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Ethnicity and Nationality: Recent Representations of French Jews in Films on the Occupation

Leah D. Hewitt

THE OCCUPATION OF FRANCE in World War II has undoubtedly produced a good deal of turmoil in individual and collective identities of postwar France. Attempts by President Sarkozy a few years ago to institutionalize politically correct memories in the national educational system bear witness to the crisis in France about what history should be taught to children, and to the difficulties of establishing collective memories. Sarkozy's showcasing of the young communist resister-hero Guy Môquet and the President's push to make school children research the lives and deaths of French Jewish children during the war were met with a mixture of skepticism and dismay. Ex-education minister Simone Weil, a survivor of Auschwitz herself, strongly advised against having ten-year-olds follow the fate of deported children in their classes. These attempts to present the modalities of heroism and the Shoah as typical French national memory play into contemporary political battles and tend to reduce the breadth of complexities in French history of the Occupation. Clearly, the goal of such attempts is to forge personalized connections to a consensual, collective memory, however misguided their implementation may be. Recently, another member of Sarkozy's government has tried to initiate a debate about French national identity from the top down: Immigration Minister Eric Besson¹ called upon French citizens to rethink the values of what it means to be French and to have French youth sing the national anthem, *La Marseillaise*, at least once a year. Few national anthems can rival this song for the praise of blood-thirsty violence! Many critics protested the timing of Besson's initiative, claiming it to be a political ploy right before regional elections. Respected historian Benjamin Stora remarked in a round table discussion that a debate on French identity initiated by citizens about their status would not be a bad idea, but that having it imposed as a form of patriotism by the government was not the way it should happen.²

In what follows I explore how French Jewish memory has been constructed in key French films about the war. Ultimately I would like to emphasize that some of the most effective recent attempts to promote a legacy of critical thinking about the war in its connections to Jewish memory and national identity have been from the bottom up, that is, with the focus on

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teachers and children reading and watching artistic works, rather than on government platforms. I would also like to make a more general assertion about the exemplary role of the arts and humanities in critical reading and writing on ethical, historical, and national identity issues, especially in an era of quick fixes and short-sightedness.

The aftershocks of World War II memory have resulted in a proliferation of films, novels, and memoirs and an enduring fascination/obsession with the period. We shouldn't forget that until the 2007 success of Dany Boon's Gallic comedy *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis*, the most popular French film of all time among French movie-goers was Gérard Oury's *La Grande Vadrouille*, dating back to 1966. A slap-stick farce about World War II France, with comedic stars Louis de Funès and Bourvil playing two *héros malgré eux*, Oury's film is full of the myths of the Gaullist era: the French are all more or less resisters in the fight against the Nazis; there are no real collaborators; the Nazis are vehement buffoons; and no one is deported or actually dies. But what might seem most remarkable about the cast of stock characters is the conspicuous absence of Jews. This is a comic fantasy about bumbling good versus bumbling evil, much in the vein of the 1959 comedy *Babette s'en va-t-en guerre*, starring Brigitte Bardot.³ The Jew as victim, hero, resister or anything else is simply not part of the standard fare of what Henry Rousso called the periods of unfinished mourning and repression (1946-1970) in France's World War II memories.

With the 1970s' numerous reevaluations of France's wartime culpability at individual and collective levels, French films about the Occupation repeatedly and obsessively take up what had been elided in most of the fictional films about Occupied France before then: the representation of Jews.⁴ Later fictional films about World War II France have made up for this lacuna. After reviewing some examples from the 1970s and 1980s as a basis for comparison, I would like to focus on some films from 1990 and after. In what ways do the later films problematize the representation of Jews? Do they adhere to standardized models or stereotypes established by earlier films or do they launch into new modes of portraiture? If we set aside documentaries, in which feature films and in what genres does the representation of Jews figure most prominently? In what ways do issues of *French* national identity intersect with the representation of *Jewish* identity? It would seem that the French revolutionary tradition of emphasizing the individual citizen and his relationship to the state (to the detriment of the ethnic community that is not nationally bound) has been negotiated by French Jews in ways that highlight both their specific successes at adapting to the French model *and* the peculiar impasses to which that negotiation has led. The representation of Jews, especially

French Jews, in films about Vichy and the war reproduces intensively a hide-and-seek game that one might find in other types of films: with the Shoah looming in the background of these fictional films, the stereotypes of appearance, customs, language, profession, etc. must be interrogated in a balancing act between community appurtenance and individual actions, among Semitic markers, anti-Semitic definitions, and something beyond such identities. Where do we place French Jews within the national rhetoric of the “French exception”?

