

Symbolism and Allusion in Matisse's *Jazz*¹

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Abstract

Henri Matisse's images in *Jazz*, created during the disruption of the German Occupation of France, were embedded with symbols of cultural resistance, while his text, which he composed after the defeat of the Germans, reflected the transition to a post-Liberation France. The wartime symbols and allusions camouflaged within these images are readily revealed when consideration is given to two carefully devised interpretative filters that Matisse created. The first, a circus theme embodied in its original title *Cirque*, and the second, the intricate captions that Matisse accorded to each image. Enhancing the visual quality of his handwritten text with his richly drawn arabesques, he created a new text-image dynamic which gave primacy to the image. The paper reveals a congruency between the text in *Jazz*, which he declared had no relationship to the image, and the essay he wrote at the same time, "How I made my books", where he articulated a principle he adopted for his other books, the rapport between the image and the literary character of the text.

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Creating the images

[1] On 31 August 1939, during what turned out to be their last meeting in Paris before the German Occupation of France, Henri Matisse (1869–1954) created a complex image while in publisher Tériade's (Stratis Eleftheriades, 1897–1983) office. *Symphonie chromatique*, composed from twenty-six different sheets of coloured paper contained twelve stylised fleur-de-lys, a historic symbol of ancient France epitomising the longevity of French cultural heritage, which Matisse placed against a black background to signal impending danger. The next day Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) invaded Poland, and two days later France and Britain declared war on

¹ This paper draws from section 3.3.1 and chapter 5 of the author's thesis, see Rodney T. Swan, "Resistance and Resurgence: The Cultural and Political Dynamic of the *Livre d'Artiste* and the German Occupation of France" (PhD diss., University of New South Wales, 2016).

Germany. Tériade hurriedly completed printing his art journal *Verve*, volume 2, number 8, *Nature de la France*, with its *Symphonie chromatique* cover on 1 June 1940, just twenty days after the German invasion of France and two weeks before the Germans marched into Paris on 14 June 1940. Matisse, denounced by Hitler as a degenerate artist, with his artwork removed from all German collections, fled Paris for the safety of Nice, not having seen the publication of *Symphonie chromatique*.²

[2] Tériade recognised the artistic potential of *Symphonie chromatique* and over a period of three years worked incessantly to persuade a reluctant Matisse to create similar colourful *découpage* images for a special issue of *Verve*.³ Matisse eventually agreed and not only created images for the special issue, later titled *De la couleur - Henri Matisse*, but also for an album of *découpage* prints with a circus theme, *Cirque*, which, by the later addition of his handwritten and self-authored text, became *Jazz*. This article, written in two parts, traces the aesthetic genealogy of *Jazz* within the socio-political influences of the Occupation and the subsequent liberation of France. In the first part, the article argues that Matisse's circus-themed images for *Cirque*, created during the Occupation, are imbued with symbols of cultural resistance. The second part asserts that Matisse's text, written long after the liberation, not only softened the violence of the messages of cultural resistance carried by his images but also created a new text-image dynamic for *Jazz*, different from his other livres d'artistes.⁴

[3] From the very beginning the German invasion of France included the difficult notion of the cultural battlefield and its associate activity of "cultural resistance", a concept which involved many complex forms. Scholars such as Rachel Brenner,

² *Matisse - Picasso*, eds. Elizabeth Cowling, Anne Baldassari and John Elderfield, exh. cat., London 2002, 381.

³ The term *cut-outs* refers to Matisse's use of the paper fragments as an aid to creating an image. The term *découpage* is used to when paper fragments are utilised as an intrinsic part of the image.

⁴ There are many outstanding writings on *Jazz* and those most helpful to this paper are listed. For an excellent scholarly analysis see Kathryn Brown, "Beyond the 'Ritual Space' of the Book: *Jazz*", in: idem, *Matisse's Poets: Critical Performance in the Artist's Book*, New York 2017, 177-192; Jack D. Flam, "Jazz", in: *Henri Matisse Paper Cut-Outs*, ed. Jack Cowart, exh. cat., New York 1977; Rebecca A. Rabinow, "The Legacy of La Rue Férou: 'Livres d'artiste' Created for Tériade by Rouault, Bonnard, Matisse, Léger, Le Corbusier, Chagall, Giacometti, and Miró" (PhD diss., New York University, 1995). An early commentary is provided by Riva Castleman, "Introduction to *Jazz* by Henri Matisse", in: Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, ed. George Braziller, New York 1983, vii-xii. For a bibliographic assessment see John Bidwell, *Graphic Passion: Matisse and the Book Arts*, New York 2015. There is much useful background information in Claude Duthuit, *Henri Matisse: Catalogue raisonné des ouvrages illustrés*, Paris 1988.

