Jaurès was such that it could be read as corresponding to each one of the diverse political narratives that had come together to comprise the common identity claimed by the *union sacrée*. A committed pacifist and believer in the international values of humanity, Jaurès was a hero for the internationalist and socialist left. A patriot, in that he was greatly attached to the political concept of the Republic as well as to the diversity of regional languages and cultures (Candar 2013, p.103), Jaurès also served as a proud symbol of a nation now under attack. An idealistic activist who had suffered many setbacks during his political career, Jaurès was the identifiable modern, everyday hero encountered in the previous chapter, his failures serving only to make him even greater in the regard of public to whom his eternal belief in the power of humanity was to give hope in times of despair (Ibid., p.101-2). However, the Jaurès around whom the nation

¹ Jouhaux in his oration declared that, “Jaurès was our living thought, our living doctrine; it is from his image, it is from his memory that we will draw our strength for the future”, (“Jaurès était notre pensée, notre doctrine vivante; c’est dans son image, c’est dans son souvenir que nous puiserons nos forces dans l’avenir”) http://www.histoiresocialesdeslandes.fr/p3_impact_win02.asp

rallied in its time of need also had much of the mythical hero about him, not only in his moral and transcendental aspirations but also in the now-legendary charisma of his oratory and in the iconography arising from his striking physical appearance. And perhaps most usefully for the canonisation and idealisation necessary for the hero myth, he was dead.

The second time they buried Jean Jaurès they fought over his coffin. Ten years after his death, on 23 November 1924, Jaurès was exhumed from his provincial grave and his remains transferred to Paris, where they were to join those of the other Great Men² of the French nation in the Pantheon. However, instead of uniting in the dead man's cortège, the political class this time used the occasion to mark their differences. For the ruling left coalition, the 'pantheonisation' of the Socialist icon was to be a republican and civil celebration, bringing together town and country, nationalists and internationalists, left and right (Ben-Amos 1990, p.52, citing Léon Blum, then leader of the Socialist party). The entry of Jaurès – a man of the people as much of the nation – would, it was hoped, endow the Panthéon with a new civic function (Centre de Monuments Nationaux 2015, p.4). Contrary to these aspirations, in the absence of an immediate external threat the second funeral of Jaurès was instead to provide the opportunity to parade opposing interpretations of the nation rather than, as in 1914, to consolidate these divergences in the one, shared identity. Thus it was that Jaurès's coffin for his second interment had not one but rather two funeral cortèges. Two cortèges and a simultaneous counter-demonstration.

The official ceremonies of Jaurès's entry into the Pantheon were organised and led by the ruling leftist coalition, a solemn and sombre celebration of the life and death of the great man. The communists and far-left, rejecting the centrist appropriation of Jaurès's hero-story, led an alternative cortège, more carnivalesque than funereal in its noise and colour (Ben-Amos 1992, pp.54-57). The workers' red flags held aloft were no longer flown in solidarity with the tricolour of the government but rather in defiance, an effort to claim Jaurès back for the true left to which, these mourners declared, he rightfully belonged. The third event held that day was not a contestation for the memory of Jaurès but instead a ceremonial rejection of the association of his story with that of the French nation. While Maurice Barrès had stood by the coffin at Jaurès's first funeral in 1914, on this occasion the far-right was absent from the official event. Instead *Action Française*, the monarchist, anti-Republican movement prominent in the first decades of the twentieth century, held their own ceremony in a cemetery on the outskirts of Paris. This alternative ceremony, ostensibly in honour of the

² The inscription over the entrance to the Pantheon reads: "Aux grands hommes la patrie reconnaissante" ("A grateful nation honours its great men").

assassinated secretary of the youth branch of *Action Française*, was an effort to counter the message of the secular canonisation of Jaurès and to advance a rival narrative of France, a counter-pantheonisation marked by a militaristic and nationalistic tone in contrast to Jaurès's message of pacifism and universalist patriotism (Centre des Monuments Nationaux 2015, p.4; Ben-Amos 1990, pp.51-58).

The contrast in the proceedings of the two funerals – the first unfolding in a time of international war, the second when the external aggressor had been vanquished, thus leaving a political space for the confrontation of enemies within – illustrates not only how the instrumentalisation of the story of Jean Jaurès could be read as a barometer of the changing political climate of the country but also how the figure of the hero could be written to advance different narratives of the same nation, how different conceptions of France could be presented as inevitable by structuring them around the character of Jaurès. Here is a specific example of the novelistic strategy of real-and-represented as explored in the previous chapter, in this case the real being (re)produced specifically through the political representation of the hero. While in the next chapter I explore the significance of national ceremonies, such as those held to commemorate the death of Jaurès, to the myth of the nation and thus to the political discursive strategies of the (re)production of national identity, here I concentrate on how the literary techniques outlined in Chapter III enable us to understand better the use of heroic figures in political discursive strategies of identity reproduction. Taking a geocritical approach to the analysis of contemporary discursive strategies that draw on the story of Jaurès permits me to illuminate how the mechanism of real-and-represented effected through discourses constructed around real spaces creates the possibility for political figures to write themselves into the national story through their narrative representation of a hero of France-past.

The Hero in Space: Anchoring Narratives of National Identity

The rival processions and ceremonies that took place on the day of Jean Jaurès's entrance into the Pantheon were to prove more indicative of the part that he was to play in political iconography across the twentieth century than had done the fleeting non-partisan solidarity of the *union sacrée* of 1914. The figure of Jaurès continued to function as a rallying point during these years but with the difference that the power of his imagery was now exercised solely on the left, as his appeal to both the centre- and far-left was called upon as a unifying force during the leftist coalition of the Popular Front in the 1930s and once again in the leftist contributions to the post-war task of political and social reconstruction (Centre des

Monuments Nationaux 2015, pp.4-5). Although Jaurès has been inscribed into the French landscape – having buildings and streets named after him in over 2000 French communes (including nearly 430 schools, making him sixth on the list of historical figures after whom educational establishments have been named) – such physical commemoration is markedly more common in traditionally left-leaning regions (Candar 2013, p.102; Bronner & Vaudano 2015). It was perhaps surprising, then, that presidential candidate Nicolas Sarkozy – whose period as Minister of the Interior had been characterised by a shift to the right in both the policy and discourse of identity and immigration – chose to structure one of the key speeches of his first presidential campaign, an address on the theme of republican values, around Jean Jaurès, icon of the left. Just as he had done at Mont-Saint-Michel at the launch of his campaign and as he was to do four years later in Puy-en-Velay in preparation for his re-election effort, Sarkozy on this occasion anchored his message of French identity, and thus the argument for his suitability as national leader, in a sense of place. When addressing the people of Toulouse on the campaign trail in April 2007, the centre-right candidate used the discursive and physical site of the city not only to connect with his immediate audience of the local population but also in order to exploit the physical location in his narrative (re)production of a certain image of the nation. The evocation of Jean Jaurès facilitated by the close association between the socialist icon and the city of Toulouse was to enable Sarkozy to advance a certain representation of the real of France, structured around the ‘real’ figure of the dead hero.

The speech began with the rhetorical tactic of repetition, listing the positive attributes of this ancient city:

Toulouse, strong, proud, indomitable
Toulouse, solid, intransigent, inflexible
Toulouse, indignant, insurgent, revolutionary
Toulouse, believer in justice
Toulouse, generous, fraternal.³

Once the speaker had thus established the character of the city he was then in a rhetorical position to call upon the city to speak as a witness to the message that he wished to deliver, in a manner similar to that seen in the previous chapter with the grounding in place of Sarkozy’s speech on France’s Christian heritage in Puy-en-Velay and Chirac’s speech on

³ Original reads: “*Toulouse, fière, orgueilleuse, indomptable/ Toulouse, entière, intransigeante, inflexible/ Toulouse, qui s’est s’indigner, qui s’insurge, qui se révolte parfois/ Toulouse, qui croit à la justice/ Toulouse, généreuse, fraternelle*”. Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, président de l’UMP et candidat à l’élection présidentielle, sur l’échec de la gauche dans la lutte contre les injustices et sur la présentation des valeurs républicaines qu’il défend. 11 April 2007. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/073001479.html>

secularism in Chambon-en-Lignon. In this case, Sarkozy followed up his eulogy to the city with a similarly structured litany of its woes, namely the threats to its industry, the worries over the future of Airbus, the region's great employer, and the horror of the fatal AZF factory explosion in 2001 ("Toulouse, struck down by AZF; Toulouse, caught in anxiety by the uncertain future of Airbus"⁴). The counterpositioning of Toulouse's proud heritage against its troubled present led Sarkozy to make a diagnosis of current troubles: "Toulouse – said to be a city of the left because it has a heart [...] Toulouse, [a city] that has seen that the left no longer cares about [...] the working-classes [...] Toulouse [a city that] no longer trusts in the ability of the left to act generously, fraternally, justly."⁵ However, although the particular physical anchoring of the speech enabled Toulouse to serve synecdochically in what was intended as a discourse on the state of the nation, the primary narratively-representational power of the city in Sarkozy's speech was in its association with Jean Jaurès. This association allowed the story of Toulouse, the city in which Jaurès had lived and worked, to become the story of Jaurès ("Toulouse, the city of Jaurès"⁶) and the rooting of the story of this national hero in the real physical space of the city created the narrative conditions for Sarkozy to create not only a particular version of the nation but also to advance a representation of himself as presumptive leader, in the tradition of the Jaurès of Toulouse.

The rhetorical tactic of the repetition of the city's attributes thus transitioned early on in Sarkozy's speech into another repetitive series, with the name of the city replaced by that of its hero. In a speech in which the name of Jaurès was to be uttered thirty-two times, the second distinct section consisted of a long sequence of phrases beginning with "Jaurès said", the majority of these Jaurèsian pronouncements followed by an example of how the left had betrayed the legacy of their historical leader:

Jaurès said: "The nation is the only possession of the poor". The left has abandoned the nation to the far-right. [...]

Jaurès said: "It is through the individual that all is known: the nation, the family, ownership, humanity, God". When was the last time the left spoke about the individual? [...]

Jaurès said: "I am one of those not wary of the word 'God'" [...] The left of today cannot speak of religion without contempt.⁷

Sarkozy's campaign speech was, therefore, an effort to appropriate the heroic figure of Jaurès and, by claiming him not as a figure of the political left but as an incarnation of

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.* Original reads: "Toulouse, qu'on a dit parfois de gauche parce qu'elle a du Coeur [...] Toulouse, qui a compris que la gauche ne s'intéressait plus au travail, que la gauche ne s'intéressait plus au sort des travailleurs, [...] Toulouse [qui] n'a plus confiance dans la gauche pour la générosité, pour la fraternité, pour la justice."

⁷ *Ibid.* Original reads: "Jaurès disait : «La nation, c'est le seul bien des pauvres. » La gauche a abandonné la nation à l'extrême droite. [...] Jaurès disait : «C'est l'individu humain qui est la mesure de toute chose, de la patrie, de la famille, de la propriété, de l'humanité, de Dieu.». Depuis quand la gauche n'a-t-elle plus parlé de l'individu? [...] Jaurès disait : « Je suis de ceux que le mot Dieu n'effraye pas. » [...] La gauche d'aujourd'hui ne sait pas parler de la religion autrement qu'avec mépris."

national values, to create the possibility of structuring a certain narrative of nation with Jaurès as heroic protagonist. This was a dual move that enabled Sarkozy to discredit contemporary Socialist policies and politics by setting them in opposition to his telling of Jaurès (the serial evocations of Jaurès in the Toulouse speech were succeeded by a series of repetitive declamations of the left highlighting how his Socialist opponents had betrayed the ‘true’ message of Jaurès: “the left does not... the left does not...”⁸) and also enabled him to write himself into the story that is the novelistic narrative of France. When Sarkozy proclaimed in Toulouse that he saw himself as the successor to Jaurès (“Je me sens l’héritier de Jaurès”) it was the culminating point in a discursive strategy in which the evocation of the city had led seamlessly to the evocation of the hero figure of Jaurès from which in turn (and on foot of the discrediting of the twenty-first century political left) was induced the model of ideal politician (a series of statements that “a politician is ...; a politician does not ...”).⁹ The final induction – the ultimate creation of a real from a representation that enabled the right-wing candidate to declare himself the “héritier de Jaurès” – was in the last significant repetitive passage of the candidate’s speech, a long section where the series of positive personal declarations (“I wish to... I wish to be”) was interspersed with national assertions (“France is...France is not”). Thus it was that, ten days before the presidential election of 2007, Sarkozy wrote himself into the story of Jaurès with the aim of suggesting as inevitable his own place in the national narrative. “I came to Toulouse to say one thing: [...] the left no longer has anything in common with Jaurès and Léon Blum. [...] I say to them: leave Jaurès and Blum to their rest; they are too great for you!”¹⁰

Jaurès again serves as illustration of the importance of the hero figure to political (re)creations of the national narrative in the manner in which his story figured in the presidential campaign of François Hollande in 2012. A week before polling day Hollande did as Sarkozy had done five years earlier, structuring one of the last major speeches of his candidacy around the character of Jaurès. In delivering his own speech on Republican values, Hollande once again rooted his strategy of identity (re)production in the association of place and personality, choosing the town of Carmaux as both physical and discursive site of his allocution. Carmaux, the town that Jaurès had represented as deputy after coming to prominence in the Carmaux miners’ strike of the 1890s, had long served as a site of

⁸ *Ibid.* E.g. “*La gauche est incapable de [...] La gauche ne le fera pas [...] Cette gauche n’aime pas [...] Elle ne veut pas [...] Elle ne veut pas [...]*”

⁹ *Ibid.* “*Un homme politique est [...] un homme politique n’a pas [...]*”

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Original reads: “*Je suis venu à Toulouse et dans cette région pour dire une chose: La gauche [...] n’a plus rien de commun avec la gauche de Jaurès et de Léon Blum. À tous les responsables de la gauche, je veux leur dire : Laissez dormir Jaurès et Blum, ils sont trop grands pour vous!*”

pilgrimage for Socialist leaders. It was from there that François Mitterrand had launched his presidential campaign in 1980 and from there that he had delivered his own speech on Republican values towards the end of his presidency in 1992¹¹. For Hollande, an oration from this sacred site of socialism offered the opportunity not only to place himself in a lineage of Socialist leadership but also to reclaim Jaurès and his narrative powers back from his right-wing rival.

I checked to see if in Neuilly-en-Seine, the town in which Nicolas Sarkozy was mayor, there was a Jean Jaurès Avenue. I looked for one. There was a Maurice Barrès Avenue¹², hardly the same thing... So I looked at the street names [...] I even checked the alleyways. Nothing!¹³

In contrast, the town of Carmaux was – through its association with Jaurès – a transmitter of history and of France’s Republican values¹⁴. Values that were, in this telling and in contrast to Sarkozy’s earlier speech, undeniably of the left. Indeed, in Hollande’s 2012 speech ‘the Left’ and ‘France’ are suggested as being almost interchangeable; the attempt by Sarkozy to appropriate Jaurès in his narrative of the nation was, therefore, a recognition that the story of France was a story of the left. This was a story, too, of the leading men of twentieth century French socialism: Jaurès’s successors Léon Blum, Pierre Mendès France and François Mitterrand¹⁵. Hollande’s visit to Carmaux was thus a closing of the circle¹⁶, creating the opportunity for Hollande to write himself into this particular story of a fundamentally socialist France, an impression reinforced visually by his position in front of the town’s statue of Jaurès as he spoke, a statue that captures the dead hero in oratorical stance with arm outstretched in a pose mirrored by Hollande throughout this own speech.

The narrative possibilities offered by the national hero figure of Jaurès thus enabled both Sarkozy and Hollande not only to construct contrasting identity narratives of the French nation but also to create their own personal real through the representation of the dead hero, in this case to present themselves as the narrative and political inheritors of Jaurès’s mantle of

¹¹ Déclaration de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, sur l’héritage de Jaurès et le socialisme, sur le bilan de la gauche, sur la défense des valeurs républicaines et des droits du citoyen. 19 November 1992. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/927013300.html>

¹² Figure of the far-right and contemporary of Jaurès.

¹³ Original reads: “*J’avais vérifié s’il existait à Neuilly-sur-Seine, ville dont Nicolas Sarkozy fut maire, une avenue Jean Jaurès. J’ai cherché. Il y avait une avenue Maurice Barrès, mais ça n’a rien à voir... Alors j’ai regardé les rues. Pas de rue Jean Jaurès : [...] Alors, j’ai même regardé les impasses. Rien ! Rien au nom de Jaurès.*” Déclaration de M. François Hollande, député PS et candidat à l’élection présidentielle 2012, sur les valeurs portées par Jean Jaurès, le risque représenté par l’abstentionnisme et la nécessité du rassemblement à gauche. 16 April 2012. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/123000817.html>

¹⁴ *Ibid.* Original reads: “*Je sais qu’ici, à Carmaux, vous portez l’histoire et en même temps les valeurs de la République.*”

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Original reads: “*Après Jaurès, qui lui n’a jamais gouverné la France mais qui a tellement fait pour qu’elle sauve son honneur, oui, après Blum, qui lui a gouverné la France avec des conquêtes que chacun honore ici dans sa mémoire mais qui n’a gouverné la France qu’un an, après Mendès France, qui n’a gouverné la France que sept mois, il a fallu attendre François Mitterrand – deux fois – pour qu’il puisse diriger la France.*”

¹⁶ *Ibid.* “*Moi je serai venu à Carmaux pour la terminer, que la boucle sera bouclée.*”

leadership. However, while the study of the hero-figure in political discursive strategies of identity (re)production illustrates the importance of the hero protagonist to the novelistic narrative of nation, it also creates an insight into the manner in which the compensatory mechanism of the mythical triad works in the (re)construction of national identity. For example, focussing discourses of nation on a heroic figure, such as Jaurès, creates the illusion of constancy even as the narrative component of the myth is destabilised.

Two years after his jubilantly received speech in the Place Jean Jaurès, François Hollande returned to Carmaux for the official launch of the Jaurès centenary year. On this occasion, as the president made his way to the town's François Mitterrand Hall, from where he was to deliver his speech, the need for a hero was greater than ever. The country's economy was still struggling, unemployment rates were high and Hollande's ratings were low. However, the crowds that jeered and heckled Hollande as he made his way through the town were, for the most part, expressing their disconnect with the Socialist president's response to these challenges: a move to the liberal right on economic and labour policy. "Jaurès would never have spoken as you do" (Weiner 2014). Hollande's speech was therefore an effort to convince his local and national audience that he was still walking in the footprints of Jaurès and thus remaining faithful to the national narrative embodied by the dead hero. The recurring references to 'the left' of the speech of his candidacy were abandoned, with the emphasis instead on the fact that "Jaurès, the figure of socialism, is today the figure of the whole French nation"¹⁷. A reflection, of course, of the move from candidate of the left to leader of the nation but a tactic, also, that saw the new policies of Hollande's government presented as being in keeping with the narrative of France embodied by Jaurès.