Through the 1970s and early 1980s, questions of the representability and identity of Jews (as distinct from Gentiles) were continually thematized in French films on the Occupation. Structurally, Jewish identity arises as a question of memory and erasure at the same time that the memory of Vichy’s complicity, on individual and collective levels, resurfaces. As Henry Rousso has noted, “La mémoire de l’Holocauste est même sans conteste un élément central dans la montée en puissance de la notion de mémoire dans les années 1970.”⁵ Critics of Louis Malle’s *Lacombe Lucien* (1974) frequently took issue with the untypical appearance of the characters Albert Horn and his blond daughter France (played by Aurore Clément) who didn’t look or act Jewish enough to suit them. Obviously what constitutes the stereotype is in itself problematic.⁶ Malle creates a clear link between ethnic and national identity in the choice of the Jewish girl’s name France, a young woman who yearns to be accepted as an unmarked French member of society.

Imagining the possibility of a post-World War II definition of “Jewishness” is a challenge of long standing. After Jean-Paul Sartre’s analysis of the inauthentic Jew in *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1948), the question constantly recurs. In a 1961 detective novel by Léo Malet about Jewish criminals and victims in a postwar Paris of the Marais district, one of the Jewish criminals exclaims: “Merde! Qu’est-ce que ça veut dire être juif, être goy [...] si un type me fout un coup de poing en me traitant de sale youpin, je lui rends le coup, parce qu’il m’en a déjà balancé un, et non pour le sale youpin. Je ne sais pas ce que c’est qu’un juif, moi.”⁷ The questioning of Jewish identity is particularly noticeable in films of the 1970s and 1980s such as *Les Violons du bal* (1973, Michel Drach), *Les Guichets du Louvre* (1974, Michel Mitrani), *Monsieur Klein* (1976, Joseph Losey), and *Le Dernier Métro* (1980, François Truffaut).⁸ Truffaut’s character Lucas Steiner, a Jewish theater director, puts on a large fake nose as he looks at himself in a mirror and ponders what it means to be a Jew when Nazi propaganda paints Jews in lurid tones. Malle’s young gentile protagonist in *Au revoir les enfants* (1986) also asks what a Jew is,⁹ while Jewish filmmaker Michel Drach self-consciously uses mirrors and metanarra-

tive in *Les Violons du bal* to call up the issue of verisimilitude and Jewish identity. Actress Marie-José Nat, Drach's real-life wife at the time who plays his mother in the film, is shown on screen preparing for her role. She points out that Drach's mother was blond, but after looking at herself in a mirror with a blond wig, she tells the camera/mirror she has decided to play the mother as a brunette (with her own hair). Clearly, such a scene thematizes the kind of complications about representation and typicality that had made *Lacombe Lucien*'s portrait of Jews objectionable to many film reviewers. The deceptive mirror is a key metaphor in many of these films that thematize ethnic identity. Drach concentrates on the construction of identity through memory more than through an essentialized or unchanging nature. He also connects, sometimes in tandem, sometimes in contrast, present events of the late 1960s and early 1970s, notably student protest, with the memories of Jewish struggles to survive under the Occupation.

In the 1980s, although the representation of Jews becomes relatively commonplace as memoirs of the Holocaust flood the publishing market, there are relatively few films about the war that feature Jewish protagonists. Most of those that do so follow in the footsteps of *Lacombe Lucien*, often portraying ambiguous mixed couples of Jews and Gentiles, resisters and collaborators, whose romances take place in the "free zone" of southern France. Jews are scarcely marked by ethnicity, cultural tradition, language or concrete historical events. Films such as *Stella* (1983) by Laurent Heynemann and *De guerre lasse* (1987) by Robert Enrico portray mixed couples of Jew and non-Jew and fit squarely into the "mode rétro," that is, a questionable nostalgia for the accoutrements of the wartime past (its fashion, cars, music, etc.).¹⁰ *Stella* especially adheres to the model of *Lacombe Lucien*, as it thrives on refusing standard portrayals of "Jewishness" by featuring a pale blond Jewish beauty (Nicole Garcia) romantically involved with a collaborator (Thierry Lhermitte). In a film such as Chabrol's 1987 *Une affaire de femmes* (inspired by the life and execution in 1943 of abortionist Marie-Louise Giraud), critics have taxed the minor Jewish character Rachel (added by Chabrol) with an absence of verisimilitude because of her lack of clearly defined Jewish attributes (physical and cultural) and because her friend Marie Latour (Giraud) doesn't even realize Rachel is Jewish until she is deported.¹¹