Mary Jane Cowan, Laurence Bertrand Dorléac, Aparna Nayak-Guercio and Colin Nettelbeck provide a better understanding of the phenomena.

[4] Generally, there is the concept of "active resistance" which overtly and covertly focuses on activities involving armed conflict, physical confrontation, sabotage, bombing bridges and destroying infrastructure. Overlapping with this form of resistance is "passive resistance" which involves conduct such as writing illicit material, wearing black for mourning, displaying the tri-colour, covertly promoting symbols of French history and cultural longevity, or even whistling patriotic music.⁵

[5] Cultural resistance, by its nature, is a form of passive resistance and involves actions designed to preserve French heritage and to recapture French cultural freedom. Dorléac identifies the issue of individuality and the cultural resistance arguing that, since this type of resistance was not an organised activity, there were multiple formats of resistance—each with its own myriad of complexities.⁶ Included within this framework are attempts by the artist acting alone to restore or uphold artistic freedoms, the recording of atrocities and, importantly, the propagation of national unity.⁷ Since these were actions involving ideas and beliefs, the fighters on the cultural battlefield used intellectual weapons, such as the printed word, the image, dance, music and film, and they fought with newspapers, books, radio, cinema and dance.⁸ Some scholars have pushed the boundaries further to assert that an act of cultural resistance represents a state of mind, that if a person has a determination to resist but cannot find a way to do so then that desire, even though unfulfilled, itself is an act of resistance. Art historian Margaret Atack argues that it is also necessary to consider material intended as instruments of cultural resistance that were created during the war but were revealed much later.⁹

⁵ Laurence Bertrand Dorléac, *Art of the Defeat: France 1940–1944*, Los Angeles 2008, 294; Aparna Nayak-Guercio, *The Project of Liberation and the Projection of National Identity. Calvo, Aragon, Jouhandeau, 1944–1945*, (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2006), 55, see <http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/7280/> (accessed 10 May 2019); Colin Nettelbeck, *Forever French: Exile in the United States, 1939–1945*, New York 1991, 55.

⁶ Dorléac, *Art of the Defeat*, 294.

⁷ Mary Jane Cowan, "Defense d'Afficher: The Wartime Art of Jean Lurçat and Jean Dubuffet", (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1993), 2-8, see <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/831/items/1.0086088> (accessed 10 May 2019).

⁸ Margaret Atack, *Literature and the French Resistance: Cultural Politics and Narrative Forms, 1940–1950*, Manchester 1989, 3.

⁹ Atack, *Literature and the French Resistance*, 8; Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940–1944*, Oxford 2001, 385.

[6] This discourse leads to the inevitable conclusion that among the wide range of cultural armoury, the *livre d'artiste* became a weapon of cultural resistance when it was used in defiance of the German objectives, to record and protest the atrocities committed by the occupiers, to defend French cultural heritage, and to provide sustenance and hope to the French people. These *livres d'artistes* retained their potency as instruments of cultural resistance even though they were created in isolation, were not seen by anyone else and remained unpublished at the time. The images of *Jazz* imbued with codes of cultural protest fall into this category.

[7] After years of refusal, Matisse commenced working on his *découpage* images for *De la couleur* in February 1943 and in a significant step, now confident of his concept, invited Tériade and his assistant Angèle Lamotte (1917? – 1945) to his apartment in Nice on 1 June 1943 to present his designs. There were four in all, two pairs of matching images. One pair was called *The Clown* and the other was called *The Toboggan*.¹⁰ As Tériade saw the two versions of *The Clown* and *The Toboggan*, he proposed to Matisse to use one set of images in *De la couleur* and to use the other set for a new project, an album of *découpage* images, *Cirque*, that later became *Jazz*. Tériade recalled this visit:

*He [Matisse] invited me and Angèle Lamotte in his Cimiez flat and he showed us not only his cover for the review (De la couleur) but also two large compositions in dazzling colours: The Clown and The Toboggan, which later became the first and final plates in Jazz. The Jazz cycle was born.*¹¹

[8] Matisse created another pair of matching images: *Icarus* which went into *Cirque*, and its pair, *The Fall of Icarus*, which went into *De la couleur*. He explained his circus theme when he wrote the text of *Jazz*: "The images, with their lively and violent tones, derive from crystallization of memories of circuses, folktales, and voyages."¹² – The circus has been depicted in art for decades, and it embodies a glittering

¹⁰ Casimiro Di Crescenzo, *Matisse and Tériade: Collaborative Works by the Artist and Art Publisher from Verve (1937–1960); Lettres Portugaises, 1946*, New York 1997, 58; Jack D. Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", in: *Henri Matisse Paper Cut-Outs*, ed. Jack Cowart, exh. cat., New York 1977, 98. It is not known whether Matisse used these four original *découpages* in *Verve* and *Jazz* or whether he created new images based on the originals. The original *découpages* do not exist separately and are most likely incorporated in the images finally used in *Jazz* and *De la couleur*.