In this new telling, Jaurès's patriotism was that of a country that was ready to look beyond its borders and its interests, a patriotism that understood that France was "never as strong as when it accepted competition"¹⁸, an interpretation of patriotism conveniently in keeping with Hollande's new liberal economic policies. This Jaurès was "a Socialist, but..."¹⁹. A social reformer; but one "sufficiently clear-minded to recognise that such reforms could not be brought about in the absence of wealth creation"²⁰. In the same vein, the Jaurès

¹⁷ Original reads: "*C'est ainsi que Jaurès, l'homme du socialisme est aujourd'hui l'homme de toute la France.*" Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur Jean Jaurès et sur la politique du gouvernement, 23 April 2014. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/147000917.html>

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Original reads: "*Jaurès était un patriote. Il savait que la France n'est jamais aussi grande que lorsqu'elle s'exprime au nom de l'universel, qu'elle sait dépasser ses frontières, dépasser ses intérêts, dépasser simplement le cours du temps. [...] La France n'est jamais aussi conquérante que lorsqu'elle accepte la compétition.*"

¹⁹ *Ibid.* Original reads: "*Jaurès était un socialiste qui voulait pousser la République jusqu'au bout.*"

²⁰ *Ibid.* Original reads: "*Jaurès, l'avocat des réformes sociales, était suffisamment lucide pour penser qu'elles ne pouvaient être construites, conçues, que si des richesses étaient créées.*"

of 2014 was “a man of peace [...] but not a pacifist” and the national army’s overseas interventions were thus in keeping with a Jaurèsian belief that the use of force was a force for good when used in the service of law and order. For Jaurès, Hollande explained, the use of force was valid when employed “to impose the rule of law and human values” and was, therefore, consistent with contemporary overseas intervention such as that in Mali, because “[this enforcement of rule of law and human values] is what we are doing in our overseas interventions against terrorism, against fanaticism and to prevent crimes against humanity”²¹.

The story that Hollande told in Carmaux in 2014 built around this newly ‘Socialist, but’ Jaurès was one of a man whose mission was characterised by the two overarching aims of reform and progress (“To be true to the message of Jaurès today is to believe once more in progress [...] Jaurès preached the patience of reform, the tenacity of effort”²²). By this note, Hollande’s recent actions in social and economic policy were “in keeping with this spirit of reform, the spirit of endeavour, the spirit of ambition of Jaurès during his lifetime”²³. Pity the land that needs a hero. In this low point of his period as France’s leader, François Hollande needed the heroism of Jean Jaurès, not least to tell the people of Carmaux and those of the wider nation that “Jaurès was not a dreamer. He was an optimist... Work, action, hope. This is the path we must follow; this is the path of Jaurès”²⁴.

Heir to too Many Fathers: When Narrative is Subsumed by Hero

The particular power of the hero figure in the novelistic interaction of real-and-represented in political discourse is therefore attested to by the instrumentalisation of Jean Jaurès in presidential identity politics. However, as established in the geocritical exploration of the preceding chapter, the interaction of text and referent – that which leads to the mutual interaction of real and represented – does not leave the referent unchanged. Thus it has been for the character of Jean Jaurès. Immortalised first by the ceremonies of his two funerals and made legendary – ever-less real but increasingly malleable in the telling of the nation – by the multiple appropriations and re-appropriations of his character, this now-mythical figure has lost his person to his role as incarnation of France. Not only have the last two French

²¹ *Ibid.* Original reads: “Jaurès était un homme de paix. [...] Mais Jaurès n’était pas un pacifiste. [...] Il entendait mettre la force au service du droit. C’est un message que nous devons entendre, la force n’est pas là pour répondre à la force. Elle est là pour imposer des règles de droit et des valeurs humaines. C’est ce que nous faisons lorsque nous intervenons loin de nos frontières pour lutter contre le terrorisme, contre le fanatisme ou tout simplement pour éviter des crimes contre l’humanité.”

²² *Ibid.* Original reads: “Retenir le message de Jaurès, aujourd’hui c’est de nouveau croire au progrès, [...] Il enseignait la patience de la réforme, la constance de l’action, la ténacité de l’effort.”

²³ *Ibid.* Original reads: “Et c’est d’être fidèle à l’esprit de la réforme, à l’esprit de la conquête, à l’esprit de l’ambition que Jaurès pouvait avoir en son temps, que de proposer ce chemin-là.”

²⁴ *Ibid.* Original reads: “Jaurès n’était pas un rêveur. Il était un optimiste. [...] Le travail, l’action et l’espoir. C’est le cap que nous devons suivre, c’est le cap de Jaurès.”

Presidents claimed him as incarnation of their separate, particular versions of France and as witness to their own legitimacy as national leaders but political actors from the far-left to the far-right have written him as heroic protagonist in their competing and contrasting stories of the nation. François Hollande's second prime minister Manuel Valls – whose promotion to head of government was due not least to his centrist-liberal politics – was to declare in 2014 that Jaurès would have voted for the Responsibility and Solidarity Pact, the package of measures designed to enhance France's competitiveness to which the "progress and reform" of Hollande's second Carmaux speech referred (Cosnay 2014). That the centrist instrumentalisation of an icon of the left would anger France's far-left was hardly surprising, with Jean-Luc Mélenchon, leader of communist-leftist alliance, despairing at this betrayal of Jaurès's legacy and addressing an appeal directly to the dead hero of the working class: "Jaurès, return! They have switched sides!" (Mélenchon, 2014). Much more striking is that Jaurès has also come to have a role in the discursive strategies of the far-right. In 2009, Front National candidate for the European elections Louis Aliot declared that "Jaurès would have voted for the Front National" (Libération 2009) using a Jaurèsian quotation of dubious origin ("The Nation is all that is left to those who have nothing"²⁵) while his party colleague Steeve Briois not only made use of a quote from Jaurès on greeting cards sent out to his constituents ("One should not regret the past nor mourn the present but should have an unshakeable confidence in the future"²⁶) but also had a bust of Jaurès installed in his office after his election as mayor in the former mining town of Hénin-Beaumont (Cosnay 2014; Licourt 2014). Given the ideological chasm between Jaurès and the Front National it is reasonable to conclude that the latter's use of the former relates less to the individual character of this political hero than it does to his representative significance for the (re)production of the national narrative; that is, that his person facilitates the narrative technique of forming the real through the representation, thus encouraging the affirmation of a particular French identity narrative as embodied by the heroic national figure. However, by being all things to all wo/men, Jaurès ceases to represent a distinct telling of the nation. The real is lost to the over-representation and the referent therefore loses its power of construction of real-through-representation, as all it offers it now is an idea – in the case of Jaurès, the idea of 'France' – rather than the grounding in the distinct and particular that is necessary, as seen in the previous chapter, for the construction of the narrative component of the modern myth of the nation.

²⁵ "*A celui qui n'a plus rien, la Patrie est son seul bien*"

²⁶ "Il ne faut avoir aucun regret pour le passé, aucun remords pour le présent, et une confiance inébranlable pour l'avenir."

This over-reliance on the hero-figure in political efforts to (re)produce the mythical identity of the nation to various policy or personal political ends is not unique to the discursive evocations of the character of Jaurès. Of contemporary political leaders in France, it is Nicolas Sarkozy who has called most upon the mythical component of hero in his discursive strategies of identity (re)production. This instrumentalisation of the hero figure was at its most pronounced during Sarkozy's two presidential campaigns, in 2007 and 2012. In the first of these, the then-Minister of the Interior – for whom the launching of a political discussion on national identity was one of the campaign pledges – declared himself the heir not only of Jean Jaurès but also of a number of heroic figures from across the political spectrum. “I see myself in Jaurès and in Blum, in Jules Ferry, in Clemenceau, just as I see myself in Péguy, in Bernard Lazare, in Lyautey and in General de Gaulle”²⁷. A candidate's appeal to both left and right, certainly, but a reflection also of a broader discursive strategy in which the nation was a lineage and Sarkozy a worthy successor. Three days before the first round of the 2012 presidential elections, to be French as defined by Sarkozy was to be a narrative successor to Jeanne d'Arc, Napoleon, General de Gaulle²⁸. Two weeks later, before the final run-off and with polls favouring his Socialist rival, Sarkozy spoke to, of and for a France that was once again told as the story of its great men (and woman): “When one hears ‘France’ one hears [...] Péguy [...] Valmy [...] General de Gaulle [...] Napoleon [...] Aimé Césaire [...] We are the inheritors of that France”²⁹. To speak of France was to speak of Jean Monnet, Victor Hugo, Molière, Voltaire, Chateaubriand³⁰.

However, in his litanies of heroic predecessors Sarkozy risked the same errors that had provoked the failure of his museum project. In that case, the desire to promote an abstract idea of ‘France’ rather than building a consciousness of collective identity through specific narratives not only undermined the intellectual credibility of the enterprise but also rendered his telling less likely to resonate with those whose identity it sought to (re)produce. Similarly, just as the myth of Jaurès has been spread so thinly as to no longer command its original

²⁷ Original reads: “*Oui je me reconnais dans Jaurès et dans Blum, dans Jules Ferry, dans Clemenceau, comme je me reconnais dans Péguy, dans Bernard Lazare, dans Lyautey et dans le Général de Gaulle.*” Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, ministre de l'intérieur et de l'aménagement du territoire, président de l'UMP et candidat à l'élection présidentielle 2007, sur la nation, la démocratie, sa conception de la politique, les valeurs de travail, de liberté, d'ordre et de sécurité et d'humanisme. 26 January 2007. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/073000355.html>

²⁸ Original reads: “*Nous sommes le peuple de France [...] Nous sommes les héritiers d'une grande histoire. Les héritiers de Jeanne d'Arc, de Bonaparte, du Général de Gaulle.*” Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, candidat à l'élection présidentielle, sur le travail et l'entreprise. 1 May 2012. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/123000881.html>

²⁹ Original reads: “*Quand on entend France, on entend [...] Péguy [...] Valmy [...] Napoleon [...] Général de Gaulle [...] Aimé Césaire [...] Nous sommes les héritiers de cette France-là!*” Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, candidat à l'élection présidentielle, sur son programme pour la France, 15 April 2012. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/123000786.html>

narrative power, in making of himself the heir to too many fathers Nicolas Sarkozy may have relinquished the micro-narrative mechanism of forging the real through its representation in favour of concentrating on the authoring of identity through a historical macro-narrative of nation, in what then risks being recognised as a political project for, rather than of, the people.

While the study of Jaurès in political discursive strategies confirms both the importance of the hero figure to contemporary tactics of identity (re)production and the novelistic nature of politic constructions of the national narrative, contrasting the discursive instrumentalisation of Jaurès with that of another national hero, Jeanne d'Arc, leads us to understand that the construction of the narrative around the evocation of the hero does not suffice for the mythical (re)production of identity. Instead, the heroic narrative needs not only a ritualistic aspect to enable the story to be brought to life, an element explored in more detail in the next chapter, but also needs to move beyond the mechanism of constructing the real through representation where, as seen, an indiscriminate use of the hero – or a heroic promiscuity, in the case of Sarkozy – can result in the focus on the character of the hero being at the expense of the careful construction of the narrative in which the hero needs to operate in order to resonate as myth with that narrative's target community.

Shaping the Narrative: Jeanne d'Arc in National Identity (re)Production

Jeanne d'Arc as Chronotopic Centre

Among those featuring prominently in Nicolas Sarkozy's many-peopled story of the nation is Jeanne d'Arc. The then-president chose as the site of one of his pre-election speeches in 2012 the town of Vaucouleurs, closely associated with the fifteenth century saint, for a ceremony on the occasion of the six hundredth anniversary of her birth. The speech that Sarkozy delivered was a striking example not only of his recurring strategy of the discursive employment of the hero figure but also of the *roman national* writing of history for which he had been so virulently criticised.

Six centuries ago, on a cold January day in 1412 with the River Meuse frozen solid, a humble peasant family was celebrating the birth of a fifth child; a baby girl for whom her parents had chosen the name Jeanne³¹

Sarkozy's speech took a novelistic tone from the start, a tactic that allowed him to draw upon Jeanne d'Arc's mythical character while portraying her – in the tradition of the *roman*

³¹ Original reads: "C'était il y a 6 siècles. Par cette froide journée de janvier 1412, alors que la Meuse était prise par les glaces, une humble famille de laboureurs fêtait la naissance d'un cinquième enfant; une petite fille que les parents ont baptisée du nom de Jeanne". Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Président de la République, en hommage à Jeanne d'Arc. 6 January 2012. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/127000032.html>

national – as flawed and human, a figure in whom the people of France could recognise themselves. He recounts, therefore, not only the glory of her role in repelling the foreign invaders but also the lowest point of her story, the trial at which she was “humiliated, spent, hopeless, terrified”, at which she revealed her “human weakness”³², a weakness that she overcame with her strength of character and depth of belief³³. This emphasis on the real rather than the legendary in the saint’s history made it possible for Sarkozy to declare that “Jeanne is France at its most noble and most humble”³⁴ and thus, reiterating the patterns of his other speeches, that those to whom he spoke were successors of Jeanne d’Arc and heirs to her story³⁵. Furthermore, Sarkozy reprised the narrative tactic of a national heroic lineage, placing Jeanne d’Arc alongside Victor Hugo, Charles de Gaulle, Jean Moulin and Aimé Césaire in the story of the nation-state³⁶. The heroic representation of Jeanne d’Arc thus enabled Nicolas Sarkozy to portray the nation of France as a historical and timeless inevitability – as he had done through the monumental space of Puy-en-Velay and as he had sought to do with his museum project. “There is a direct line of descent. There is a link, woven mysteriously across the centuries”³⁷. However, this overt manipulation of the hero figure in a tactic of identity (re)production and (re)appropriation, a manipulation similar to that employed in the case of the Guy Môquet letter, drew criticism not only from political opponents (Libération 2012) but also from historians and intellectuals, including academic Nicolas Offenstadt, who decried that “to trace, as Nicolas Sarkozy does, a direct parallel between Jeanne d’Arc and the national sentiment of today is not credible from a historical point of view” (Bouchet-Petersen, 2012).

Sarkozy was by no means exceptional in evoking the story of Jeanne d’Arc in political strategies of national identity (re)production. Her “extraordinary story”, as President François Mitterrand had called it, “of mysticism, of the belief in dynastic tradition, of love for France, of the fight for national unity and grandeur”³⁸ was called upon by the political classes in times of crises of identity, her patriotic legend providing a focal point for poetic

³² *Ibid.* Original reads: “Elle fut humiliée, épuisée, désespérée, terrorisée. Ce n’est pas ce qu’il y a de moins bouleversant dans Jeanne, sa faiblesse humaine.”

³³ *Ibid.* Original reads: “La faiblesse dont elle fit preuve ce jour-là révèle sa fragilité humaine et donne donc à son incroyable courage plus de valeur encore. Puisque Jeanne pouvait être faible quand elle fut forte, c’est parce qu’elle a dominé sa faiblesse”

³⁴ *Ibid.* Original reads “Jeanne, c’est la France dans ce qu’elle a de plus noble et de plus humble”

³⁵ *Ibid.* Original reads: “Vous êtes les héritiers de cette jeune fille [...] Nous sommes les héritiers de cette histoire”

³⁶ *Ibid.* Original reads: “Jeanne d’Arc a sa place dans notre mémoire collective à côté de Victor Hugo, à côté du général de Gaulle, à côté de Jean Moulin, à côté d’Aimé Césaire”

³⁷ *Ibid.* Original reads: “Il y a une filiation. Il y a un lien, tissé mystérieusement au travers des siècles”

³⁸ Original reads: “Et l’histoire de Jeanne d’Arc et du Dauphin, c’est une histoire extraordinaire. On y retrouve la mystique, la foi dans la dynastie, l’amour de la France, le redémarrage du combat pour son unité et sa grandeur”. Allocution de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, sur la vie dans les petites villes, 12 September 1991. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/917013300.html>

expressions of nation even as, as in 1870, that political and practical position of that same nation was weakened or under threat. In recent years, however, it is the far-right that has been most successful in placing Jeanne d’Arc at the centre of their particular narrative of the French nation. While the privileging of the hero figure of Jeanne d’Arc in identity discourses has long been a strategy adopted by the FN – as witnessed by the speeches given annually on 1 May in her honour by former party leader Jean-Marie Le Pen – with Marine Le Pen at the helm of the party the use of the heroic imagery and narrative has been intensified. As I explore in this section, the particular narrative potency of Jeanne d’Arc in the political narrative of nation lies not only – in a manner recalling the political power of the museum as explored in Chapter II – in the relationship of rupture and continuity that her story offers (a relationship of tradition and renewal especially exploited by the FN in their efforts to present their politics as consistent with an eternal France while also representing a break from the established political actors of the nation-state) but also in the ability to give an illusion of stability or constancy throughout history. This balancing of time-and-space enables Jeanne d’Arc to function as a chronotopic centre in the telling of the nation, creating the possibility for the story of France to be presented as a consistent narrative work and thus implying a constancy and consistency of spatio-temporal coordinates and/or logic. Therefore, analysing what it is that has seen Jeanne d’Arc function as a chronotopic centre in the mythical narrative of nation not only creates further insights into contemporary political strategies of identity (re)production but also offers a means of exploring emerging and changing patterns in the notion and portrayal of heroism in twenty-first century identity narratives.

A Nation Born from a Woman’s Heart

In her political rise, FN’s leader Marine Le Pen has worked hard to create for herself a formidable iconography. The party’s literature and images – especially those from the 2014 European elections in which the far-right gained a record 24% of the vote – frequently show her, arms outstretched or extended in victory salute, smiling or holding forth in the foreground of Frémiet’s gilded statue of Jeanne d’Arc in the centre of Paris. Marine Le Pen, the imagery says, is France’s new female warrior. She will fight for her people just as Jeanne d’Arc fought for hers. In her 2015 speech at the Front National’s annual May Day commemoration of the life of the saint, Marine Le Pen spoke of a woman who “symbolised

the spirit of resistance, faith in her country and the triumph of spirit”³⁹, who appeared when France was at its lowest point⁴⁰. To speak of Jeanne d’Arc was, thus, to speak of Marine Le Pen. Although, as discussed in more detail later, the identification with a female historical figure is of considerable importance in validating and enhancing Marine Le Pen as a female political leader (somewhat of a novelty on the French political scene), the significance of Jeanne d’Arc in French political and public consciousness extends beyond the fact of woman as warrior. Not only does the constancy of Jeanne d’Arc in French national imagery tell a story about the way in which the nation recognises itself but considering the role of Jeanne d’Arc in political expression today provides a means of understanding crises of and struggles for identity in contemporary France.

The story of Jeanne d’Arc has long been one of history wrapped in history. The Jeanne d’Arc that France knows today is largely that of Jules Michelet’s history of 1841, a mytho-historical figure captured in the words of a figure who himself has long since entered not only into history but also into the myth of France as nation and identity. For Michelet the role of historian was not a passive one; the historian, the teller of history, breathed life into the dead, not only to grant to these dead a second life but also to create communion between generations present and past⁴¹. History was for Michelet a socio-political project, one that needed the clear hand of the author – the medium – to permit it to play its intended role in the destiny of a people (Garo 1998)⁴². In writing the life of Jeanne d’Arc, therefore, Michelet was consciously creating a history to be instrumentalised in the service of the nation.⁴³ However, the Michelet-Jeanne d’Arc relationship also has something to tell us about the relationship between author and narrative hero.