One of the few fictional films from the 1980s to dramatize a historical view of Vichy's anti-Semitic representations of Jews is Jacques Renard's *Blanche et Marie* (1985). This tale of female heroism in the Resistance stages one of its scenes inside the 1941-1942 anti-Semitic exhibition "Le Juif et la France." Although the film does not portray Jewish characters, the use of

iconography from this exhibition about how to recognize Jews provides an effective backdrop for Renard's story of resistance action.¹² In this instance, Jewish misrepresentation and caricature are all that we see. In a later film, *Dr. Petiot* (1990), by Christian De Chalonge, the same exhibition is represented, but through the use of actual propaganda news items from the period spliced into the fiction.

In turning to films of the 1990s and early twenty-first century that re-imagine Occupied France, we see that French films for the most part no longer problematize issues of ethnic or cultural identity for Jews. The early exception is *Dr. Petiot*. It is an expressionist film about real life madman Dr. Petiot who kills Jews and other victims before incinerating them. In this horror tale the filmmaker melodramatically plays with mirrors and caricatural makeup that Petiot places on his victims, seemingly to dramatize the layers of hideous masks that Jewish victims endured. Physically, Jews in the film are the only ones who have black hair, and the men wear the brims of their hats turned up, making them seem more culturally foreign and naïve, like easy victims. But like Petiot who is alternately sweet and kind or monstrous and murderous, the Jewish characters' identities are part of the distortions and contortions of the Dark Years. In one example a Jew in the resistance is forced to reveal the identity of Petiot to the Nazis because they think Petiot is actually helping Jews (instead of killing them). The Jew appears as a traitor since he must find Petiot for the Gestapo as a condition of his own release. But of course in the topsy-turvy world of the Occupation where values are reversed like mirror images, appearances are bound to deceive. Petiot is not the victim he appears; the Jew is not the traitor but the victim, as the film quickly reveals when Petiot drugs and incinerates this man with whom he has tranquilly played chess. Dr. Petiot even calls him a worthy opponent, which makes one wonder if the Jew's identity isn't as contorted and disguised as demented Petiot's, an unreadable mask.

Although the obsession with the Occupation has continued into the present, being Jewish in many recent films often seems incidental or secondary. One might in fact argue that the whole issue has remained constrained by Republican rhetoric that elides ethnic identity in favor of the unmarked, individual citizen, whose community affiliations are overshadowed by national citizenship. For a number of films, the representation of Jews is more a background issue, the necessary reminder of a historical reality, but not necessarily the central question the film explores. These include *L'Accompagnatrice* (1992, Claude Miller), *Lucie Aubrac* (1996, Claude Berri), *Laissez-passer* (2000, Bertrand Tavernier), *Les Égarés* (2002, André Téchiné), and *Les Femmes de l'ombre* (2008, Jean-Paul Salomé).

In the last ten years, however, there have been a few films that offer a new focus on Jewish dilemmas of the Occupation. There are four French films in particular that portray Jewish identity in more concrete ways, weaving these portrayals more tightly into the twists of their narratives: *Monsieur Batignole* (2002, Gérard Jugnot), *La Petite Prairie aux bouleaux* (2003, Marceline Loridan-Ivens), *Le Promeneur du Champ de Mars* (2005, Robert Guédiguian), and *Un secret* (2007, Claude Miller).

Jugnot's *Monsieur Batignole* and Guédiguian's *Le Promeneur du Champ de Mars* follow a recognizable pattern of French films about World War II: the Jewish characters are minor, but important figures and ethnic stereotypes are acknowledged (although altered in interesting ways). *Monsieur Batignole* is a comedy in which a reluctant hero, a butcher, hesitantly spurns the advantages of his collaboration with the Nazis in order to save three Jewish children whose parents have been deported and whose apartment the butcher now occupies. As in the case of many postwar French films about the Occupation, Jews are victims rather than heroes, even though many Jews fought in the Resistance.¹³ But *Monsieur Batignole*'s portrayal becomes somewhat more complicated by the fact that one of the Jewish children, a little boy, refuses to be subservient or obedient to his benefactor. The Jewish boy is a defiant verbal sparring partner with Mr. Batignole, not just because he is Jewish, but because he is a child with needs and desires that he expresses freely, not as a victim.

La Petite Prairie aux bouleaux of 2003 is an autobiographical film (poised between fiction and documentary) by Marceline Loridan-Ivens.¹⁴ It features Myriam, a French Jewish survivor of the Shoah who, like Loridan-Ivens, was captured and deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Loridan-Ivens sets the stage in the present; like Claude Lanzmann, she shuns recreating the trauma. There are no clips from the past, no realistic reconstructions or flashbacks, only characters remembering, sometimes together, sometimes at odds, as Myriam (Anouk Aimée) returns to present-day Cracow, the home of her parents, and then Birkenau, to revisit her and her family's past. But this is a film that is as much about forgetting and misremembering the Shoah, intentionally and unintentionally, as about its memory traces in the present. It suggests a subtle, complex rapport between personal and collective memory. Myriam expresses contradictory desires to remember but also to forget, and through her interactions with other survivors, she must face the fact that memory sometimes deceives the victims as well as those implicated in the killing. There is a troubling honesty to this film's poetic portrayal of the return to Birkenau even as the film refuses a more dramatic, suspenseful mode. Although French national identity is not so much an issue in *La Petite Prairie aux bouleaux*, the relationship

between surviving victims, historians, and the descendants of Nazi and Polish Holocaust perpetrators is highlighted. This is a more a transnational film, as was the 1998 comedy *Train de vie* (directed by Romanian-born Radu Mihaileanu) about a fictive shtetl in Eastern Europe during the war.

Guédiguian's *Le Promeneur du Champ de Mars* embodies a turning point in Vichy memories as it features the last French president to have played an active role in the war. Many have argued that with the passing of François Mitterrand in 1996, a new era of Vichy memory began, with the younger generation asking more questions about their elders' actions. Guédiguian's film recalls the explorations of such films as *Les Violons du bal* from the 1970s, since it is a work about remembering the war in the present, rather than an unself-conscious recreation of a past. Although focused on a dying President Mitterrand and an obsessed journalist writing his biography¹⁵ (and trying to set the record straight about the President's switch from work in the Vichy government to resistance work), this film also spotlights two Jewish characters who offer new portraits of French Jews' connections to the wartime past. Both are women, one old (Madame Picard), one young (Judith), with the former representing the generation who lived through events with all its complications and compromises, and the second one interested in the Occupation past as an object of academic study (graduate research on the period's fashions). For the young Judith, Jewish identity is not only affirmed through her scholarly preoccupations with Vichy (where she is conducting her research), but more intimately through the loss of family members in the Shoah. One of the remarkable points in common between these two Jewish women is their staunch defense of Mitterrand against accusations of a collaborationist past. They are less interested in settling accounts with the socialist president, that is, in exposing a potential truth of culpability vis-à-vis Jews and other Holocaust victims through his collaboration with the Vichy government, than in acknowledging his positive political legacy. The women seem to bridge the chasm between past and present without falling prey to the obsessions about past truths that besiege the journalist.

Monsieur Batignole, *La Petite Prairie aux bouleaux*, and *Le Promeneur du Champ de Mars* pave the way for a renewed focus on the relationship between Jewish identity and the Occupation in Claude Miller's *Un secret* (2007), based on Philippe Grimbert's autobiographical novel of the same name. What is most remarkable about this film for our purposes is that it portrays the dilemma of French and foreign-born Jews from the inside: the plot focuses on Jewish characters, and issues of *francité* and integration are dramatically played out by the characters who struggle to define themselves, both

in the past, under Vichy rule, and in the present, as French Jewish citizens. Like many of the works about wartime Jewish experience, *Un secret* centers on a child's maturation, but this time the war is not a direct part of his experience even if its secrets shape his upbringing and sense of self. The "memory" of the war is thus a legacy that continues to impinge upon the present. In many ways, the telling of *Un secret* represents a coming to terms with the interplay between ethnic identity and national identity. This does not mean that there is a full resolution, but rather that the complex network of interactions is acknowledged.