Michelet’s history of France was a personal history, not only in the personhood that Michelet ascribed to the nation and the manner in which he sought to tell the stories of individuals both celebrated and previously silenced by history (Crossley 1993, p.42) but personal, most of all, in the role of the historian in history that Michelet illuminated, and

³⁹ Original reads: “*Elle symbolise à elle seule l’esprit de résistance, la foi en son pays et la triomphe de la volonté*” Discours de Marine Le Pen, 1 May 2015. Available at: <https://www.frontnational.com/2015/05/discours-de-marine-le-pen-vendredi-1er-mai-2015/>.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* Original reads: “*Jeanne d’Arc est apparue quand la France était à genoux*”

⁴¹ “I have exhumed [the forgotten dead] for a second life. Some were not born at a moment suitable to them ... History greets and renews these disinherited glories; it gives life to these dead men, resuscitates them. Its justice thus associates those who have not lived at the same time, offers reparation to some who appeared so briefly only to vanish. Now they love with us, and we feel we are their relatives, their friends. Thus is constituted a family, a city shared by the living and the dead” (Preface to *L’Histoire du XIX^e siècle* (1873)).

⁴² For the writing of history is always a story-telling, “[upholding] the fiction of the past [...] so that the scholarly play of history can ‘take place’” (de Certeau 1988). The chronicler is the history-teller (Benjamin 2006, p.370).

⁴³ “Let us always remember, people of France, that our nation was born from a woman’s heart, from her tenderness and her tears, the blood that she shed for us” (Michelet 1888, p.xiv)

perhaps indeed initiated. Much as Michelet was boastful of his role in giving to France the history that the nation merited, he recognised also that in writing this history he was writing his own story. “It is a fact that history, in the progress of time, makes the historian much more than it is made by him. My book has created me. It is who I became its handiwork. The son has produced the father” (Michelet 2013[1869], pp.143-144). The historian may have been writing of the manner in which his historical researches had forged him as a man; nonetheless, it is just as true that Michelet’s *History of France* was also to create the historian as figure of history by writing Michelet into the broader narrative of that nation that he had glorified – and one might say created – through his own writing⁴⁴. A successful writing or reproduction of a heroic narrative has the potential to elevate not only the heroic character but also the person associated as author with that narrative.

Marina Warner, in the new preface to her 1981 book *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism*, claims that Marine Le Pen commits an “abuse of history” in her writing of the story of Jeanne d’Arc (Warner 2013, p.xxv). However, any calling on history is of necessity an abuse; a selection and omission, an elevation and forgetting. The figure of Jeanne d’Arc provides a mixture of recorded fact and mythical imagining that facilitates both the playing of politics and the anchoring of narrative in selected certainties. For while, as catalogued by both Warner and by Michel Winock (1992), there are scores of celebrated works that mythologise, eulogise or mock Jeanne d’Arc, the power of her legend lies in the fact that it is much more than a legend. The original story of Jeanne d’Arc was recorded in her time and stands up to any and all historical scrutiny. Both her trial and her post-mortem rehabilitation were documented and their record ensures that Jeanne d’Arc can be called upon today as a historical figure rather than one of pure legend.

That Jeanne d’Arc exists in document as well as in legend makes it possible for those who present themselves as inheritors of her legacy to place themselves in an actual historical lineage. However, record and documentation notwithstanding, the many hundreds of years that have passed, the many, many tellings and representations of this one individual have seen the figure of Jeanne d’Arc become one of, as Dominique Goy-Blanquet puts it, “unique malleability” (2003, p.ix), to a degree not possible with more recent national heroes such as Jean Jaurès. “What she was is lost” (Goy-Blanquet 2003, p.xi); she is a void (Ibid.) or a cypher (Warner 2013, p.xxxvi). Therefore, Jeanne d’Arc has both the historical appeal of a figure whose life can be marked in linear time and the romantic potential of character located

⁴⁴ Indeed the citation at note 16 would suggest that Michelet was all too conscious of the role of history in giving him life beyond death.

“in the timeless dimension of myth” (Warner 20103, p.xxxvi). Small wonder then that, as Warner and Winock detail, political figures have long called upon the image of Jeanne d’Arc to validate either their person or their image.

Thus Jeanne d’Arc has been, as the title of Goy-Blanquet’s 2003 edited volume proclaims, *A Saint for All Reasons*; hers is a pliable memory, a memory open to dispute, a functional memory (Winock, 1992). She embodies the abstract principles of Frenchness and Resistance while retaining sufficient potential for her embodiments of these ideals to be appropriated from and by all sides. That Jeanne acted as a messenger of God but was later condemned by the very Church for and to whom she wished to speak saw her claimed by both the religious Right and the anti-clerical left. Her appeal to the Catholic public is evident, while after the split of church and state secular nationalists employed Jeanne d’Arc in the assertion of their patriotic credentials by presenting her actions less as the manifestation of Divine Right than of national imperative. In Michelet’s account “God is not denied but relativised. The real agent of the history is instead the People. Of which Jeanne is the sublime incarnation” (Winock 1992, p.702). Similarly, while Jeanne’s provincial background facilitated her portrayal as epitome of the simple people of the rural provinces (Bibliothèque National de France, 2007), rising urbanisation and centralisation of power in the nineteenth century saw Jeanne increasingly claimed for urban France, not least through Socialist efforts to rally the (largely urban) Socialist populations through the political messages of patriotism (Winock 1992, pp.706-707).

This facility of being all things to all (French) people, of reflecting the ideals and values projected upon her, without the degree of manipulation or re-interpretation that was necessary to make of Jaurès a symbol of the Right, have seen Jeanne d’Arc serve as both as a figure of unity and as a figure of division. In the Third Republic especially, the republican political elite called on the figure of Jeanne d’Arc to bring together an ever-divided people, to rally them as one behind the idea of an essential, universal France. When a national, political debate was held in the latter years of the nineteenth century on the merit of creating a national day of commemoration, the significance of this proposed day was contrasted to Bastille Day – “the celebration of liberty” – in being characterised as a celebration of patriotism and of independence (Winock 1992, pp. 708-709). For while the story of the Revolution is one of domestic strife, of internal enmity, Jeanne d’Arc’s tale makes it possible for the rancour to be projected outwards. That the victory of Jeanne d’Arc was a victory over an external enemy,

over an invader “driven out of France”⁴⁵ provided a more uncontroversial, less divisive narrative of French national identity than that of the Revolution of 1789, or of Jaurès, Jules Ferry, Hugo or any of the hero figures of modern France, generally associated with one or other of the ‘two Frances’. Whereas the emotions surrounding the birth of France as modern nation-state are coloured by the fact that the descendants of both victors and vanquished are co-occupiers of the country today, the legacy of Jeanne d’Arc is much less complicated. *I was willing to believe*: Jeanne d’Arc’s political cry is one that serves better to inspire than to divide. Thus, when Maurice Barrès, then president of the League of Patriots, launched in 1920 a new campaign for a national day of recognition he did so able to claim that “No matter what one’s religious, political or philosophical opinions may be, there is no one in France for whom Jeanne d’Arc does not fulfil the profoundest veneration. Each one of us can see in her the personification of our ideal”. The context was somewhat different this time around, however. The France to which Barrès spoke may no longer have been the France of which he spoke; this was a France that, while enjoying victory over an (external) enemy of long-standing, was also (as were many of its neighbours) embedding its internal differences into formal social and political cleavages of left and right. Barrès himself espoused a nationalism that was insular rather than universal in its aspirations and this, along with the pending canonisation of Jeanne d’Arc, may have been decisive in subsequent narrative positionings of Jeanne d’Arc as a figure of the conservative right.

And perhaps it was, anyway, too late. For Michel Winock “the Dreyfus affair and its consequences had swept away the dream of nation unanimity”. Instead, “the myth [of Jeanne d’Arc] became exclusive, unequivocal, aggressive” (Winock 1992, p.708). The very things that endowed the figure of Jeanne d’Arc with the potential to unify the nation became the means by which the nation highlighted its internal differences to political or ideological ends. The Jew who did not embody the Nation as she did, the Church who had killed her, the ungodly Socialist who denied the voice of God that had guided her, the Cosmopolitan whose sophistication and materialism was in opposition to her humble simplicity: if Jeanne d’Arc was the incarnation of France at its purest then France’s enemies could be known through negative comparison with her ideal. Her fluid ideal. “The French do not love the French but they love France” (Winock 1992, p.727). The figure of Jeanne d’Arc, somewhere between myth and reality, “a life lived on the borderline between human and celestial nature” (Gregory of Nyssa, cited in Warner 2013, p.3), allowed the French the illusion of loving one

⁴⁵ *Bouter les Anglais hors de la France*. A phrase attributed to Jeanne d’Arc, the longer version of which is “I have come here from God, the king of Heaven, body for body, to drive you out of France.”

another by providing a personage who was the embodiment of the ideal of France but also facilitated the setting of boundaries of Frenchness by fixing in and around Jeanne d’Arc certain representations of the nation.

Thus it is that today Marine Le Pen can stand in front of the gilded statue of Jeanne d’Arc in the centre of Paris, arms raised, and encourage the juxtaposition to tell her public: *c’est moi la France*. Like Jeanne d’Arc I will chase our enemies out of France, like Jeanne d’Arc I have been called by some higher force to lead. The Front National is not content with implied symbolism, however. In recent years they have actively mobilised the celebration of Jeanne d’Arc to challenge explicitly the Socialist identity of France, as seen in the action of commemorating the life and death of Jeanne d’Arc⁴⁶ from its slot later in the month to the first of May, to International Labour Day, a national holiday in France and the symbol of European socialism, when the whole country shuts down and the streets of towns and cities play host to marches organised by the country’s powerful union and labour movements. The staging of the rival commemoration of Jeanne d’Arc on this day is a way of calling the very idea of France into question, of wresting the right to its identity from the current ruling socio-political class, of permitting the FN leader to declare that “to celebrate Jeanne d’Arc is to celebrate the nation”⁴⁷. It is also – as explored further in Chapter V – a means of engaging the third component of the mythical triad: ritual, the popular participation in and enactment of the heroic narrative, without which the narrative cannot hope to function mythically and resonate as identity with individuals and the collective. This aspect of ritual is one of the factors that elevates Jeanne d’Arc above other hero figures that feature in the *roman national*, the recurring, participatory aspect elevating the narrative from the page to lived existence.

Notwithstanding the success of the far-right in building a close association between the heroic narrative of Jeanne d’Arc and the national identity narrative that the FN promotes, the battle for the right to represent Jeanne d’Arc is not yet over. One of efforts of the political establishment to reclaim the Saint as a figure of universal, revolutionary France can be seen in a project in Rouen in Normandy, a town whose identity is inscribed with and central to the legend of Jeanne d’Arc. The *Historial Jeanne d’Arc*, a project backed largely by Socialist politicians in the region, is a museum dedicated to the personality and actions of the French heroine. At the launch of the project in 2012 (the museum had its official opening in March 2015) Laurent Fabius, former Socialist prime minister, current minister for Foreign Affairs and president of the regional organisation responsible for the new museum, presented his

⁴⁶ Previous commemorations were, in the past, marked later in the month.

⁴⁷ *Op. cit.* note 139. Original reads: “*Commémorer Jeanne d’Arc, c’est fêter la Nation*”

visions as “a double ambition. Both to retrace the story of Jeanne d’Arc and to tell the (hi)story of this story. That is: the myth” (Bruet 2012). For its advocates, the project responds to a dual necessity, one that is civic as well as historical (La CREA 2013). Whereas the historical necessity was that of restoring Jeanne d’Arc as a hero of all of France, the civic politics of the planned museum draw from a belief that “Jeanne is not a figure of the past: she embodies even today the image of a very modern woman” (Socialist Mayor of Rouen Valerie Fourneyron; cited in Bruet 2012). And so, six hundred years after her death, political elites vie for the control of the image of Jeanne d’Arc, hoping that this association can bestow upon them a heightened validation and authority in their roles as public representatives.

Here again is Jeanne d’Arc serving the role of literary chronotope in the story of France, as a figure that stabilises the narrative and centres the fundamental narrative event by providing a dynamic place for the projection and reflection of different attitudes toward time and space. For, as noted in the previous chapter, the political significance of the chronotope is not least that it not only enables a telling to be anchored but also sets limits to what can be told:

Bakhtin’s example of chronotopes suggest that, far from being only inventions of a writer’s imaginations, they are more importantly instances of socially determining structurings of practices that set limits not only on what can possibly *happen* with their effective confines but also what can be *perceived* and even *imagined* by agents acting within their constraints (White 1977, p.240).

Winning the battle for the representation of Jeanne d’Arc, therefore, makes it possible for the victor to become the narrator, to set limits to the story and thus to determine what actions or attitudes belong within the narrative account that is ‘France’.

Virgin Warriors in the Twenty-first Century

That the figure of Jeanne d’Arc is one that has found new resonance and employment as the chronotopic centring and limiting of narratives of Frenchness is due in no small part to the failure of other traditional anchors of nation-state identity. In a time when institutional politics have fallen out of favour with the public, when enforced austerity has made opulence and grandeur distasteful to many, when the decline of organised religion and the growth in machine interaction and changes in social organisation have heightened individualism in society, the figure of Jeanne d’Arc – this singular, modest, humble figure of integrity whose institutional ties are excused by the fact that the institutions to which she was tied were responsible for her death – is one that can still be identified with, looked up to. Real enough

to ground the narratives constructed around her while uncertain enough to provoke idealisation, imagination and projection, Jeanne d'Arc is “the purest figure in the national pantheon” (Bibliothèque Nationale de France 2007).

However, there are other elements that make of Jeanne d'Arc a particularly suitable hero figure for twenty-first century attempts at identity (re)production. Not least of these is that Jeanne d'Arc was, uniquely in the *roman national* of French history, a woman. This fact alone lends her some of the exceptionalism that is, as we saw in Chapter I, necessary to the character of the mythical hero, an exceptionalism based on the fact that woman-as-hero is a rare feature of modern national narratives. Added to this is the particularity of feminine heroism alluded to by the Mayor of Rouen at the launch of the museum in Rouen: the ‘modern-ness’ of a female hero enabling the hero narrative to be more accurately reflective of and resonant with life in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Sarkozy referred explicitly to this aspect in his 2012 speech in Vaucouleurs, remarking that it was the fact of Jeanne’s womanhood in an era when courage was considered an exclusively masculine trait that made of her story such a modern one⁴⁸. Therefore, identification with Jeanne d'Arc not only creates the potential for female public figures to engage in the politics of mythical identity construction through the narrative tactics of real-and-represented – Jeanne d'Arc featured in the campaign discourse of Ségolène Royal (along with Marine Le Pen, one of the more prominent female figures on the French political scene in the early twenty-first century) in the run up to the presidential elections in 2007 (“I include without hesitation in the lineage of women whose succession I claim Jeanne d'Arc, rebellious daughter, daughter of the people”⁴⁹) and Royal dedicated a chapter to Jeanne in her 2013 book entitled *Courage: That Beautiful Concept*⁵⁰ – but also enables the narrative of nation to be presented as still relevant in the twenty-first century.

This is particularly important in the case of an ultra-conservative party such as the Front National, and in this the character of Jeanne d'Arc once again provides the elements that produce the relationship of rupture and continuity that in turn facilitates the renewal of the myth of national identity. The emphasis on female heroism marks out the FN as a progressive party, suited to the changed and changing society of a new millennium. However,

⁴⁸ *Op. cit.* note 136. Original reads: “*Jeanne, la Pucelle, qui a suscité tant de sarcasmes de la part de ceux pour lesquels le courage ne pouvait être que masculine, grande modernité dans cette histoire*”

⁴⁹ Original reads: “*c'est leur legs que je revendique. Et, [...], j'y range dans cette lignée des femmes, et sans hésiter, Jeanne d'Arc, fille du peuple et fille rebelle*”. Discours de Ségolène Royal, candidate à l'élection présidentielle, à l'occasion de la Journée des Femmes, 7 March 2007. Available at: <http://sites.univ-provence.fr/veronis/Discours2007/transcript.php?n=Royal&p=2007-03-07>

⁵⁰ My translation. Original title in French is *Cette Belle Idée du Courage* (Grasset, Paris).

the particular female heroism on which they call is one that, on closer scrutiny, corresponds rather to the conservative agenda of their members.

When Sarkozy spoke of the ‘modern-ness’ of Jeanne d’Arc he did so using her sobriquet “La Pucelle”, a title used by writers and politicians as interchangeable with her given name of Jeanne. La Pucelle translates to English as ‘the virgin’ (a virginity referred to in the ‘maid’ of the English-language equivalent ‘Maid of Orléans’). While her gender might initially appear to render Jeanne d’Arc as an exception to the hero-type analysed in Chapter I, the portrayal of gender as embodied by Jeanne d’Arc in fact reinforces this hero-type of the mythical narrative. La Pucelle might be a figure of unique malleability yet she is consistently portrayed as falling into one or all of the categories of maid, warrior, saint. For much put-upon Ségolène Royal it is Jeanne d’Arc the combatant (Royal 2013), for the Christian, conservative FN she is all three. In film representations, Jeanne is a peasant maid clad in rags (e.g. Georges Méliès 1900), a saintly victim (Carl Theoder Dreyer 1928; Roberto Rossellini 1954) or a strong warrior clad in armour (Luc Besson 1999). The story of Jeanne d’Arc is thus either (or both) the story of a hero whose femininity is not challenging to the male dominance – Jeanne the pure, the humble – or of a hero who falls into tradition hero-types of warrior and/or saint – a warrior Jeanne with shingled hair and in male clothing. Neither of these portrayals of woman challenges traditional definitions of the hero figure; in fact the latter case reinforces the hero types of the traditional mythical narrative and, by extension, the traditional mythical narrative itself.

This could be a further factor in the contrasting receptions of the hero-narratives of the far-right and the centre/centre-left. The theoretical explorations of Chapter I and the discussions of this chapter would suggest that, just as a mythical construction needs a mythical hero, the construction of a discourse around a heroic figure produces a traditionally mythical narrative. This is in keeping with the politics of the Front National, who promote a definition of identity fundamentally based on physical space and borders, a dichotomous identity where one is or one is not, an identity of modernity where space can be felt and time is known to advance linearly. However, that the importance and exclusivity of this identity as promoted by the FN has become more pronounced in recent years can be attributed in part to the uncertainty of an era in which modern experiences and understandings of identity are increasingly challenged. Experiences of time and space have been affected enormously by lives lived in and with cyberspace, a space that was once considered virtual but that we should by now recognise as real. The reliance on the hero-figure and the hero narrative represents one form of reaction to such new and emerging spatio-temporal identities, an

attempt to reassert the dominance of the mythical identity of nation in the face of threats to its spatio-temporal basis as well as to a loss of faith in the traditional politics of the nation-state provoked by domestic and international economic, humanitarian and security crises. This enhanced emphasis on the mythical identity of the nation is a choice made by the far-right and ultra-nationalists in a pattern that can be seen across Europe. An alternative, one that is explored in the next chapter, is to adapt that manner in which the mythical elements of hero and ritual are discursively constructed in order to take into account these changing spatio-temporal realities and thus to preserve the mythical narrative of identity: that is, the nation as the privileged form of belonging with others in the world. However, and as I consider below, it is possible that these choices will not be much longer available to the political class. The same pressures and developments that threaten the narrative of the nation as primordial collective identity of the modern era are affecting also the possibilities for the creation of the modern narrative hero.

THE DEATH OF THE HERO

Removing Heroic Distance

Vico wrote of the three stages of gods, heroes and men through which the nation passes. However, he doesn't tell us what it is that comes after gods, heroes, and men. Do we remain in the third age of men or does the wheel turn and we find ourselves with gods once more in our presence, poking and prodding at our destinies? If heroism has been at the centre of our narratives and our societies and has thus been instrumental in our efforts to make a place for ourselves in the world, what then happens to our stories, our societies, our belongings once the hero no longer has a place among us?