Un secret tells the story of a postwar child, François, who imagines his family's wartime past in idealized terms, before it is revealed to him as a hidden, guilty remembrance. François grows up knowing virtually nothing about his family's Jewish origins and culture, about the very existence of his half-brother Simon who died during the war, and about his parents' guilt-ridden past. François imagines a beautiful, happy encounter of his handsome, athletic parents who meet and fall in love during the war, only to discover through a family friend that his father and mother, Maxime and Tania, had first been married to a brother and sister, Robert and Hannah, who died during the war—Hannah with her son Simon in Auschwitz, and Robert as a soldier downed by typhoid. Maxime and Tania's love is thus tainted with guilt concerning their culpable desires for each other and their spouses' deaths.

The film, like the novel, narrates François's invented past with the same intensity and realism as the remembered one. In addition, director Miller juxtaposes and interweaves three different time periods, going back and forth between them. Scenes from the 1930s and 1940s evoke the Grinberg family's immigrant life in France, with the contrast between the grandparents' generation, proud of their East-European Jewish heritage, and the younger one seeking assimilation (and a concomitant erasure of ethnic identity). The voiceover of the adult narrator, François, explains that his father Maxime had "Frenchie" the family name by changing Grinberg to Grimbert. A second collection of scenes from the 1950s and 1960s dramatizes snippets of François's boyhood and adolescence when he eventually learns his parents' secret. Finally, the present, traced almost exclusively in black and white images rather than the vibrant colors of the past, chronicles a short period in the lives of the adult narrator's aging parents (Maxime and Tania), as well as François' adulthood with a daughter of his own and a career as a psycho-therapist of troubled children.¹⁶

I would like to explore briefly a key identity scene in *Un secret* in which the dramatic intensity rises to a paroxysm through the evocation of the Shoah. It is a scene that embodies the difficulties of ethnic identification for the post-

war generation, but it also has more generalized resonances, since identity is caught up here in adolescent self-loathing and eroticism. The young, sexually alert adolescent François who routinely fantasizes about sexualized bodies, including his parents', watches a silent documentary at school on the Allies' opening of the death camps and gazes intently at the piles of dead naked bodies on the screen. His private, voyeuristic reactions are cut short, however, by those of another boy who is making jokes about the shattered, nude corpses on the screen. Although François has shown a certain ambivalence toward Jews and being Jewish up to this point,¹⁷ he abruptly explodes and frenetically starts hitting the other boy as hard as he can, almost as if he were beating his own anti-Semitism out of the other boy who has presented him with a mirror image. In Sartrean terms, we might say that François assumes the image of being Jewish that the other has unwittingly thrust upon him.¹⁸ Additionally, in the film (although not in the novel) the image of a Jewish school girl, Rebecca, in whom François has shown interest, flashes briefly on the screen, suggesting that François makes the connection between dead Jews of the documentary film and the living girl of his desire. Belonging and not belonging coexist in François' reaction to the situation: at first, he hesitates, appearing to want to join in the adolescent jests about the cinematic vision of naked corpses, and then he switches sides and identifies with the victims (or becomes their defender).

François lies to his parents about the reason for his violent outburst, claiming that the other boy had stolen his pen. Ironically enough, François' father Maxime, an athletic man who has continually shown disappointment in his weak, unathletic son, now displays a certain admiration for his son's violent reaction, not because he has defended the Jews (he is not made aware of this), but because his son has shown himself capable of physical force. Maxime's habitual erasure of Jewish identity is paradoxically repeated in his son's account of the altercation. Like his parents, François keeps his own guilty secrets that link a taboo eroticism and an identification with Judaism through the images of (and responses to) the documentary film. He too eliminates the link to the Holocaust when he tells his parents what happened at school, so that censorship goes in both directions.¹⁹ François will in fact not reveal to his parents until much later that he knows their secret about the deaths of Hannah (Maxime's first wife) and her son Simon (François' half-brother).

It is worth noting that there is an additional level of self-censorship in moving from autobiographical novel to cinematic image. Although Grimbert describes in some detail an adolescent autoeroticism that feeds on the images of naked bodies, including those he's seen of the death camps, Miller chooses

not to make an explicit visual link between them. Clearly, the filmmaker realizes the facile shock value of the image and chooses to suggest rather than show, thus preserving the self-conscious critical exploration of the taboo connection between eroticism and death. Both Grimbert and Miller make us aware of the integral nature of secrets in our daily interactions with the world. Both use verbal and visual metaphors to suggest the complicated exchanges between secrets and revelations and even between victims and aggressors. They bear witness to a nuanced understanding of the dual need to tell and to be silent.²⁰

As I noted at the beginning of this article, President Sarkozy's efforts to institutionalize French memory of the Resistance and of Jews in World War II within the school system were met with a good deal of resistance. A look at some of the alternative pedagogical programs online that use film to teach about the Occupation provides useful insights into a different approach to the issue. The reappearance, for example, of Claude Berri's autobiographical film, *Le Vieil Homme et l'enfant* (1966),²¹ as an early model for exploring Jewish identity under the Occupation, announces the return of what was never quite repressed in the 1960s: French Jews under the Occupation. This little masterpiece portrays a young Jewish boy whose parents hide him at the farm of an old Catholic couple during the Occupation. Berri (born Langmann) was in fact hidden in this way during the war. In the film, as the young boy and the old farmer become emotionally attached, the boy cunningly undermines the anti-Semitic prejudices of the old Pétainist farmer (played by veteran actor Michel Simon) who doesn't know the boy is Jewish. French teachers' renewed interest in such films that portray a child's survival (and the debunking of anti-Semitic discourse) is a healthy response to Sarkozy's rash educational directives. Yves Jeuland's recent made-for-TV documentary, *Comme un juif en France*, recognizes the emblematic quality of Berri's film by showcasing passages of *Le Vieil Homme et l'enfant* where the boy deconstructs the old man's anti-Semitic arguments.²² In another pedagogical turn, the documentary about the filming of *Un secret* shows director Miller carefully providing a history lesson to the boy actors who are about to act in the scene showing the screening of concentration camp victims. It is the kind of thoughtful preparation necessary in showing images of the Shoah to the young.²³

A glance at the internet shows other impressive teaching materials: not only are there interviews with Grimbert and Miller concerning *Un secret*, there is a superb pedagogical dossier treating text and film on the website zerodeconduite.net by Florence Salé, a French lycée teacher in Drancy.²⁴ One might speculate that Salé's interest in the dossier project was influenced by

the fact that she was teaching in a town that is the site of an ex-internment and deportation camp and is also part of the rough "93" *département* that is often plagued with unemployment and violence. It is almost as if her dossier were written for the adolescents interviewed in the documentary *Les Voix de la muette* by Daniela Zanzotto (2003), adolescents in Drancy who were only vaguely familiar, if at all, with the wartime past of Drancy. Ultimately, I am suggesting that although not all French films dealing with Jews and the Occupation provide guidance and a better understanding of the intersections between ethnic and national identity, the combination of artistic and critical reflections in the works of Grimbert, Miller, Salé, and Jeuland offer a much more effective way of pondering French Jewish identity in the history of the Occupation than what Sarkozy's government could ever have hoped to impose.