The myth of the Abbé Pierre has at its disposal a precious asset: the physiognomy of the Abbé himself. It is a fine physiognomy, which clearly displays all the signs of apostleship: a Franciscan haircut, a missionary's beard, all this made complete by the sheepskin coat of the worker-priest and the staff of the pilgrim. Thus are united the marks of legend and those of modernity. (Barthes 2000, p.47)

The modern hero has been he who, like the Abbé Pierre, could unite a modern character with the marks of legend. As was seen in Chapter III, the hero of the narrative of the modern nation is necessarily 'normal' in that s/he must be recognisable as being of (wo)man but s/he must still retain something of the unique, exceptional or distant of the traditional hero for the narrative to be structured effectively around his/her character. That

which sets the modern hero apart from his/her peers might be an iconography or physical appearance: Abbé Pierre's physiognomy, Napoleon's bicorne hat, de Gaulle's kepi and uniform, the heroism of these last two leaders enhanced by spatial distance, both journeying from over the sea (De Gaulle returning from his war residence in London, Napoleon arriving first from Corsica and later from his exile in Elba), the messianic heroes of their time. But what of the political and narrative heroes of today, an era in which our structures and institutions are those of the logic of modernity but where developments in society and communication have undermined the spatial and temporal assumptions upon which these structures have been built? Can today's political leaders still speak in the language of the deliverer and prophet? The theorists of myth and hero would say no. For Otto Rank, "he whose parents, brothers and sisters, or playmates, are known to us, is not so readily conceded to be a prophet" (Rank 1990, pp.57-58). Orrin Klapp agrees that for a public-figure to retain aspects of legend, he or she must not be too closely known to those he/she commands or inspires. "Distance builds the "great man" (Klapp 1948, p.138). However, I would argue that the possibility for such distance no longer exists. Or, if it does, it is being rapidly eroded.

The heroes of lore were kept at distance in the telling – they lived their lives long ago or far away or were rendered out-of-time by a belief in their exceptional acts or characteristics. A necessary out-of-timeness since, as Bakhtin noted "it is impossible to achieve greatness in one's own time" (Bakhtin 1981, p.18). This holds true for heroes of history as it does for heroes of lore or fictional narrative. History might be built around great men but it is thanks to the distance that history creates between the narrative and the reader that such men remain great. Therefore, the greatness of heroes in modern time has relied to significant degree on the degree of distance of their recounting, a distance that existed both in oral traditions of story-telling and in the temporal lapse between the writing and reading of written and printed text.

However, just as an oral tradition of story-telling was succeeded and, indeed displaced, by the advent of the printing press and the spread of literacy so too has the printed word been succeeded and displaced by digital technologies of communication. In this, the immediate has replaced the delayed recounting of traditional narrative modes, both in the fictional and historical genres. Digital technologies and new communication platforms promote a sharing of knowledge and information that obliterates distances in both time and space; the word is instant and instantaneously universal. This not only provokes a dramatic change in means and methods of story-telling but also serves to eliminate the distance that is necessary for the creation of the character of the hero, as understood in mythical narratives up

to this point, and to destroy the possibility of a heroic out-of-timeness. All time becomes of the instant; one is either in it or not.

This changed experience of time is reflected in the celebrity culture of our era. The notion of celebrity is, of course, not new. The nineteenth century in particular was notable for its celebrities of society, fashion, military and the arts, a celebrity of figures such as Garibaldi, Beau Brummell, Napoleon, Byron and Lola Montez, a celebrity that, once again, can be linked to the greater spread, through technological and educational advances, of printed media (see for example Mole 2007 on Byron and the new magazine culture). However, these celebrities still had something of lore about them. They might have been examples of a new familiarity that saw popular heroes becoming more men than gods yet they remained at a practical remove from the vast majority of their populations and thus could never be fully known, granting them a somewhat folkloric character even in their own time. Not only has that distance been made impossible by new communication methods but it is no longer sought in the making of the celebrities of today. Instead information is an asset; the goal has become to be closer to one's 'followers'. The aspiration is no longer that of the hero – to ascend to a higher plane – but rather that of a new kind of leading character, with whom the aspiration is to share the space of a moment. The lore that was associated even with the popular print era of the nineteenth century onwards was facilitated not only by the temporal and spatial distance that characterised the relationships of that modern age but also by the nature of information of pre-digital society. The lore that saw such nineteenth century characters as Irish politician and folk hero Daniel O'Connor attain mythical status grew from rumours and tales that were both varied and never fully refutable. In the compression of space and time of cyberspace, as well in as the universality of its reach, this variety has been reduced – the viral phenomenon – and the information-sharing mechanisms turn lore into gossip. While in the next chapter I look at how ritual practices are adapted within the mythical identity of nation to the fact of the waning hero, I first explore here some of the potential effects of changes to hero-type on narrative, including ways in which the reduction or alteration of hero status can affect the construction and reception of a narrative. I have chosen as example the myth-type narratives of the video-game and super-hero, where the heightened portrayals of a classical heroism make it possible for the impact on narrative of changes in the conceptualisation of the hero figure to be more easily tracked, focussing on the specific hero-change of the ascension of women to hero status in order to illustrate how such a change leaves neither narrative nor traditional conceptualisation of hero unchanged

Gamergate and the Narrative Impact of Woman-as-Hero

While the advent of the modern era can also be understood in the move from epic to novel as dominant narrative genre, in one of society's newer narrative forms the influence of the epic is still considerable. One of the most prevalent forms of story-telling in video games today is that of the hero quest, in the tradition and pattern of Joseph Campbell's monomyth (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. 2013, pp.193-228; Cassar 2013, pp.89-97). The quest narrative of these games mirrors Campbell's framework of the epic journey, the quest of the archetypal mythical hero, he who is exceptional, iconic, caught between gods and men (Campbell 1993, p.39). Both the character construction of the hero and the structure of his progress through his story-world in these quest games reflect the stages of the typical hero journey as defined by Campbell in his *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and as made popular among screenwriters and game designers through Christopher Vogler's *The Writer's Journey*, a simplified and applied adaptation of Campbell's hero-quest model, designed for use in and much lauded by the film industry (the book's subtitle is: *Mythic Structure for Writers*).

In the specific case of mythically-structured narratives in gaming narratives, analyses of patterns of story-telling in popular video games has shown the hero of the gaming world to be, for the most part, 'traditional' in the Western sense of being white and male. The seminal study of the portrayal of gender in gaming, Tracy Dietz's 1997 'An Examination of Violence and Gender Role Portrayals in Video Games', showed the heroes of popular video games to be overwhelmingly white and male, with only 15% of the sample portraying women as heroes or action characters, and even these action roles were often in a supporting capacity to a central male hero (Dietz 1997, pp.432-439). The roles occupied by women were largely those of sex object or damsel in distress but the most common portrayal of women in the game studied "was actually the complete absence of women at all" (*Ibid.*, p.433). This early analysis was confirmed by later studies, such as the 2009 'virtual census' that contrasted the 85.23/14.77 percent divide of men to women as characters in popular video games to the real world population divide of 50.9/49.1 percent (Williams et al. 2009, p.824). Once again, the women that did feature were shown to occupy in many cases secondary roles while most non-white populations were also under-represented (*Ibid.*, pp.824-827). The primary characters of these myth-like narratives were therefore consistent with the traditional hero-types of Western myth while the portrayal of women, as categorised by cultural critic Anita Sarkeesian in the Feminist Frequency 'Tropes vs Women' project, more often corresponded to one of the standard tropes of: damsel in distress, woman as reward, as background decoration or as a female version of an already-established male character or male character-

type⁵¹. Considering, therefore, the reaction of these traditional myth-type narratives to changes in the conception of hero and heroism can offer insights into the ability of myth to adapt to significant change in one of the components of its mythical triad.

The conflict that arose within the gaming community in 2014 – a conflict that was to come to be known as the Gamergate controversy – suggests a defensive reaction, a prioritising of narrative rather than an adaptive balancing of the triad in favour of the myth. While the trigger for the Gamergate controversy was a personal romantic dispute between two gamers, the issue was soon to spread throughout the gaming world. On foot of an account of their relationship that was published and circulated on-line by her ex-boyfriend, a games developer was accused of having solicited positive reviews of one of her games by initiating a romantic relationship with a review journalist. The game in question, *Depression Quest*, was a quest narrative of a very different sort – an interactive fiction mapping the everyday struggles of a sufferer of depression – and the developer, Zoë Quinn, was one of a growing number of successful, increasingly well-known women in the video-game industry. The attacks on Quinn soon escalated and expanded into an extensive and intense campaign of harassment against these prominent women, in a campaign presented as one of concern for the preservation of the gaming community's tradition, values and identity. In the Gamergate controversy, therefore, can be found an illustration not only of the interaction of real and represented identities within a community but also the perceived threats to identity felt when that community's traditional notions of heroism were challenged.

Gamergate's campaign of extreme abuse and harassment against a number of female members of the gaming community illustrates how the portrayal of men, women and gender-relations bled out from the fiction of the games to the reality of lived existence, provoked by the resentment at a "feminisation" of both power and narrative in the gaming culture (i.e. the development of non-traditional narratives such as *Depression Quest* and the increasing number of women in hero-author roles). Gamergate illustrated how a certain narrative of identity – both in fictionalised and in lived form – can come under threat when the notions of heroism, example and aspiration around which the narrative is built is altered. In the case of Gamergate, rather than embracing the changes to the narrative or adapting narrative structures to the changed realities of 'hero', a section of the male population of the gaming community chose to try to retain the hero-type of the violent, misogynistic quest narratives by

⁵¹ Available on the Feminist Frequency website at <https://www.feministfrequency.com>

engaging in violent, misogynistic abuse of the female individuals who posed the threat to their mythical narrative.

While the quest-narratives of video games offers one example of how traditionally mythical narratives have struggled to adapt to changing societal norms of leadership and heroism, the equally traditional narrative of the superhero story offers examples of how the narrative genre is affected when these same changing social realities are embraced. Recent years have seen an increase in women in lead roles in popular comic-book, super-hero or fantasy narratives (e.g. Jessica Jones, Agent Carter, Supergirl, Star Wars). However, while this adaptation of a traditionally-structured narrative genre to social reality has encouraged for a renewal of the genre and enhanced its attraction to a broader audience, the ascension of a greater number of non-traditional heroes (e.g. women and non-white characters) to the role of narrative protagonist has not left the conceptualisation of the role of hero unchanged.

One of the most heralded new super-hero narratives of recent years has been Jessica Jones (a comic-book creation made into a hugely successful web television series in 2015). Although Jessica Jones enjoys the same status of lead character as any traditional super-hero protagonist, the role she occupies is not that of the classical hero. She is a flawed and damaged protagonist, very much more on the level of (wo)man than god notwithstanding her extra-human superpowers. This portrayal of a fundamentally flawed and fallible lead character can be ascribed to a degree on the factors considered in the section above on the death of the hero. However, it should also be recognised that the classical hero-types as encountered in Chapter I were shaped on and for almost-exclusively male social and political roles. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that, in ascending to heroic status, the female hero should begin to influence the shaping and definition of heroism, rendering the traditional portrayal of hero if not invalid then at least inadequate. However, in her reinventing of the superhero protagonist Jessica Jones is not being lauded as a new type of hero; she is instead being celebrated as an ‘anti-hero’ (Knight 2009, p.144; Hamilton 2015), suggesting that non-traditional narrative protagonists do not fit easily into the traditional ‘hero’ role of heroic narratives. Rather than influencing a rewriting of the hero role to accommodate them, it might be that these new non-traditional heroes are instead provoking a reformatting of the narrative in a manner that, as discussed in the section below, moves away from the structure that has underpinned not only the narrative genres of the modern era but also our dominant identity narratives.

The Antagonistic Protagonist: Rise of the Fool and Villain

The following chapter explores how an emphasis on the last element of the mythical triad – ritual – is employed in political discursive strategies of identity (re)production in contemporary France in order to stabilise or preserve the dominance of the mythical identity of nation-state even as the other mythical components of national hero and narrative are being challenged, altered or undermined. However, here I consider the related possibility of the emergence of alternative narratives of collective belonging. Orin Klapp's work on the hero, in which he groups together heroes, villains and fools as fundamental social symbols to which the social mass reacts and responds (Klapp 1948, 1954), is relevant in this regard. Klapp observed that these three social actors of hero, villain and fool can be separated by as little as “[an act] performed too soon or too late” (Klapp 1954, p.59); a misplaced out-of-timeness. Therefore that which sets the individual as hero rather than as villain or fool is not any fundamental difference of character; it is rather in the contextualisation of the actions. With the conditions necessary for the creation of a mythic hero jeopardised by the removal of the heroic distance, perhaps it is to the fool and villain we should be looking for the emergent or alternative narratives of today's society. There is certainly evidence in popular cultural and social narratives of the last several years that stories are being constructed around figures of villain and fool rather than the starring the hero of traditional mythical narratives. This can be perceived in television series (which, as Metcalf (2002) and Larabee (2013) observe, function somewhat as did the popular serials and novels of the nineteenth century) and the rise of the anti-hero as narrative protagonist, with some of the most popular and critically influential narratives are being constructed around figures that are more anti-hero than flawed hero. The ‘Second Golden Age of Television’ (Martin 2013) began with *The Sopranos* and *The West Wing*: anti-hero and hero. However, fifteen years later it is the anti-hero who has triumphed in the popular imagination, for example Walter White in *Breaking Bad* and Piper Chapman in *Orange is the New Black*, two leading characters who owe their stories very much to an out-of-timeness, accidents of time that conspired to produce villains rather than heroes but, crucially for the narrative structure, villains as protagonists rather than antagonists.

Similarly, in the social and political sphere, many emerging narratives have as their centre not the hero-type of the myth – the Warrior, Emperor, King of the mythical typology or the de Gaulle, Napoleon, Churchill of political myth – but rather what I might call, after Bakhtin, the fool in the square. The simple fool who speaks the truth: Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning and – a less obvious and more complex example (due to his role in one of

the great traditional narratives of identity) – Pope Francis. This idea of the figure who goes out in the world as a truth-teller – often in the face of public opinion – can be traced from the parrhesiastes⁵² of Greece through the Middle Ages, where the fool was an accepted figure of society, given licence to laugh at convention or authority and to tell truth through simplicity and apparent lack of understanding (Bakhtin 1981, pp.159-163). If in narrative the fool and the villain are antagonist or accomplices/accessories of the hero protagonist then the narrative form remains unchanged (even if their presence alters aspects of the hero’s journey or of the novel’s unfolding). However, as Bakhtin observes in his study of the history of the novel, when the fool, rogue or villain becomes the protagonist of the novel, the narrative itself is altered (1991, p.165). While the hero of the modern novel reflected and contributed to the consciousness of the emergence of the self-determining individual in society, the replacement in narrative of hero with fool subverts this development and provokes a re-examination of that new individualism so soon taken for granted. With the modern novel so closely linked in spatiotemporal logic and in trends of political and social emergence with the modern nation-state, such subversion was, as in the case of works of parody, a challenge not only to the literary form but also to the dominant socio-political structures. The narrative of the fool is not mythic; it is the narrative of the common “natural” man (Bakhtin 1991, p164), it is the narrative not of lofty ambition but of the humanity of the public square (Ibid. p.165). That the heroes of popular narratives – both literary and socio-political – are being displaced by the fools and truth-tellers or the villains and rogues, therefore suggests a desire to create new narratives of identity around figures of example and identification that no longer link to the higher plane of transcendence. Instead of aspiring to a level above, these new non-heroic heroes return to the level below – the level of common humanity. However, it remains to be seen which of the narratives of the fool and the villain will advance more with the fall of the hero. Will the shift in narrative from the mythical to the level of the human result in “battle against vulgar convention” and a new truth and honesty of personal responsibility and collective community, as Bakhtin would have for the story of the fool (p.159), or will the return be not to the individual in the public square but merely to the individual, the villainous narrative of self-interest and pure-individuality?

⁵² Thanks to Professor Mick Dillon and his seminars on parrhesia at the 2013 Gregynog Ideas Lab for pointing me in this direction. See also Michel Foucault’s Collège de France lectures on the Courage of Truth.

The Death of the Author

The final part of this chapter considers what might happen to narrative authority should the traditional hero-myth continue to wane until it is no longer the dominant means of structuring belonging and collective identity. The figure of the author has been a feature in the production of the modern narrative, in both the fictional form of the novel and the socio-historical construction of the modern nation-state to which it is so closely related. The French historians of the nineteenth century not only wrote the story of the nation into history but also, in the process, elevated the role of historian to new heights of socio-political influence and personal prestige. A modern tradition of authored history that, in the French context, began with François Guizot, Jules Michelet and Ernest Lavisse and that has contributed to the literary and popular celebrity of, *inter alia*, Max Gallo, Stéphane Bern and Lorànt Deutsch. The political strategies of identity (re)production encountered thus far, such as the discursive exploitation of modern sacred spaces or the instrumentalisation of the hero figure in the narrative construction of the nation, can thus also be interpreted through the concept of authorship; that is, by provoking an association with the novelistic role of author the initiator/narrator of a political narrative discourse can make it possible for the implied author to write him/herself heroically into that same narrative.

It is useful to turn once again to the insights of twentieth century literary criticism to understand better the concept of “implied authorship” and how it can affect our insights into contemporary political discursive strategies of identity (re)production. The term, made popular by Wayne C. Booth in his 1961 book *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, refers to the manner in which the author is understood by the reader through the text. The implied author is thus a joint construction of the writer of the text and the reader, a reconstruction by the reader of the author-character from the signs or clues left in the text. These signs can be, and in the case of the modern novel usually are, conveyed by the text’s narrator: his character, his construction, his actions as well as the decisions and selections made in the construction of the text’s story-world, its limits, its logic, its particularities (Booth 1983; Schmid 2013, §3-7). Therefore, while the political orator cannot lay claim to the title of ‘author’ as we might understand it in a literary or academic sense, s/he can hope to make use of the narrative power of the implied author; that is, to construct an image of him/herself through the text and to implicate him/herself in the narrative through identification with narrator, lead character and/or story-world.

The particularity of the author-hero relationship is one of the distinguishing features of the modern novelistic narrative. Whereas the realistic nature of these modern narratives

facilitates, as we have seen, the construction of real through representation and the construction of the author through identification with the hero, it is characteristic of the novelistic narrative that the author is never wholly subsumed into his work (Bakhtin 1981, p.256), just as the boundary between real and represented can never be fully erased in the modern novel. The fact that there is always an incomplete correspondence between author and text means that there is always a role for the reader in the narrative act that is distinct from that of both author and hero. In Bakhtin's earlier essay 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity', he shows that the relationship between author and hero is a defining factor in the determination of narrative form (Bakhtin 1990, p.164). When the distance between author and hero is removed and/or when the text ceases to be a co-creation of author and reader the text ceases to be an aesthetic narrative (*Ibid.*, p.22). In such a situation we would no longer be in the form or register of the novel, the novelistic mechanisms of real-and-represented and chronotopic construction would no longer hold and the narrative component of the mythical production would thus need to be revisited and re-evaluated.