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Notes

1. Besson's full title is Minister of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Solidarity.
2. See the video online at <http://www.kewego.fr/video/iLyROaflQ2v.html> (accessed September 11, 2009). The government's official site is <http://www.debatidentitenationale.fr/> (accessed September 11, 2009).
3. Directed by Christian-Jaque, the script of *Babette s'en va-t-en guerre* was written by Gérard Oury and Raoul Lévy; so with Oury's participation in both, it is not surprising that there is an air of familiarity between these two comedies.
4. An important exception to this silence is Claude Berri's 1966 autobiographical film, *Le Vieil Homme et l'enfant*. The final section of this essay will address this film's renewed interest.
5. Henry Rousso, "Vers une mondialisation de la mémoire," *Presses de Sciences Po*, 94:2 (2007): 8.
6. See Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust*, revised edition (New York: Cambridge U P, 1989), 126.
7. Léo Malet, *Du rebecca rue des Rosiers* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1987), 148.
8. Also of interest is *Les Guichets du Louvre* (1974) by Michel Mitrani in which a young man tries to save Jewish women from a Paris roundup, but is turned away by the women themselves.
9. Julien asks what a *youpin* (yid) is, so it is as much an interrogation about the anti-Semitic stereotype as a question of concrete identity.
10. Although the "mode rétro" is usually associated with the 1970s and a certain complacency toward collaboration with the Nazis, some of the most glaring embodiments of this nostalgia for the 1940s are from the 1980s and beyond, especially in films that replicate *Lacombe Lucien*'s themes.
11. For a discussion of such films and their intersections with issues of national identity, see my book, *Remembering the Occupation in French Film: National Identity in Postwar Europe* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008).
12. See Raymond Bach, "Identifying Jews: The Legacy of the 1941 Exhibition, 'Le Juif et la France,'" *Studies in Twentieth-Century Literature*, 23:1 (1999): 65-92.
13. Claude Berri's *Lucie Aubrac* (1997) and Bertrand Tavernier's *Laissez-passer* (2002) are examples of films that represent Jews in the Resistance.

14. Marceline Loridan-Ivens herself is no stranger to the screen, as she appeared in the 1960 ground-breaking documentary *Chronique d'un été* by Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin. Joris-Ivens reveals midway through the film that she is a holocaust camp survivor. In 2007, she appears as one of the interviewees in Yves Jeuland's documentary *Comme un juif en France*.
15. The film is based on Georges-Marc Benamou's biography, *Le Dernier Mitterrand* (Paris: Poche, 1997).
16. Philippe Grimbert is in effect a Lacanian psychoanalyst who works with autistic children.
17. Although he is baptized Catholic as an adolescent, François intuitively realizes that his family has Jewish roots.
18. I provide a more detailed account of Sartre's influence on postwar cinematic portraits of Jews in "Distorted Mirrors: Jewish Identity in French Postwar Films on the Occupation," to appear in *Framing Narratives*, Margaret Attack and Christopher Lloyd, eds. (2010).
19. I am reminded of the way Sarah Kofman censured from her philosophical work any direct reference to the pain and guilt of her Jewish wartime childhood even though the traces of that experience remain embedded in her work. Similarly, we may speculate that Grimbert's choice of career as a therapist of autistic children draws inspiration from the silences that he learned to uncover in his own background.
20. A very different conclusion can be drawn from a novel like Pierre Assouline's *La Cliente* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998), in which the historian-turned-detective insists on bringing to light secrets from the war that both Jewish victims and Gentile perpetrators would prefer to let rest.
21. It is interesting to note that Berri's film came out the same year as the blockbuster *La Grande Vadrouille*.
22. Following the Palestinians' First and Second Intifadas (1987-1993 and 2000) and the Israeli response to them, there was an outburst of anti-Semitic violence against Jews in France. But a number of French comedic films have focused on the complicated, but potentially positive, interactions of Jews and non-Jews in contemporary France. We can mention briefly among these *La Haine* (1995, Matthieu Kassovitz) with its trio of friends, Arab, Jew, and Black; *La Vérité si je mens!* and *La Vérité si je mens 2* (1996 and 2001, Thomas Gilou), about a non-Jew mistaken for a Jew in the Jewish textile industry of the Paris Sentier neighborhood; *Dieu est grand et je suis toute petite* (2001, Pascale Bailly), about an on-again, off-again mixed couple (Jewish male and Gentile female); and *Mauvaise Foi* (2006, Roschdy Zem), a romantic comedy about a Jewish woman and a Muslim man facing the prospect of having a child together.
23. The documentary on the film of *Un secret* is part of the bonus materials accompanying the film on DVD. It should also be pointed out that the novel *Un secret* was awarded the *Prix Goncourt des Lycéens* in 2004, so the filmmaker was doubly aware that there would a sizeable number of young spectators.
24. See http://www.zerodeconduite.net/unsecret/dossier_pedagogique.htm (accessed July 18, 2009). Another pedagogical dossier that was published in book format is Olivier Brunet's "*Un secret*" de Philippe Grimbert (Paris: Livre de Poche, 2007).