The possibility of exerting authority over the narrative and thus of writing oneself as hero character into the story of nation is challenged by the fact that techniques of writing have moved on from those that gave birth to the novel, giving rise in turn to new narrative forms. It might be reasonable to suppose, therefore, that new understandings of identity are arising around these new narrative forms, identities that no longer operate with the narrative genre of either nation or novel, identities that have different understandings of author and hero. In theorising the history of the book in Western culture, David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (2005, p.17) identify three phases in the spread of written literature: the movement from oral to written cultures, the movement from literacy to printing and the movement from print to computer generated content. The first of these critical phases was to change both how people communicated and the way in which they knew themselves – not only a new means of connecting across space but also a closure across time, an “imposition of a linearity” (*Ibid.*) where narratives were retrievable and replicable as well as fixed and constant. The second stage had, as seen in the previous chapter, more overtly political effects as the mass production and spread of text not only contributed to developments in education, communication and fomentation but also served to blur the boundaries between the private and the public, the fact of shared readership connecting private individuals as a reading public (Finkelstein & McCleery 2005, p.57).

The concept of authorship was far from being a constant during these developments. In pre-modernity, in the time before the novel and the nation, the author was little more than

a scribe, a transcriber, transmitting the word of God, a conduit for a message. The author as personality developed not only in the advent of a secular age and with the growth of the novel but also as a result of legal and administrative developments brought about by technological advancements. Mass production of text brought with it the potential for wealth and renown for the author, which in turn provoked the development of provisions for copyright and, later, intellectual property rights (Finkelstein & McCleery 2005, pp.66-81). However, as the author gained in independence and began to exert greater control over the integrity of his/her work and the attribution to his/her name, the nature of his/her narrative authority was changing. The secularisation of text may have allowed the author to enjoy more autonomy in the production of her/his work but it also took from him/her the right to lay claims to a greater authority or truth.

There was no longer a need to think of texts as a linear procession from the God/Author to the reader via which were handed down rigid truths needing disentangling. Instead, readers created their own meaning without the aid of this concept of an author – they, in a sense, were authors in their own right (Finkelstein & McCleery 2005, p.81).

The third shift, the move from print to digital, has been perhaps more revolutionary still. A new place of uncertainty, digital content constitutes new departure in our way of telling. Whether this new way of telling stories will constitute a similar departure in the way in which our identity narratives are formed or whether the novel genre of narrative will survive the transition to cyberspace, as it did in the twentieth century to visual forms of storytelling in the cinema and on television, remains to be seen. I would contend, however, that the new digital and cyber technologies are not merely a further development on the modern development of the printing press and the later improvements in word processing and text distribution. Instead, they represent a break with the writing practices of the past; they engender practices of writing and reading – e.g. anonymous writing, collaborative writing, crowd sourcing, fan fiction – that encourage a new confusion of public and private, of particular and universal. In the new and ever-expanding narrative forms and writing practices of a digital society the distinction between author and reader is eroded and the notion of narrative authority thus cast into question. In a world where readers are increasingly moving beyond a role as interpreters of the text to that of co-authors (e.g. through crowd-surfing projects and interaction on social media platforms at all stages of text production), a world where authors are legion and frequently anonymous, the role of the author in providing a narrative of identity, in dictating the deontic and axiological constraints of the story, in writing the ideal type hero, is undermined. Within the understanding of the nation as mythical

manifestation, for the political actor thus stripped of – or at least restricted in – his/her ability to shape narrative and/or to write himself into the narrative there remains another means by which to (re)produce the myth of that nation: the mythical component of ritual. Therefore, in the following chapter I examine the manner in which ritual is called upon in political discursive strategies of identity (re)production in contemporary France, both in the reinforcement of the character of the traditional hero figure and in efforts to preserve the mythical power of nation-as-identity where the other mythical component of myth is or has been, as discussed in this chapter, challenged, altered or undermined.

CHAPTER V: THE ARTISTIC VISIBILITY OF TIME

Ritual Practice in Political Strategies of Identity (re)Production

On fera des jours de fêtes autant qu'on a des héros

Zaz

In Rouen, the town of her execution, in 1964, then-Minister of Cultural Affairs André Malraux addressed himself to Jeanne d'Arc: "Jeanne, you who have neither sepulchre nor portrait, you knew the tomb of the hero to be in the hearts of the living."¹ The hearts of the living are fickle, however, and if Jeanne d'Arc remains sacred to the French people today it is thanks in no small part to her inscription in the physical landscape: in the streets and schools named in her memory, in the posthumous portraits and quasi-tombs of the nation's towns and villages, the statues and paintings rendering solid the legend. Indeed Malraux's phrase has itself entered into the physical commemoration of the saint, having since been engraved in letters half a metre high in a wall by the Church of Saint Joan of Arc in Rouen. This spatial inscription of Jeanne d'Arc creates places in and from which the myth can be re-enacted and brought to life, serving the function of the tomb at which the people gather to pay homage to the hero, e.g. in contemporary ceremonies of worship ranging the Front National rallies by the statue of the warrior saint in Place des Pyramides in Paris to the civic-modern homage paid by the newly opened Historial in Rouen. For, as seen in the previous chapter, it is not enough that the hero is written; the hero story must be brought to life for the myth to resonate. This is ritual: the performance through which the myth is lived as identity. In presenting ritual as an essential element of the modern myth of the nation-state I illustrate in this chapter how ritual also serves the function of bringing together and consolidating the other components and processes of contemporary political discursive strategies of identity (re)production as explored in this thesis.

By structuring the exploration of political strategies of ritual around the story of the Pantheon in Paris, I demonstrate how the ritual act confers space with monumental status, making the space of the ritual sacred in the manner encountered in the museum stories of Chapter II; that is, making it possible for myth to operate without contradiction in modernity by creating the possibility for places of temporal 'absoluteness' within the abstract space of the modern world. The exploration of the manner in which the Pantheon is used by the

¹ Original reads: "*O Jeanne, sans sépulcre et sans portrai, toi qui savais que le tombeau des héros est le coeur des vivants*". Discours d'André Malraux à l'occasions des fêtes de Jeanne d'Arc, 31 May 1964. Available at: <https://www.rouen-histoire.com/Malraux>

nation's political leaders also elucidates ritual's chronotopic function of infusing space with visible time in a narrative move that creates a continuity with a suitable historical past and creates a mythical temporality that creates the possibility of an immemorial identity.

The Pantheon is also the site of the nation-state's civic hero-worship² and tracing patterns of national heroism through the political rituals of this sacred civic site facilitates the identification of changes in the conceptualisation and/or political narrative construction of national hero. Furthermore, the role of the ritual of 'pantheonisation' (as the ceremony marking the entrance of a new national figure to the monument is known) in bringing the dead hero to life in the consciousness (and hearts) of country's citizenry also permits me to build on the analysis of the preceding chapter by examining the manner in which political leaders use the rituals of the Pantheon not only to create a relationship of real-and-represented between dead hero and live leader but also to account for the changes in manifestation of hero, as identified in Chapter IV, to be adapted into the myth. However, the study of the story and practice of the Pantheon also introduces an element not covered in the previous explorations of sacred space, of narrative and of hero. That is the very ritualistic nature of the ceremonies of the Pantheon, a practice that necessitates the participation of the public in the myth. As seen in Chapter I, it is this participatory element that transforms the narrative of myth into identity; through participation in the ritual the individual (or community) implicates him/herself in the myth, bringing the narrative to life and making of it a lived reality.

PERFORMING THE NATION IN A HERO-LESS AGE

In the first gathering of France's National Assembly after the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, the chamber's deputies broke out in a spontaneous rendition of *La Marseillaise*. Less than a year later, after the attacks of 13 November 2015, the *Marseillaise* was to be heard throughout the world: on city streets, in concert halls, in stadia. The battle hymn of ambiguous popularity – satirised and jeered even as it was sung and celebrated – became in a time of fear and sorrow a rallying point of and beyond the nation. The *Marseillaise* emerged from its role as “a prayer sung by people worshipping their country” (Billig 1995, p.86) and was lived instead as a symbol and shared demonstration of solidarity, of humanity. A symbol of the people rather than of the state.

² With Les Invalides as the site of military heroes and Notre Dame as that of the Church.

For the national day of commemoration for the victims of the Paris attacks on Friday 27 November the government called on the people of France to display a national tricolour in solidarity with the victims of the shootings. The people of France responded in great numbers, with shops and manufacturers experiencing huge demand to the point of being sold out³. However, there was also some disquiet at the idea of a mass flag-waving, no matter how noble the sentiment behind the idea; a reticence at the thought of participating in a ritual that all too often suggested (away from the sporting arena at least) at its most innocuous a traditional nationalism with which some people were uncomfortable and at its most egregious an ultra-nationalism, especially on foot of Front National efforts to appropriate the flag for the far-right (Franrenet 2015; Morin 2015). That the official call for the display of the flag also instructed the public to publish the photos of themselves with their tricolours along with the hashtag *FiersdeFrance* (Proud of France)⁴ added to the unease that the spontaneous, human celebration expressed through the Marseillaise might in this case be turned into a prescription of the state. Therefore, while flags in their hundreds of thousands were resurrected from cupboards, bought new, printed out or painted on, there were also more irreverent tricolours: appropriately matched red, white and blue coloured t-shirts, dresses, plastic bags, underwear displayed in windows and hung over balconies. Proud of France but retaining the right to choose what France to be proud of.

There is a thin line between ritual – the performance of an identity story – and something more subversive. The whole might be thought of in terms of spectacle, the range of performance from politically-initiated ritual to community-led revelry. However when Guy Debord wrote of spectacle he wrote of it in terms that recall the totalising power of myth in “its monopoly of appearances [and] manner of appearing without allowing any reply” (Debord 1992, p.10). Akin to the myth of Adorno and Horkheimer’s enlightenment, spectacle in modern society was for Debord tautological, “its means and ends are identical” (*Ibid.*)⁵. Nonetheless, spectacle was not necessarily a totalising practice. Instead, as David Harvey shows in his study of nineteenth century Paris, spectacle is an ambiguous power that was

³ See the *Le Monde* video news reportage of 26 November 2015, ‘Les ventes de drapeaux français en forte hausse’. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/attaques-a-paris/video/2015/11/26/les-ventes-de-drapeaux-francais-en-forte-hausse_4818419_4809495.html

‘Attentats de Paris: flambée des ventes de drapeaux français’. Available at http://www.francetvinfo.fr/faits-divers/terrorisme/attaques-du-13-novembre-a-paris/victimes-des-attentats-a-paris/attentats-de-paris-flambee-des-ventes-de-drapeaux-francais_1188685.html

⁴ See the official call at <http://www.gouvernement.fr/partagez-hommage-national>

⁵ Though Debord was writing largely of the notion of spectacle as created by and experienced through new technologies and in a commodity culture.

harnessed by the spatial practices of modern myth-makers and turned into the ritualistic practice of modern identity.

The physical reinvention of Paris under the prefecture of Baron Haussmann at the behest of Napoleon III impacted on the lives of the citizenry in the influence the new spatial planning had on the routine of daily life and also in the manner in which communities expressed themselves collectively. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the great urban reorganisations of Paris and Lyon were not only to affect the patterns and practicalities of daily life but were also designed to impose structure on leisure and festival time. The construction of the city around the new wide boulevards had been influenced to a degree by the barricaded streets of the June Rebellion in Paris and the silk worker revolts in Lyon in the early 1830s but the city prefects also attempted to address the unrest at the source by building public parks that would both contribute to public health efforts and provide controllable spaces of leisure and public manifestations (Harvey 2003, pp.207-224).

The production of the Second Republic as both state and nation depended not only on the physical organisation of space – with the monumental politics of the new empire promoting “a design of spaces and perspectives to focus on significant symbols of imperial power” (*Ibid.*, p.205) – but also on the animating of this space. At the elite level the city’s streets and monuments were mobilised in a near-constant calendar of balls, celebrations, exhibitions, galas and commemorations whereas the frequently riotous and occasionally subversive excursions and celebrations of working population were tamed into organised spectacle, ritual and performance. “The aim was to transform active players into passive spectators” (*Ibid.*, p.206). The official organisation of spectacle thus became a means by which to appropriate space, to stake claims to ownership and authorship of place, with the performance of public space in troubled areas such as Belleville henceforth to be organised by and carried out within the spatial logic of the state, replacing troublesome manifestations of local or class identities⁶.

Just as Debord wrote of twentieth century society that “everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation” (Debord 1992, p.7) so did the spectacle politics of Haussmannian Paris cause “[the] presentation of self in the public sphere [to come] to substitute for representation” (Harvey 2003, p.216). However, in the totalising character of spectacle is also the potential for its own undoing. If it is as Debord affirmed, and as can be

⁶ The ambitious development of the Buttes-Chaumont Park on the edge of the city, by the Belleville district, was one of the major leisure-space undertakings of this project of organising the people through the spectacle of public space. A century and a half later, a number of those responsible for the Charlie Hebdo attacks were known to be involved with an extremist Islamist grouping known as ‘the Buttes-Chaumont Network’.

observed in the ritual practices of the nation as explored thus far, that the means and ends of spectacle are identical then one might surmise that the undermining of the ends – i.e. the project of national (re)production – would affect the means. So it was in the declining years of the Second Empire, the underlying and increasing disaffection with the regime bubbling over at those very mass-gatherings and spectacles that the government had encouraged in earlier years (Harvey 2003, p.218). The rituals developed to reinforce the political and social identity of the nation-state descending into a spectacle of another kind. Correspondingly, in a time of the decline of the traditional hero in narrative and society (the means to the end of the spectacle of the nation), it might be expected that political ritual would have to adapt to the changing realities of hero. In what follows below I consider how contemporary political discursive strategies of identity are attempting to effect such an adaptation. An analysis of the ritual politics of the national-state monument of the Pantheon makes it possible to trace the manner in which this ritual component of the national myth has been called upon to uphold the narrative of nation even as the narrative influence of the hero wanes.

ENTERING THE PANTHEON: THE REBIRTH OF THE HERO?

There was once a hero without a tomb. But for Jeanne d’Arc, where there was no tomb one was made, the dead hero to be encountered anew in the streets and statues of all of France. There was once a tomb without a hero. So they opened the tomb to the dead and made of (wo)man a hero. Welcome to the Pantheon, the tomb of all the great and good of the land. Read their names and you shall know the nation.

“Today France comes face-to-face with all that is best about it⁷”. On 27 May 2015 François Hollande presided over the largest ceremony of his presidency: the entry into the Pantheon of four of France’s national heroes. These great men and women of France – the Resistance heroes Jean Zay, Geneviève de Gaulle-Anthonioz, Germaine Tillion and Pierre Brossolette – would join Voltaire, Jaurès, Hugo, Pierre and Marie Curie and many other heroes of the nation in the great civic monument of the Pantheon, in Paris. The ceremony was the culmination of a project that had been launched two years previously, when President Hollande formally commissioned Philippe Bélaval, president of France’s Centre of National Monuments, with conducting a study into and proposing recommendations for the

⁷ Original reads: “*Aujourd’hui, la France a rendez-vous avec le meilleur d’elle-même*”. Cérémonie d’hommage solennel de la Nation à Pierre Brossolette, Geneviève de Gaulle-Anthonioz, Germaine Tillion et Jean Zay, 27 May 2015. Available at: <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/ceremonie-d-hommage-solennel-de-la-nation-a-pierre-brossolette-genevieve-de-gaulle-anthonioz-germaine-tillion-et-jean-zay-pantheon-3>

strengthening of the role of the Pantheon in “affirming and propagating France’s universal values” (Bélaval 2013, p.3). It was the responsibility of France’s president, Hollande wrote, to bring out the full potential of the Pantheon by placing the monument at the heart of the state’s efforts to develop and promote these national values (*Ibid.*).

Hollande was not alone in ascribing such importance to the relationships of both Pantheon-and-state and president-and-Pantheon. When, on foot of the Bélaval recommendations, this solemn ceremony of pantheonisation took place Paris in 2015, media and political commentators saw the occasion as an opportunity for François Hollande to assert the particular identity of his presidency. “Tell me who you ‘pantheonise’ and I’ll tell you who you are”, ran one headline the day of the ceremony (Coquet 2015). For Hollande, suffering as he did from a “memorial bulimia” (Wieder 2014) by which he, more than any other president of France’s Fifth Republic, drew on sites and stories of memory in his discursive politics, the historically-loaded ceremony of the Pantheon was an opportunity to finally deliver a speech that was truly historic (Simon 2015), to present a true oration of the nation that would be a high point of his presidency (Berdeh 2015).

In this chapter I demonstrate that the Pantheon was set apart from the other sites featuring in Hollande’s calendar of “serial commemorations” (de Royer 2014) by its mythical potential as a site of ritual; that is, its capacity to exist in an interaction with the previously considered components of narrative and hero in (re)producing the mythical identity of France. In what follows I argue that the particular ritual significance of the Pantheon in discursive strategies of national identity is in its ability to reunite all the elements of identity (re)production encountered thus far in this thesis and to act as witness to the inevitability and inviolability of the nation. Understanding the Pantheon as a ritual site in which the mythical strategy of identity (re)production is encapsulated in turn produces insights into emerging patterns or possibilities of ritual and or performance of identities other than that of the nation.

Implementing Strategies of Identity (re)Production through the Ritual of the Pantheon

Rupture and Continuity in the Narrative Role of the Pantheon

That the Pantheon has a role to play in the telling of the story of France is due not least to the story of the institution itself, a history of ruptures and continuity that, as was also the case for the role of Louvre in the constitution of the nation creates the possibility for new or renewed claims to be made in the name of a historical tradition. Whereas the narrative possibilities offered by the figure of Jeanne d’Arc rely to a significant degree on her absence in space, the Pantheon – that great material site of remembering and forgetting in the heart of

Paris – instead provides a very real spatial presence that can be called upon in the construction of a temporal lineage. With this physical presence providing the illusion of stability of time, (and the very name of ‘Pantheon’ suggesting a reaching back to the ancient and prehistorical), Hollande’s twenty-first century ceremony of multiple heroes serves as a reminder that the Pantheon, in the encounter of space and time that it provides and represents, retains a significant role in contemporary national story-telling

Against this continuity of presence is the oscillation of the function of the building itself. The Pantheon today is a secular mausoleum, a place where the claim of great men (and, though only more recently, women) to immortality in the myth of the nation is validated through the performance of ritual. However, this secular mausoleum was once a holy Christian site. Commissioned by Louis XV and designed by Soufflot, after whom the street leading up to it is still named, the Pantheon was intended as a Catholic church dedicated to the female patron of Paris. The Church of St Geneviève was completed as the Revolution took hold in the country; its initial life of a church was short-lived and in 1791 it was declared by the Constituent Assembly to be a republican temple, a Pantheon of and for Great Men, or at least those whose greatness was in the era of the new free France⁸. As the country flailed from Revolution to Empire to Monarchy to various Republics, the Pantheon experienced incarnations and reincarnations as Catholic church and as secular temple, with successive sovereigns and political powers employing or not-employing the structure and its functions of pantheonisation as an expression of their rule and of their vision of and for the nation (Ozouf 1984, pp.139-150; Bélaival 2013, pp.6-10). These were the ruptures within the grand narrative continuity, each successive shift in the function of the building signalling a socio-political change of track, a clear distancing from previous principle and policy without ever departing from the logic of the story that was France. The history of the Pantheon is, therefore, “the exact reflection of the history of France since the French revolution” (Agulhon 2009, pp.39-40); it records the political and ideological battles of ‘les deux France’ and traces their conflicts, co-existence and interaction in the development of national history and society.

Napoléon Bonaparte, in a nice metaphor for his own role in the country’s history, played it both ways; the crypt preserved for the secular heroes of the empire, the main hall above restored to its function as a church. (Agulhon 2009, p.40). The succeeding regimes, the Restoration of 1814, the July Revolution and Louis Napoléon’s Second Empire, all re-

⁸ As set out in Article 1 of the National Assembly report of 4 April 1791. This report on the new function of the Pantheon was also a report on the entry of Mirabeau into the newly (non)consecrated secular temple. However, the later revelations of Mirabeau’s contact and collusion with the king led to his being removed from the Pantheon in 17793, to be replace by Marat.

invented or restored the role of the Pantheon in the state in a manner that enabled each government to re-present the image of the particular France that was to be upheld in that regime's narrative of the nation. Around the Pantheon were thus created the conditions under which, as was the case with the re-imagining and re-invention of the Louvre, the present could be told as a rupture with an unsuitable past, the continued instrumentalisation of the Pantheon in the writing of the nation's character in turn establishing its place in the grand narrative of history, thus endowing it with a narrative constancy that enabled it to serve as privileged site in the discursive (re)productions of national identity.

The Pantheon as Sacred Space

The dual mechanism of rupture and continuity that resulted in the Pantheon being called upon in political strategies of identity (re)production was also in play in the pantheonisation of Victor Hugo in 1885, an event that was to see two million people take to the streets of Paris in one of the greatest funeral processions that France would ever know. Hugo's funeral represented a new beginning for the French nation; it would be the first ceremony of a Pantheon newly reclaimed for the secular state and by choosing as the first individual to be pantheonised in the new era a great writer who had gone into exile after the 1851 coup that was to lead to the Second Empire of Napoleon III the government of the Third Republic was clearly celebrating its ideological differences from and with the regime that it had replaced. However, in celebrating these differences through the site and functions of the Pantheon the Republican political class was ensuring that though distancing itself from the preceding government it was not cutting itself off from the continuous narrative of Frenchness.

Hugo's funeral was far more than a performance of the state for the benefit of the people. It was a ritualistic coming together of the people at the tomb of their hero, an outpouring not only of grief but of gratitude. And not only of gratitude but also of pride. The civic ritual of Hugo's funeral, in a time when France was recovering from humiliations abroad and emerging from violent political strife at home, encouraged public pride in the life and work of this great figure of French literature to be associated with the national project of the newly Republican state. The formal organisation and solemn nature of the funeral ceremonies also made it possible for the new Republic to present itself as more than an organisation of state and, by imbuing it with the aura of sacred, enabled it to lay claim to the mythical status of nation. On the day of the funeral a cortège wound its way to the Pantheon through the streets of Paris, from the Arc de Triomphe down the Champs Elysée, through

Place de la Concorde, down Haussmann's Boulevards Saint-Germain and Michel.⁹ The air of pilgrimage that this solemn procession suggested, allied to the mass public participation and the fact that the day of the funeral was decreed a public holiday, "created a special, sacred time in which all mundane activities were suspended", thus creating in the nation and through the ritual a "sacred centre of power" (Ben-Amos 1991, p.31).

Its role as focus of the ritual – the tomb of the hero – therefore endows the Pantheon with sacred, monumental status in the manner of the museum as considered in Chapter I. The specificity of the monument is, as already seen, not solely in its symbolism or in its own particularity as a physical object but also – more so – in its influence on the space around it, transforming the city space of the modern into a sacred space, akin to the museum spaces of earlier. Monument is a coming-together of the social, the possibility of transcending the everyday in an action of gathering (Lefebvre 1991, pp.222-224). The power of the Pantheon is not only that it allows for the modern to be infused with myth by being poetically outside the time of the modern world (in its daily function as museum and in its history as place of worship as well as in its exceptional ceremonial capacity) but also that in provoking the participation of the citizenry in its ritual it draws the people into its space. Once engaged with the ritual of the Pantheon (most forcefully through the ceremonies themselves but also through the Pantheon as museum) the modern individual becomes part of a space outside the conventions of homogeneous, secular space. The modern opposition between inside and outside is if not subverted then at least altered while within the logic of the monument it is made possible for the properties of space to break away from the geometric constraints of the everyday. Therefore, the ritualistic character of the Pantheon creates the conditions by which the mythical narrative of the nation can become part of an individual's or community's lived existence.

Writing the Nation in the Space of the Pantheon

The rituals of the Pantheon also make possible the construction of the mythical 'real' through the narrative practice of representation. The monumental status of the Pantheon not only enables a grounding of the narrative in a familiar physical site, in the manner identified by the geocritical analyses of earlier, but the monumental character of the ritual site also creates a sacred or abstract space – a space in which the association of the myth with the modern no longer appears contradictory – from which these narratives of nation can be

⁹ Details of the official organisation of the ceremony are given in the posthumous entries (p.220) to: Hugo, V., 1880, *Actes et Paroles: Depuis l'exil*, Nelson, Paris Available at: https://archive.org/stream/atesetparol02hugo/atesetparol02hugo_djvu.txt

delivered. In François Hollande's address at the Pantheon in 2015 (the culmination of two days of ceremonies that included a cortège through the streets of Paris and a lying in state of the four new entrants¹⁰), the president was not only delivering a homage to the Resistance heroes but also, in the pattern seen through this chapter, (re)producing his own narrative of the nation.

The speech that President Hollande gave before the four coffins of the Pantheon – a speech and ceremony that was broadcast live and extensively commented upon across all French news organisations and media platforms – drew on many of the discursive tactics encountered in earlier chapters. Hollande structured the speech as the story of the four modern hero journeys of Brossolette, Tillion, Zay and de Gaulle-Anthonioz in richly descriptive narratives of their progressions through time and space. It is clear from the outset that these are not the stories of heroes who stood alone; these were not the romantic heroic journeys of destiny but stories of heroism as a courageous choice, a heroism forged from circumstance. That the hero journeys of Hollande's speech were so closely written into and of the tempo-spatial dynamics of the story-world encouraged close identification between hero and narrative chronotope and thus between individual and nation: "Two men, two women. Four fates, four paths, four stories that, by evoking the values of nation, give face and form to the Republic"¹¹.

The ritual of the Pantheon thus afforded the president the opportunity of building the narrative of the Republic through the hero stories of these four women and men, in a manner similar to that seen in the previous chapter. However, in this instance Hollande had a discursive advantage in that he could counter the ever-impending narrative death of the hero through the heroic ritual of the pantheonisation ceremony, using the ceremonial entrance to the Pantheon – the hero's tomb – to create the necessary heroic distance. In this case Hollande tells the story of the nation, as he would have it, not only by implied comparison with the hero journeys of the four Resistance heroes but also by explicit analogy with the values of the nation. Jean Zay, pre-war Minister for Education and Fine Arts and member of the political Resistance until his capture in 1940 (he was later assassinated by members of the Vichy militia), was the Republic, incarnating the values of the parliamentary republicanism of which his life had been an exemplum.¹² Pierre Brossolette was Liberty, by virtue of the

¹⁰ Though two of the coffins were in fact empty, the families of Geneviève Anthonioz-de Gaulle and Germaine Tillion not wishing to have the bodies exhumed.

¹¹ *Ibid.* Original reads: "Ils sont quatre, deux hommes, deux femmes. Quatre destins, quatre chemins, quatre histoires qui donnent chair et visage à la République en rappelant les valeurs."

¹² *Ibid.* Original reads: "Jean Zay, c'est la République. La République parlementaire dont il est l'un des plus talentueux représentants".

principle of freedom that had, by Hollande's telling, shaped his heroic choices. Brossolette's engagement in the armed resistance was the choice of a pacifist who knew the use of force to be the price to be paid in order for freedom to be secured; it was in the quest of liberty that he lived and it was in the name of liberty that he died. "C'est la liberté, la liberté toujours".¹³ Germaine Tillion was the embodiment of humanity, her belief in the republican value of Equality strengthened by her work as an ethnologist and put into practice in both her Resistance activities and her post-war work for human rights and social justice¹⁴. The last core value of the Republic, Fraternity, was incarnated by Geneviève de Gaulle-Anthonioz. This fraternity – the solidarity with and care for her fellows – was upheld and embodied by De Gaulle-Anthonioz during her Resistance struggles and her deportation but also in her post-war engagements for the alleviation of poverty and her combat against social exclusion. "In the Republic, compassion is known as Fraternity. It was in the name of Fraternity that Geneviève de Gaulle-Anthonioz wished for the legal right to dignity to be set in stone"¹⁵.

With each of the Pantheon's new heroes identified with a fundamental value of the Republic, Hollande could tell their stories as the story of France in the manner of inevitability associated with the mythical construction of the nation. However, this tactic of identity (re)production through the ritual of the Pantheon was done not only to reinforce the narrative myth of the nation but also to instrumentalise this myth in the legitimation of current state policy. The first parallel was drawn between the France of the combat of the Resistance heroes and the France from which Hollande spoke. Evoking the assassination of Jean Zay, the president recalled the Charlie Hebdo shootings of five months earlier: "Seventy years later the same hatred has returned; with different actors, in different circumstances but always formulated with the same words and same intentions"¹⁶. This coincidence of circumstances served as a reminder that the work of the nation undertaken by France's newly consecrated

¹³ *Ibid.* Full citation reads: "C'est au nom de la liberté que Pierre Brossolette s'est convaincu, lui l'apôtre d'Aristide Briand, le pacifiste, l'euro péen, que la guerre et la force, étaient le prix de la sauvegarde de l'essentiel. C'est la liberté qui lui avait donné la lucidité de s'élever contre le fascisme, contre le nazisme, contre le totalitarisme. C'est la liberté qui avait fait de lui un antimunichois contre le lâche soulagement. C'est la liberté, la liberté toujours qui le poussa à unir la Résistance intérieure autour des réseaux et des mouvements, et pas des partis politiques. [...] Liberté qu'il a choisie jusqu'à l'ultime seconde de sa vie."

¹⁴ While in May 2015 Hollande framed the character of Tillion in terms of 'Humanity' ("C'est au nom d'une Humanité blessée qu'elle est solidaire des peuples victimes. C'est au nom de l'Humanité oubliée qu'elle est aux côtés des opprimés, des minorités, des réprouvés. C'est au nom de l'Humanité humiliée qu'elle s'élève toujours pour l'émancipation, la dignité, l'égalité des femmes") in the speech two years earlier during which he had announced his choice of the four Resistance heroes as the next entrants to the Pantheon, the president had constructed Tillion as the embodiment of the fundamental national value of equality: "Germaine Tillion, c'est l'égalité. L'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes, l'égalité entre les cultures, l'égalité entre les peuples". Discours lors de la cérémonie d'hommage à la Résistance, 21 February 2014. Available at: <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-lors-de-la-ceremonie-d-hommage-a-la-resistance/>

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Original reads: "En République, la compassion s'appelle Fraternité. C'est au nom de la Fraternité que Geneviève de Gaulle-Anthonioz voulait inscrire dans le marbre de la loi le droit de la dignité"

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Original reads: "Soixante-dix ans après, ces haines reviennent, avec d'autres figures, dans d'autres circonstances, mais toujours avec les mêmes mots et les mêmes intentions"

heroes must continue – “the task has not been completed”¹⁷ – and that there were lessons for the present to be drawn from these hero stories of the past.

Were she alive today Germaine Tillion would be in the refugee camps of those exiled from Syria and Iraq. She would be calling for solidarity with the Christians of the East. She would have engaged in the efforts to recover the girls kidnapped by Boko Haram in Nigeria. She would have been moved by the lot of the migrants in the Mediterranean.¹⁸

Other extrapolations were more pointed still. Hollande’s project of reform, as encountered in the previous chapter, was presented as logical, indeed inevitable, within these national hero stories: “[Pierre Brossolette] advocated reform, audacity, renewal [...] He wanted a modern, open Republic”¹⁹. Similarly, Hollande’s controversial educational reform plan (announced in March 2015 and intended to come into force the following year) was alluded to in terms of Brossolette’s championing of the potential of the youth of France, make it possible for Hollande to claim that it was in the interest of the nation that the state be active in affecting and effecting policy for the young people of the country.²⁰

The Pantheon cannot be a mausoleum. The Pantheon is a vibrant place, a place of education, a place that we visit and a place that should be more visited. A place of culture. A place in which the Republic is incarnated and shared. A place where everyone, upon entering, should find inspiration, emotion and example.²¹

The employment of the Pantheon in presidential discourse of identity is a centring of a narrative around an organising centre, Bakhtin’s materialising of time in space, the concretisation of representation (Bakhtin 1981, p.250). In this instrumentalisation of the Pantheon is a tacit acknowledgement of the power of such narrative chronotopic centres, permitting the speaker to create representations of a particular France in the hope that these representations become in turn generative of the identity they seek to represent. It is perhaps this mechanism of real-and-represented, enhanced by the mythical potential of ritual, that Nicolas Sarkozy hoped to harness when he proposed that Albert Camus – that “extraordinary symbol” – be welcomed into the Pantheon in a project “dear to [the then-president’s] heart”

¹⁷ *Ibid.* Original reads: “la tache n’est toujours pas finie”

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Original reads: “Aujourd’hui, Germaine Tillion serait dans les camps de réfugiés qui attendent les exilés de Syrie et d’Irak. Elle appellerait à la solidarité pour les Chrétiens d’Orient. Elle se serait sans doute mobilisée pour retrouver les filles enlevées par Boko Haram au Nigéria. Elle s’inquiéterait du sort des migrants en Méditerranée.”

¹⁹ *Ibid.* Original reads: “[Pierre Brossolette] a appelé à la réforme, à l’audace, au renouvellement. [...] Il voulait une République moderne, une République ouverte”

²⁰ *Ibid.* Original reads: “La jeunesse est la première qualité que doit savoir garder un vieux pays comme le nôtre. A nous de lui faire la place, la place qu’elle mérite, de lui donner ses chances, de lui offrir l’espoir de la conquête, de la regarder avec bienveillance et de ne jamais distinguer entre nos enfants.”

²¹ *Op.cit* note 10 (Tillion and Humanity). Original reads: “La Panthéon ne peut pas être un mausolée. Le Panthéon, c’est un lieu de vie, un lieu d’éducation, un lieu que l’on visite ou l’on doit visiter davantage. Un lieu de culture. Un lieu où la République s’incarne et se partage. Un lieu où chacun doit ressentir, quand il y pénètre, à la fois l’inspiration, l’émotion et l’exemple”.

(Nicolas Sarkozy, cited in Leparmentier 2009). However, unfortunately we will never now know what narrative of French identity would have emerged from the ritual pantheonisation of Camus, as his family refused the president's request, fearing that the writer would be "misrepresented" in the process (Haski 2009).

Making Heroes of (Wo)Men

Are heroes born or are they made? Jeanne d'Arc, as seen in the previous chapter, might not have been the inevitable or eternal hero of the nation that her myth claims. Her story instead became myth over time, not least through participation in ritual celebrations of her life. Jeanne d'Arc was kept alive in memory in the centuries following her death by a festival held annually in Orléans and the renewal of her narrative in the memory of the new nation-state was achieved not only through the writings of Michelet but also in the later commemoration fever of the Third Republic. The national insecurities and Republican ambitions of the Third Republic provoked a politics of memorial history to which belonged the emergence of the *roman national* and also made extensive use of ritual and ceremony in order to express and develop the consciousness of a national identity, the "creation of a system of civic festivals that was meant to mobilise the citizens in the name of values embodied in the new regime" (Ben-Amos 1991, p.28). Jeanne d'Arc's status as exemplary hero of the nation was therefore consolidated not only in her inclusion in Lavissee's *Histoire de France* and the erection of a statue in 1874 (a contemporary "site of worship" (Sanson 1973, p.445) that was to be renewed over a century later as a physical focus for the faithful by the Front National) but also through the establishment of a national holiday in her honour, celebrated for the first time in 1894 and intended as a complement to Bastille Day by providing both a story around which the 'two Frances' could rally (unlike the still divisive story of the Revolution) and a heroic national figure as an example to be adopted (Sanson 1991, p.447). This national holiday was not continued into the twentieth century, as its national resonance was called into question when the Catholic Church claimed it for its own (*Ibid.*, pp.459-461). Instead, the heroic narrative is kept alive today (to rather different ends) by the FN in their annual – and increasingly popular – May Day rally at and around the Paris statue. In these May Day celebrations can be seen the traditional practice of hero-worship and ritual: the gathering of the public at the foot of the giant, the figure of their heroine towering above them. This is the ritual of the tomb, the temple, of the pilgrimage. With the hero as the central figure of the national myth of the FN, ritual in this way encourages the people to bring the glory of the hero into their own lives, be this hero Jeanne d'Arc or Marine Le Pen

Just as the story of Jeanne d'Arc is still today brought to life in the mythical construction of the nation through ritual expression, so too does the Pantheon make it possible for individual stories to be written as shared hero narratives of the nation. The decision to reimagine the Pantheon as a secular temple was born from the same intellectual and social developments that were present in the genesis of the modern nation-state. Chief among these was the increasing acknowledgement and importance of the role of the individual in and to society. As Mona Ozouf points out in her chapter on the Pantheon in Pierre Nora's *Lieux de Mémoire*, "The Great Man of the seventeenth century was improbable and could only be he on whom God laid his hand. The thinkers of the Enlightenment were to depart from this mind-set: henceforth personal characteristics would be in play" (Ozouf 1984, p.149). With the new Republic were born too new rituals, new manifestations of the collective project. The pantheonisation of the Great Men of the new-old land thus responded to the thirst for ritual and for new national secular heroes.

However, the ability to write the modern heroic narrative also creates the potential for the implied author to write himself into the story. Indeed, the most memorable Pantheon ceremony of the twentieth century was to immortalise not one but two men in the narrative of modern France; not only he who was being elevated through the pantheonisation to a rank above mortal men but also he who was charged with immortalising the pantheonised individual in words. When the remains of resistance fighter Jean Moulin were transferred to the Pantheon in 1964 in the first pantheonisation of the Fifth Republic, it was fellow resistant André Malraux who gave the commemoration oration²². In many ways a linear telling of one man's journey, Malraux's account of the Resistance activities of Moulin was also a vision of a France known by its grandeur, with Moulin portrayed in the speech as fighting not only for the freedom of a country and a people but also for the freedom for France to express itself once again as a place of prestige in the world, as a site of universal values. Malraux, in one of the most celebrated French political speeches of the Fifth Republic, spoke not only to illuminate the past and praise the dead but also to shape the present and exhort the living.²³ The impact of Malraux's speech at the ceremony for Jean Moulin's entry into the Pantheon created a situation by which Malraux could follow Michelet in acting as "a ventriloquist creating a history" (Lewis 2005, p.119) and in creating new bonds between living and dead.

²² Available online at <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/actualites/dossiers/malraux2006/discours/a.m-moulin.htm>

²³ "It is the funeral march of these ashes you see before you. Alongside those of Carnot with the soldiers of the Year II, those of Victor Hugo with his *Misérables*, and those of Jaurès under the guardian eye of justice, may they rest here with their long cortège of disfigured shadows. Today, young people of France, may you think of this man as you would have reached out your hands to his poor, unrecognisable face on that last day, to those lips that never let fall a word of betrayal: on that day, his was the face of France...."

However, in his positioning as the author of the national story being told, Malraux also inserted himself into a grander narrative of the nation as a constant telling, as an endless narrative process. The author of the nested narrative featuring as a character in someone else's telling.

RITUAL POLITICS: WRITING HERO-LESS NARRATIVES OF THE NATION

Reinventing Ritual in the Absence of the Hero

The Ritual of the Common Hero

The Pantheon has welcomed more great dead heroes under France's Fifth Republic than in any era since the end of the First Empire, in what might be a ritual response to a decline in narrative heroes in the late twentieth and early twentieth first century, a strategy to counter the loss of the dead narrative hero through the production instead of ritual heroes. In a context where the hero is not only dying but the traditional concept of heroism is no longer socially and narratively convincing, changing conceptualisations of 'hero' are being adapted into and by the role of the Pantheon in the discursive (re)production of national identity. This is reflected in the most recent pantheonisation ceremony, which can be read as an example of the strategic use of ritual to stabilise the myth of the nation by covering or compensating for the decline of the hero.

In 2006, in a France very much caught up in debates and tensions of identity and belonging, left-leaning national newspaper *Libération* published an opinion piece that linked the waning influence of the Pantheon – reduced from its intended role as “memory of the Republic” and “guardian and vehicle of the Republican message” to “contemporary art museum” (Levy 2006) – to the decline in Republican values and ideals. As “the depository of the historical memory [of the nation] and the guarantor of [its] political project” the Pantheon, the author wrote, was crucial to the Republican identity of France (*Ibid.*). Seven years later François Hollande was, as seen above, to commission a report into the possibility of enhancing the role of the Pantheon in the reinforcement of the values of the nation-state in twenty-first century France. The resultant report identified in the Pantheon the opportunity for a relaunch of politics by creating new meanings for the honours that the Pantheon bestowed on the figures remembered therein (Bélaval 2013, p.13), its title – *Bringing the People of France into the Pantheon*²⁴ – reflecting the overall tenor of the report, which was

²⁴ My translation. The original title is: *Pour faire entrer le peuple au Panthéon.*

that to be of relevance in twenty-first century France the Pantheon should be a place not of transcendental heroes but ordinary of women and men.

The report observed that the role of the Pantheon in French Republican life could best be increased or improved by making more use of its functions as a site of national or civic ceremony, celebration or ritual. However, it also specified that this ceremonial capacity should be adapted to changed and changing socio-political realities by making the Pantheon a place open to all the people rather than a shrine to the select few. The new ceremonies and celebrations should therefore have a more participative and common character, by which the citizens could play a role in its story and thus to renew their engagement with the values and ideals that the Pantheon might be seen to represent (Bélaval 2013, pp.10-11).

A second major recommendation of the report was that great care be taken in the choice of the next entrants into the Pantheon and that, specifically, the next entrants should count women in their number. Before the pantheonisation of Tillion and de Gaulle-Anthonioz only one woman had been admitted into the mausoleum of the ‘Great Men’: Marie Curie. (Sophie Berthelot was the first woman to be laid to rest in the Pantheon but her entrance was by virtue of the pantheonisation of her husband, Marcellin Berthelot, who had wished never to be separated from his wife, even in death.) This recommendation that more female figures be recognised was based on the need to address the gender imbalances that existed but was also part of the wider recommendation that the Pantheon be more representative of the general population. Representative not only in quantity but also in quality. Bélaval – who had consulted with nearly a hundred figures from French political, social and intellectual life in the preparation of his report – recommended that the next chosen few be figures that would encourage the public of France to see itself reflected and represented in this central site of French Republican identity (*Ibid.*, pp.11-15). In these recommendations can be seen a significant departure from traditional patterns of recognition and commemoration of national figures, a departure from the transcendental, aspirational figure we encountered in Chapter I. The ‘hero’ of the Pantheon was no longer to be a figure of exception, someone different, removed, someone above and beyond; instead the state was choosing as its pantheonised those in whom the collective could recognise themselves. “Thanks [to these new pantheonists] the people, all the people, will enter in the Pantheon; by recognising themselves in [the Pantheon], they will better recognise themselves in the Republic” (*Ibid.*, p.15).

The idea that the citizens of the Republic should be able to recognise themselves in the construction of the nation was taken literally in the artwork, commissioned by the Centre for National Monuments, that covered the cupola of the Pantheon during a phase of

restoration. The installation (entitled ‘To the Pantheon!’²⁵) was part of a global participatory project called Inside Out, by photographer JR, in which portraits of ordinary individuals were displayed as public art. In 2014 the cupola of the Pantheon was thus covered with the faces, in black and white, of women, men and children from throughout France, with the artwork extending for a time inside the building, the floor and ceiling of the temple of Great Men now covered in the portraits of ordinary and anonymous French citizens. The people of France thus became, for a while, the heroes of the Pantheon; for a time they were the incarnation of the nation as exhibited in and by this site of national and cultural pilgrimage. The Inside Out installation, the photos for which had been gathered by the photographic team as they travelled throughout the country, was therefore very much in keeping with the new vision for the Pantheon as set out in the 2013 report and an illustration of how the power of ritual and ritual sites is being called upon to maintain the myth even when the hero might be dead.

This new expression of national heroism places the discursive strategies of identity (re)production of François Hollande very much in opposition to those of the far-right who instead of adapting their narrative to the possibility of the death of the hero have chosen to reinforce the narrative of the traditional hero through their ritual practice. The Front National’s Jeanne d’Arc is a hero of old – a figure above us, in communion with a higher power, a possessor of powers not quite mortal. The heroism of the new entrants to the Pantheon as chosen by François Hollande is of a very different kind. These are people who are among us, not only of us but also like us. They differ from us not in their being – no communion here with a higher power, no supernatural powers or intimations of immortality – but, rather, in their acts. In the choices that they make. And in these contrasting portrayals of contemporary heroism we can find a representation of the two Frances being written around and defined by their characters, being claimed, conflictingly, as the real. The new hero of Hollande’s Pantheon represents a Republican citizenship, an implication of the ordinary individual in the greater story. A post-modern telling, perhaps, where there is no independent writer, no passive voice. Jeanne d’Arc as she is told by the Front National is the centre of a different story, where the narrative is propelled not by individual choice but by destiny, where all is already written and by someone else. Where the only choice is to join the narrative or to remain unwritten.

Except there is always another choice. Hollande’s reimagining of the national hero through the ceremonies of the Pantheon was in response to social and fiction narratives that

²⁵ ‘*Au Panthéon*’ in the original French.

increasingly understand heroism differently. The adapting of the rituals of the nation-state to cater for and reflect this changing heroism is thus intended to maintain the identity narrative of the nation-state, the triad adjusting to find its mythical balance. However, the validation of the notion of a hero-less narrative through the changing rituals of the Pantheon is also a validation of the notion that our identity narratives no longer need – or can no longer logically sustain – a heroic protagonist. Such an admission, if we can read changing political strategies and practices of hero and ritual as thus, suggests that society needs new identity narratives, new narrative structures of collective being and belonging that the mythical construction of the nation-state can no longer provide. Perhaps there is only so much balancing that can be done.

The Ritual with No Hero

Pity the land that needs a hero but has none. Emerging politics of identity (re)production in France suggest that the political class has not yet renounced the strategies of myth in the construction of a civic identity. The balancing is still being attempted. In earlier chapters it was seen how Nicolas Sarkozy sought to create a newly identifiable, but still aspirational, hero through the creation of a new ritual in the school system. His proposal that the letter that young resistance fighter Guy Môquet had written to his family shortly before his execution be read aloud annually in the schoolroom was, as identified earlier, an attempt to perform the *roman national* into life, to infuse history with the emotion of the novel through the civic centre of the education systems.

Nicolas Sarkozy's efforts to create new rituals in the classroom were denounced as the clear instrumentalisation of history in the (re)production of a politically-defined national identity. However, in the year since the Charlie Hebdo attacks, efforts to create new rituals of identity through the school have been intensified. Reflecting their own personal discursive patterns, whereas Sarkozy had put the emphasis on the ritual creation of the hero in the service of the national narrative, the policy under Hollande has been to create new hero-less rituals. In his speech to the education sector on 21 January 2015, an annual new year's address that was on this occasion shaped extensively by the shootings in Paris of two weeks previously, Hollande declared that "to perpetuate the Republic we must convince rather than force"²⁶. He therefore announced the introduction of measures that would aid the school system in its mission of "transferring the strength of our values [...] values of equality,

²⁶ Original reads: "Pour la perpétuer, la République, il nous faut convaincre plutôt que de forcer". Voeux au monde éducatif, 21 January 2015. Available at: <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/v-ux-au-monde-educatif-3/>

secularism, liberty”²⁷. This “promotion of the Republican promise”²⁸ was to be achieved not only through the introduction of classes in civil and moral education, to be taught from elementary school through to the final year of second-level education, but also by means of the introduction and/or restoration of republican rites and symbols²⁹.

When the Minister for Education Najat Vallaud-Belkacem announced the details of these measures they were seen to include ritual practices such as the annual celebration in schools of a National Day for Secularism as well as the introduction of thematic days or weeks (e.g. against racism, for civic engagement) as well as “patriotic commemorations and collective participation in competitions and ‘olympiades’”. The emphasis on participation (the measures also included annual rituals of prize-giving, recognition of student success and end of year shows) would not only strengthen Republican values in the country but also the authority of the teacher in the classroom. “The reestablishment of the teacher’s authority can also be achieved through the understanding and celebration of republican rites and of the symbols of the Republic (national anthem, flag, motto)”³⁰. A clear link was therefore drawn between the understanding of and respect for authority and the ritual practices of the nation, much as we saw in the previous chapter the link between notions of authority and practices of narrative and heroism.

Whereas these new measure are from and of the Socialist left, they reflect a broader contemporary political strategy of promoting a mythical conception of identity through the civic mechanism of the education system, a move from nation to state in the (re)production of an identity of nation-state, a move towards the civic without renouncing the tactics of the myth. Centre-right president of the Senate, Gérard Larcher, presented a report to François Hollande in April 2015 that called explicitly for the *roman national* to be restored in schools. “Great dates, great personalities, great events, great ideas should be at the heart of [the instruction of history] and each student should find in this telling a source of knowledge and of reflection, of identification and of pride”³¹. Although Larcher’s story of the nation still

²⁷ *Ibid.* Original reads: “*La mission de l’école, c’est de transmettre la force de nos valeurs [...] valeurs d’égalité, laïcité, valeurs de liberté*”

²⁸ *Ibid.* Original reads: “*promouvoir la promesse républicaine.*”

²⁹ *Ibid.* Original reads: “*Il y a aussi les rites républicains et les symboles, là aussi, ils méritent qu’ils soient regardés comme des marques d’attachement, de solidarité et donc d’adhésion.*”

³⁰ All the details of the measures are available on the government website under the heading: *Grande mobilisation pour l’École pour les valeurs de la République* (Mass Mobilisation of schools for the sake of Republican Values), especially Measure 2: Re-establishing the authority teachers and of republican rites. Available at: <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid85644/onze-mesures-pour-un-grande-mobilisation-de-l-ecole-pour-les-valeurs-de-la-republique.html>

³¹ Original reads: “*Il s’agit de donner à l’enseignement de l’histoire un sens et une portée effectives en matière de sentiment d’appartenance : grandes dates, grands personnages, grands événements, grandes idées, doivent ponctuer cet enseignement et chaque élève doit pouvoir y trouver une source d’intelligence et de réflexion, d’identification et de fierté.*” Larcher, G.,

retained the “great personalities” that were absent from the governments new ritual politics of education, he too emphasised the importance on the ritual enacting of the nation’s identity: “the schools of the republic must recover the education, moral and symbolic function of the republican ‘liturgy’”.³² In a time of crisis, therefore, when the narrative is called into question by external as well internal events (e.g. attacks on the space of the nation as well as economic weakness, loss of international prestige as well as problems of unemployment), when there is no hero to be called upon to save the story, political actors are still drawing on those tactics of identity (re)production that emerged from a modern mythical understanding of identity. However commendable some of the goals of these discursive tactics might be (i.e. to a people shaken by the terror attacks of 2015), the instrumentalisation of the civic in the creation of the myth and the use of the myth in the definition of the civic risks creating a strategy of identity that is neither civic nor mythical but essentially political. A politics of identity that therefore risks failing to resonate with the individual as either citizen or national subject, provoking, as a result, the search for identity away from the narrative of the nation-state.

2015, *La nation française: un nation en partage*, 15 April, p.15. Available at: <http://gerardlarcher.fr/fichiers/file/2-gerard-larcher-nation-francaise.pdf>

³² *Ibid.*, p.16. Original reads: “L’école républicaine doit retrouver le sens éducatif, moral et symbolique de la « liturgie » républicaine et de ses rites.”

CONCLUSION

Seeking a Hero in a Time of Crisis

*Trois mille six cents fois par heure, la Seconde
Chuchote: Souviens-toi! — Rapide, avec sa voix
D'insecte, Maintenant dit: Je suis Autrefois,
Et j'ai pompé ta vie avec ma trompe immonde!*

Charles Baudelaire, *L'Horloge*

PART I: MYTH in the MODERN

Not to be here, not to be anywhere. Nothing more terrible, nothing more true. Until the soundless dark comes to be filled with morning noises and the fear of not-being-in-life is forgotten in the routine acts of living. But night will fall again and there will come another sleepless four o'clock. What of the times when living is not enough?

This thesis has proposed understanding the idea of 'nation' as that which fills the four o'clock soundless dark of an ostensibly secular modern. Nation is a narrative that not only structures our daily routine by making natural our organisational adherence to rules and entities of state (a 'banal nationalism' (Billig 1995)) but also offers more than the postman's tonic of mundane daily practice by interspersing the natural with the ceremonial through the overt rituals that make of us not only participants in but also perpetrators of the narrative and practice of the nation. In visiting national ritual sites ranging from the still rooms of the museum to the pomp and circumstance of the Pantheon, this thesis has shown that the role of ritual in the political association of nation and state goes beyond the provision of state bread and national circus. Instead, the notion of nation as woven into the discursive politics of state creates the possibility for an affective experience of an administrative identity: the being in the political space of the state becomes a belonging to the community of a nation.

While this study of the ritual practices of nation and state made it possible to gain new insights into both the modern experience of space and resultant political discursive strategies of identity (re)production it also produced a result that I had not initially anticipated, which was that of the importance of the hero figure to modern myth-making. The descent (or progression), as described by Giambattista Vico, from the age of gods to that of heroes and then of men as well as the trends, as set out in Chapters III and IV, that saw the leading characters of both fictional and societal narrative become increasingly familiar and ever-less god-like initially indicated that the narrative of the modern might be a hero-less one.

However, the studies of political ritual and narrative practice in modern France suggested otherwise. The rituals and narratives of the modern myth of the nation were seen to be consistent with the Classical and Christian traditions in being of and for the hero. We still worship at the tomb of the hero.

However, while the narrative and ritual significance of the hero persists, the possibilities for heroism have waned. In Celtic lore, it was that no man with a blemish could be king of the ruling Tuatha Dé Danann¹; today it could be said to be impossible to be without blemish. The extent of information and communication technology enables us to know and to share ever more information about not only public figures but indeed each other. And, as seen in the work of both Otto Rank (1990) and Orin Klapp (1948), those we know too closely we cannot worship well. To be a hero in the classical sense was to be at a remove, to be out of time (Nagy 2013); with our denial of anything other than a linearly advancing time and the more recent instantaneity of communication we have apparently removed the possibility of out-of-timeness. What then to do about the mythical desire for the hero?

The studies contained in this thesis support the contention in Chapter I that the mythical triad of narrative-hero-ritual creates possibilities of mythical self-perpetuation. The circularity and self-referential nature of myth facilitates the creation or maintaining of the necessary mythical hero through the tools of narrative and ritual. The sacred spaces made accessible in the modern through ritual operation create experiences of space and time other than those usually permissible in the logic of the modern, thus offering the possibility of a different or other spatiality and/or temporality. In this, a potential space of heroism can be produced. The ritual practice also allows for the hero figure to be inserted or maintained in the narrative. The hero-based myth thus is maintained through the very tools that the myth itself provides.

However, as seen from the outset, one of the characteristics of myth is its power to ‘make natural’, be this the religious ‘naturalising’ of the supernatural or the socio-political move, as per Barthes, of turning history into nature. Therefore, when there is a hand behind the efforts at mythical creation and where the hand is not well hidden, the efforts are likely to fail, as was the case for Nicolas Sarkozy’s *Maison de l’Histoire de France* though which to gain narrative authority by creating a space that was to be both ritualised and heroically-based. Where the descent from gods to men has meant that there is no longer the same myth-

¹ And thus it was that King Nuadha, although greatly respected by his people, could no longer remain as ruler after losing his arm in battle (later having his lost arm replaced by a silver prosthetic, earning him the title of *Nuadha Lámhairgid* (Nuadha of the Silverarm).

making possibility through heroic acts, political actors in modern France can be seen as attempting to insert themselves discursively into a heroic lineage. Charles de Gaulle, a heroic figure in late twentieth and twenty-first century stories of the French nation, not only followed the heroic path in his call to duty/adventure and his later Messianic return from over the sea but through his use of a personal iconography presented himself in the lineage of a Napoleonic military identity. Contemporary political leaders, in the absences of heroic opportunity, rely rather more on the suggestion of lineage, e.g. Marine Le Pen and Jeanne d'Arc or '*Président Normal*' François Hollande and his rewriting of the nature of 'hero' through ritual practices in the Pantheon. However, once again, such moves can hope to succeed only if such a heroic lineage already exists or can be narratively suggested to exist.

In the introduction I wondered what it was that made a flag more than a flag, referring to the two tricolours of France and Belgium. I could also have looked behind the flags to the heroic narratives they represented or failed to represent, with one of these narratives to be found in the Belvue museum of Belgian national history, situated in the Royal Palace in the centre of Brussels. History in the museum is told through two permanent exhibitions, the first a thematic tour through Belgian history and society and the other a temporally unfolding narrative of the nation as told through the life and personalities of Belgium's kings: *Les Rois des Belges*. The history of Belgium is thus presented as a story structured around its leaders – its Great Men – yet the idea of a Belgian heroic narrative has largely failed to resonate, as captured in the famous challenge to 'name ten famous Belgians'. The explorations of this thesis would suggest that this failure is not solely due to the absence of heroic action but that there might be a lack of appropriate narrative and/or ritual conditions that would enable personalities or actions to be (re)written as heroic within a national context. When Hollande and Le Pen, and generations of French leaders and pretenders before them, have tried to insert themselves into a heroic national tradition their efforts were supported by a lineage of heroism stretching back into near-timeless time, from Vercingetorix through Clovis and Charlemagne to Louis XIV and Napoleon and de Gaulle. That these figures lived in hugely different 'Frances', with little resemblance linguistically and geographically let alone socially or culturally between the earlier and the later versions of 'France', is of no matter. That a narrative path, no matter how mistakenly or disingenuously, can be traced back through history in the one name of France, suggests a heritage, a descent, a succession to be continued. The case of Belgium is rather different. Although a 'Belgica' can be traced back to Roman times, that the country was rather later than its French neighbour in gaining its modern territorial integrity and sovereignty, and not having to this day linguistic unity, would

render the writing of an eternal Belgica rather more challenging than was the Gaulish case. Thus, while the Belgian revolution of 1830 provides the rupture of the modern the failure to provide a supporting narrative continuity has arguably resulted in the construction of a much weaker national myth. The first sovereign leader of this new Belgian state, Leopold I, was an unemployed royal living on the equivalent of a widower's pension in England who responded when the authorities of the new Belgium went looking for a suitable royal² to fill the newly-created sovereign position. The structuring of the history of Belgium around the personalities of its kings, therefore, succeeds more as a recounting of the unfolding history of the state than it does as a narrative of a timeless nation. In contrast, although the museums to Charles de Gaulle in Paris and his home town of Colombey-les-deux-églises³ are necessarily dedicated to the life, actions and character of a single man they are presented otherwise: as the story of a nation. The *Memorial Charles de Gaulle* in Colombey 'allows the visitor to relive the history of twentieth century France through the story of the man', proclaiming the traces left by de Gaulle to be the 'history of the French [people]'⁴ while the *Historial Charles de Gaulle* in Paris links the story and legacy of the twentieth century president to those of Louis XIV and Napoleon in a history that is the "shared heritage" of the French people.⁵

That the French tricolour is more than a flag in a manner that its Belgian equivalent is not was suggested in the responses to the terror attacks of 2015 and 2016 in Paris and Brussels. The response to the shootings in the Bataclan and on the café terraces of the 10th and 11th arrondissements of Paris was characterised by the use of strong national imagery by both French domestic and international sympathisers; i.e. the singing of the *Marseillaise* in the national parliament and at sporting and cultural events across the world, the use of both the French tricolour and the Eiffel tower as avatars on social media profiles. Although state authorities responded in a similar manner to the Brussels airport and metro bombs (the Eiffel tower, for example, was illuminated in the Belgian black, yellow and red in a gesture of solidarity) Belgian avatars were not adopted to the same extent on social media and the anthem – that same anthem that ex-prime minister Yves Leterme had such difficulty in recalling – was not to be heard in the same way either inside or outside the country. This can be explained to an extent by the relative size and influence of the two countries and also, perhaps, by a creeping attack fatigue but it is also true that the Belgian nation-state offers less

² Indeed, the first draft of the national constitution had blanks left in its articles 60 and 61 (on the power of the king) into which the name of Léopold de Saxe-Coburg was later inserted (Permanent exhibition of Belvue museum Brussels; Setvens et al. 2008, p.95).

³ In Paris the *Historial Charles de Gaulle* and the *Mémorial Charles de Gaulle* in Colombey-les-deux-églises

⁴ <http://www.memorial-charlesdegaulle.fr/>

⁵ <http://www.charles-de-gaulle.org/pages/historial.php>

in the way of symbol and narrative around which to build rituals or to create imagery. The myth of the nation is much less developed in the Belgian nation-state than it is in the French case.

To contend that France, by the mythical measures of ritual, heroism and narrative, may have been more successful in building and calling upon the mythical power of nation in its political actions of state is not by any means to suggest a France that is more ‘successful’ than a ‘Belgium’. Rather, the idea of a mythical analysis of the relationship of nation and state makes it possible to consider in new lights the particular strengths and weakness of both socio-political projects. That mythical success of the national narrative in France offers the possibility of a belonging-in-space that transcends the individualised being of the modern, creating a broader sense of identity that is in contrast to the communitarianism that periodically threatens to undermine and even tear apart the Belgian state. However, where Belgium has the separatist N-VA (centre-right nationalist) and Vlaams Belang (far-right) France has the Front National; where the insular views of one nation’s political groupings is fed by the failure of a national mythical narrative the other’s insularity is enabled by its mythical successes. Similarly, while the strong identity narratives of the French nation-state feed into strong and proud national cultural and social productions at both regional and national level, the absence of such centralised identity contributes to the humour and surrealism that characterises the Belgian cultural scene. Therefore, the mythical approach adopted in thesis not only makes it possible to use the constant interaction of narrative, ritual and myth to analyse the manner in which political discursive strategies attempt to maintain a mythical balance in service of the modern association of nation and state but also to consider the political (re)production of identity where the mythical operation is weaker or less easily instrumentalised. However, while the focus of the analyses of this thesis have been on myth in the modern – that is, how the notion of myth can help us understand how a sense of belonging is created in and through the nation out of the temporal void of secular individualism – this exploration of myth and modernity also creates new ways of asking questions about belonging-in-space in a situation or world where the characteristics of modernity as understood here (for example the spatio-temporal logic of the modern) cease to be total.

PART II – MYTH BEYOND THE MODERN?

The application of the notion of myth to the discursive strategies of identity (re)production in contemporary France thus created new insights into the particular politics of the modern, including the ritual and heroic aspects of identity (re)creation and the interaction of real and represented in the narrative construction of the nation. However, in doing so it has also opened up spaces for asking new questions about the operation of identity in society, especially as, or if or when, that which has been understood as ‘modern’ in this thesis ceases to hold. Is the break catastrophic, as the idea of modernity as totalising and thus liable to total failure if breached might suggest? Or are there changes that creep until we find ourselves, should we ever realise, in a logic of time and space that is no longer of the modern? Where the ruptures in our narratives are not expressly instrumentalised – not the ‘new’ modernity of a Haussmanian reconstruction, for example, or that of a Third Republic trying to herald a new and more glorious era of nation – but rather have developed as with the transition we now point to from Dark Age to Enlightenment, the change can often be seen as rupture or discontinuity only from a temporal distance, even if a consciousness of revolution or change exists at the time. Nonetheless, several of the insights of this thesis suggest that these early years of the twenty-first century might be fruitfully thought of in terms of a potential break from the modern and that the tools provided by the mythical exploration of the modern experience of being-in-space could enable us to engage with the possibility of an emerging being-in-space that is no longer of the modern. Therefore in this last section, I return to three of the thesis themes of hero, space and story-telling in what is less an application of myth to a potential post-modern than a use of the application of myth to modernity to begin to understand what an ‘after’ of the modern might be.

A New Heroic Time

The first of the final points is in essence a reiteration of the arguments made in Chapter IV as to the changing notions of heroism but is a point I make again not only to emphasise its importance but also to offer one perspective of an ‘after’ of the modern.⁶ This perspective is that of a modern that has been so successful in its myth, that has been so complete in appearing natural that it has become totalitarian in a manner even beyond that identified by the Frankfurt School writers. If this is the perspective adopted then the triadic

⁶ I avoid using the term ‘post-modern’ here not archly but rather to avoid any prejudices or preconceptions associated with the term as I try to move towards thinking in and of a logic that is other than modern

balancing of the myth becomes all-important in maintaining the sense of belonging-in-space even as many of the practicalities of being-in-space alter. This thesis has highlighted particularly the changes in the idea of the hero, in both narrative and society, especially in the later years of what I am still including in the modern. How to maintain the myth if the hero is no longer heroic? One can alter the ritual, as can be observed in Hollande's Pantheon practices, but what if the altering of ritual in service of an increasingly ordinary hero does not elevate the ordinary to heroic status but instead robs both ritual and hero of any transcendental heroic power? The myth resides then entirely on its totalising narrative and the new void that appears is now within the existing myth. A heroic void. My studies in this thesis would suggest that such a heroic void within an enduring myth of nation could potentially be extremely dangerous. There are examples of ultra-nationalist leaders such as Marine Le Pen who choose not to move with changes in modern narrative sensibility but rather to exploit the potential of a heroic void in the traditional modern narrative, emphasising the importance of continuity and suggesting themselves as the heroic figure around which fragile narratives of identity can be stabilised. There is also the desire to preserve the narrative tradition at all costs, as was identified in the particular case of Gamergate when potentially productive challenges to traditional conceptualisations of hero – which in modern Western tradition have been mostly white, Christian and masculine, thus allowing the dominant white, Christian, male grouping to perpetuate their authority by seeing it reflected in and legitimised by dominant narratives – have been interpreted as threats not only to the (white, male) narrative authority of the text and of the textual production but also to the very narrative structure, firstly the micro-structure of the game and by extension, through the modern interaction or real and represented as discussed in Chapter III, to the social identity narrative, in which the white male has enjoyed a privileged position.

However, the effect of the heroic void might not only be the increased emphasis on the absoluteness of the narrative, with consequences seen perhaps in the rise of the populist far-right in Europe and in the United States, but also in the alternative triadic balancing of new heroisms. If the narrative is to be preserved over all then perhaps it is the hero that must change to adapt to narrative expectations. As seen in Chapter IV, one way in which the heroic narrative can be adapted to a non-heroic age is to replace the heroic protagonist with the formerly antagonistic villain or fool. In the narrative genre of the superhero an increasing employment of the anti-hero can be observed, not only in the case of new female protagonists as already seen but also in films such as *Deadpool* and *Suicide Squad* where the ultimate aim of rescue or salvation might remain the same but the means and saviours are radically

different. In these anti-heroic narratives salvation is achieved through what might be thought of as nefarious, or at the very least dark, means as opposed to the more traditional redeeming saviour figure. Perhaps it is that now that we can see all the hero's blemishes we have renounced the possibility of a transcendental or aspirational heroism and thus have embraced as 'honest' the imperfect to an extreme degree. Or perhaps it is the indication that the narrative has failed or is failing and cannot be redeemed even in the triadic balance, that in our inability or failure to see beyond a being-in-the-modern we are destroying even all that was good about a being-together in the modern sensibility.

Changing Spaces

Another way in which to think of an 'after modern' as suggested through the studies of this thesis is in the experience of space. There are two elements to this: firstly the new practices of space that alter our being in space in a manner that the new urbanisation of Napoleon and Haussmann altered the being in space of the nineteenth century modern and, secondly, new and emerging experiences of space that begin to operate at the individual level, with consequences for the belong-together-in-space of collective identity that are yet to be understood.

The first of these two spatial elements can be thought of in terms of architectural practice, departing from the Heideggerian idea that dwelling is the manner in which humans *are* on the earth (Heidegger 2008, p.349) – i.e. that creates place from space and a belonging-in-space from a being-in-space – and that this dwelling is achieved through building (*Ibid*, p.341). Building and architectural practices can thus influence our experience of space not only physically but also affectively.. “Architecture produces living bodies” (Lefebvre 1991, p.137), it “strengthens the existential experience, one’s sense of being in the world, and this is essentially a strengthened experience of self. [...] We feel pleasure and protection when the body discovers its resonance in space” (Pallasmaa 2005, p.67). Architecture is therefore seen as means of calling forth the dwelling that has been lost in modern space, of addressing the violence done to the body by the modern operation of space, of allowing the body feel once more secure in its experience of space, secure in its being in the world. While architectural practice has changed with, for example, population pressures and with the availability of new technologies and building material the function of architecture in the modern has stayed broadly the same for several centuries: to provide places of work, of sleep and to provide a distinction between the public and the private and by these enabling the control of populations, largely through state function, both physically and socially. However, the early

years of the twenty-first century have seen the emergence of new spatial practices that have the potential to encourage altered experiences of space as produced through building. One manner in which certain new practices of public and private are being initiated is through what has become known as ‘defensive architecture’⁷, through which the space of the city is marked as being for some and never for others. This defensive architecture is at its most explicit in the spikes or protrusions outside shops or in doorways that are designed to deter rough sleepers, a spatial policy of exclusion that is less obvious though no less intentional in the defensive design of many public benches, of bus shelters, of window ledges. Elsewhere still, the new practices of space exercise power through policies of inclusion rather than exclusion. The office buildings of the new tech companies that dominate a considerable part of lived experience today are carefully designed in their efforts to promote new ways of being and being-together. The proposed architectures of Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google in Silicon Valley – buildings to be realised in the coming years⁸ – are totalising in a way that Haussmann wished his Paris to be totalising. With their wide expanses and open green spaces, these corporate buildings promote a culture of controlled leisure that recalls the public parks of Haussmann and Vaisse. While the circular and domed designs of the new Apple and Amazon buildings suggest a unity and a completeness that is absent from more traditional office designs, the proposal for the new Google building goes further still in its development of its spatial influence in that while the infinite lines of the Apple and Amazon designs might promote a particularly forceful belonging to space but the Google building is designed not only to enhance the spatial belonging of those inside but also – in its inclusion of leisure and retail resources – to invite in those from outside, in what is a very new imagining of the organisation of space and a further confusion of the public-private dynamic. In his consideration of dwelling as the way in which mortals are on the earth, Heidegger wrote that “the working woman is at home in the spinning mill, but does not have her dwelling place there; the chief engineer is at home in the power station, but he does not dwell there” (Heidegger 2008, p.342). Perhaps in the new architecture this will prove to be no longer true and a new being-in-space will alter the way we know our being-together-in-space. That these new architectural initiatives emanate not from government, as was the case in the newly modern Paris, but rather from the corporate world also suggest the possibility of a further

⁷ Nils Norman’s photographic collection *The Contemporary Picturesque*; See for example the Dismal Garden Defensive Architecture Archive: http://www.dismalgarden.com/archives/item/defensive_architecture/3014; ‘Anti-homeless spikes: ‘Sleeping tough opened my eyes to the city’s barbed cruelty’, *The Guardian*, 18 February 2015

⁸ Details and images at: Vella, M., 2015, ‘See the Massive Monuments Silicon Valley is Building’, *TIME*, 23 April 2015. Available at: <http://time.com/3814971/silicon/valley-facebook-building>

shift of identity through space from that of national population to expressly created professional populations, as seen for example in the San Francisco Bay area. The physical divide of social fragmentation thus becomes designed rather than effected in the frequently ad hoc manner of existing urban society. The relation of public and private as characteristic of the modern and as explored in Chapter III also undergoes radical alteration in such new practices as not only are individuals encouraged to remove the divide between work and leisure spaces but the traditional distinction of home and office, of personal and professional, becomes increasingly blurred, which might be expected to have consequences not only in the immediate social environment but also for the manner in which those affected view their relationships in and with society as a whole.

However, perhaps of more interest and relevance to the explorations of this thesis is the idea that the individual experience of space might be changing in an manner perhaps not similar to but that could be understood in terms of Anderson's changing apprehensions of time from the pre-modern to the modern or in terms of Lefebvre's shift from the absolute space of religious society to the abstract space of the secular modern. As seen in this thesis, the dominant spatial identity of the modern nation-state has denied the possibility of other understandings of political or spatial identity. However, the state's denial of other ways of being or being-together in space is increasingly problematic, not least because this spatial understanding of the modern state is undermined by new dimensions of space that are born out of the modern but that contradict the temporal and spatial assumptions of this same modernity, such as the challenge posed by cyberspace, a space that uses the same vocabulary of geometric space but that "violate[s] the familiar conventional rules of spatial organisation" as imagined in the modern" (Elazar 1999, p.883). Cyberspace is therefore a challenge to the nation-state because this new geography of cyberspace suggests a spatial and temporal reality that the logic of the modern would seem to deny. I would contend that while modern state politics and policies engage with the technologies and products of cyberspace, they do this largely within a modern logic that acknowledges the importance of cyberspace but that refuses to recognise in it an alternative spatial and temporal reality. In this denial of an increasingly shared reality, political actors of the nation-state risk not only ignoring the politics being made in and of cyberspace but also losing its dominance over conceptions of being-in-space.

Lives lived increasing in cyberspace have two main effects on the experience of modern space. The first is when the cyber experience causes a change in practice of modern space. This can be seen in online games that engage with physical space, such as Pokémon

Go, where the cyberspace experience results in the individual changing his or her practice of physical space, as the two spaces meet in the one narrative. However, the effect of cyberspace goes beyond affecting the practice of physical space to a complete challenge to the modern logic of space. The cyber and the 'real' are increasingly fused so that identities, consciousnesses and behaviours online and in physical space are not mutually exclusive but increasingly combined and indeed inseparable. This affects not only how the individual behaves in space but also what the spatial experience comes to mean. The modern logic of space should no longer be thought of as totalising in the manner considered here in the story of the modern nation-state. However, as I have explored in this thesis, this modern logic of space has been central to both the notion and operation of the modern nation-state, not least that in the fixing of space as geometric in the modern, possibilities were opened up for the operation of the 'sacred', a relationship of space and place that enabled the association of affective nation and administrative state. In cyberspace, and even in the relationship of modern space and cyber space, the spaces of possibility are less easily identifiable and so too is the notion or form of politics or authority that could be asserted in and through these spatial lacunae, tensions or contradictions. Challenges to the physical authority of the modern nation-state have been effected through online space in the instance of, for example, ISIS attacks in Europe. However, I think the challenges to nation-state authority of cyber-space go beyond this, to the very notions of being and belonging that were at the origin of nation-state as entity and identity. New generations are being born into new experiences of space; it remains to be seen whether these new spatial potentials will be engaged or will operate in the maintenance of what is a status quo of sorts of being-in-the-nation or whether they will contribute to the construction or emergence of newly-dominant identity sensibilities that are not physically rooted in the manner of the modern. Chapter I told the story of the myth of the nation emerging from the modern anxiety of a time that was always 'now'; what will emerge to fill the void of our terror when our experience of space begins to change and there is no longer any 'here'? The 'not to be here, to be anywhere' of Larkin's night terrors is no longer the 'soon' of death but the awfulness that could emerge from the tension between a modern logic of space that denies the *being* or *belonging* of cyberspace, bringing the experience into conflict with the founding logic. The national myths as explored in this thesis have emerged in response to a physically rooted identity. When this physical fixity is challenged the myth must surely either change or fail.

Telling Stories

One manner in which the myth can adapt to changing experiences of space is in its narrative, including in its narrative genre. However, it can be too that changing experiences of space alter narrative possibilities and this the manner in which our being together in the world is written and recounted. Although the consideration of the mythical narrative of nation in this thesis was based on the interaction, and occasional confusion, of real and represented in the modern genre of the novel, it was specified that in the novel genre the text and world could never be wholly confused. Similarly, even though intellectual debates might rage about the ‘author function’ in the novel, the novel genre – and novelised modern narratives of television and cinema – have clear lines of official authorships in practices dating back to the early days of print reproducibility and the growth in secular, rather than scriptural, printing. The new practices of writing in cyberspace have the potential to annihilate both of these distinctions, and with them the notions of narrative authority. Although present practices of writing in cyberspace exist in parallel with modern textual writing practices (in which I include digital writing practices in the code of the authored modern) and thus the narrative logic can still be considered to be of the modern, there exists the potential that as textual production not only moves increasingly online but increasingly adopts the cyber practices of writing, a new genre of authorless writing, or of writing with combined authority, will emerge, with the texts of this genre never fixed in a way even the eternally emergent novel is and was. The importance of practices first of writing and later of novel to the narratives of myth as traced in this thesis would suggest that such changed or changing practices and genres of writing would have an effect on political and social story-telling and that narrative authority thus removed would create the potential for new social conceptualisations of authority. While an utopian or even idealistic view might consider this the opportunity for new and liberating practices of organisation and being together in space and through narrative, it is also very possible that existing political or social authorities will make use of these new practices to (re)write their authority into and through this new narrative space – or that the myriad and anonymous writers will largely replicate existing narrative patterns – or that social tension will arise between the authority of this new narrative space – in which real and represented are no longer so easily distinguished – and traditional modern political authority. However, a truly liberating new narrative practice would be one that would move away from the mythical word completely, that would reject the mythical project of naming things, and the political modern mythical aim of giving a name to everything in order to make things familiar, to remove their distance from us. What the narrative aspect of myth takes

from us is the memory that not everything can be written, that not everything can be turned into word. Perhaps then, the way of escaping that which is negative about the totalising project of the modern would be not only to challenge its (re)production through each element of the mythical triad of narrative, ritual and hero but to use the understanding of modern and myth to look further beyond still in an effort to recover the linguistically inaccessible from the verbal projects of myth and through this to explore the individual and collective being and belonging that cannot be brought within the narrative project of myth and modern.

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