¹¹ Di Crescenzo, *Matisse and Tériade*, 58. Di Crescenzo refers to Tériade's editorial in the facsimile of *Jazz*, see Henri Matisse, *Jazz* (Facsimile), Munich 1960, and Samantha Friedman, "Avant La Lettre", in: *Henri Matisse: The Cut-Outs*, ed. Karl D. Buchberg et al., London 2014, 88.

¹² Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, text translated from the French by Sophie Hawkes, ed. George Braziller, New York 1983, xviii. All translations of the *Jazz* text are from this edition.

haven of performance, a return to a carefree childhood where simple acts of magic and parade provide a light-hearted diversion from the burdens of daily life. It is that arena where for a fleeting instant the performers accomplish the impossible. Where the clowns, gypsies, trapeze artists, lion tamers, human cannon balls, disfigured, giants and midgets transported the audience into a fantasy world. These were the freaks and the marginalised, typical of those that Hitler condemned, who came from diverse backgrounds, who coalesced as a society "and presented an environmental model of social integration". This was a theme that unified people, for adults and children came together to laugh and forget their hardships.¹³ Matisse adopted the circus theme as a template for a series of *découpage* images which camouflaged his messages of protest, hope and resistance at the Occupation.¹⁴

[9] Matisse worked on *Cirque* at a bleak time. On 30 June 1943, barely four weeks after he showed his first *découpage* images to Tériade and Lamotte, the Allies bombed the Quartier Saint-Roch near his residence in Cimiez, interrupting his work. He fled Cimiez to a residence, Villa le Rêve, in Vence which his friend André Rouveyre (1879-1962) had found, just outside the old town and not far from where Rouveyre himself lived. Just a few weeks later, on 9 September 1943, the Germans occupied nearby Nice and took over the basement of Villa le Rêve as a kitchen for German soldiers.¹⁵

[10] In addition, Matisse's fears for his family grew, knowing that his estranged wife Amélie Parayre (1872-1958), daughter Marguerite (1895-1982), and son Jean (1899-1982) worked in the French Resistance.¹⁶ The perceived danger to him may have been exacerbated by his older son, Pierre (1900-1989), a successful art dealer in New York, whose "Artists in Exile" exhibition in 1942 featured many of the

¹³ Ann Thomas, "The Waking Dream: Photography and the Circus", in: *The Great Parade: Portrait of the Artist as Clown*, ed. Jean Clair, New Haven 2004, 47-55: 53; Jean Starobinski, "The Grimacing Double", in: *The Great Parade: Portrait of the Artist as Clown*, ed. Jean Clair, New Haven 2004, 16-17: 16.

¹⁴ Flam, "Jazz", 45. Flam argues that Matisse's choice of the circus as a theme recalls the 1917 production of *Parade* by the artist's friend Erik Satie. He notes that Matisse's circus-based images and *Parade* were produced in two world wars and had much in common with each other. He goes on to state that there are "striking parallels" between Picasso's costume designs for Satie's *Parade* and Matisse's images.

¹⁵ Hilary Spurling, *Matisse the Master: A Life of Henri Matisse, the Conquest of Colour, 1909-1954*, New York 2005, 416, 419.

¹⁶ Michel Anthonioz, *Verve: The Ultimate Review of Art and Literature (1937-1960)*, New York 1988, 149. Marguerite was the daughter of Matisse and Caroline Joblaud, who was Matisse's mistress from 1892 until 1897. Amélie adopted the four-year-old Marguerite after she married Matisse in 1898. The two women stayed close to each other throughout their lives.

surrealist artists who had fled France during the Occupation, the very artists that Hitler declared degenerate.¹⁷ His Russian-born assistant Lydia Delectorskaya (1910–1998) had also been questioned by the Vichy police.¹⁸

[11] Matisse blocked out these difficulties by immersing himself in his work, illustrating Henri de Montherlant's (1895–1972) *Pasiphaé: Chant de Minos (Les Crétois)* (1944), Pierre Ronsard's (1524–1585) *Florilège des amours* (1948), his handwritten *Poèmes de Charles d'Orléans* (1950), as well as *Dessins: Thèmes et variations* (1943), just published by Martin Fabiani, with a preface written by communist activist and writer Louis Aragon (1897–1982).

[12] Now focusing on *Cirque*, in addition to *The Clown* and *The Toboggan*, he completed seven other images by November 1943: *The Burial of Pierrot*; *The Circus*; *The Horse, the Rider and the Clown*; *Icarus*; *Monsieur Loyal*; *The Nightmare of the White Elephant*; and *The Sword Swallower*; and he expected to complete *The Knife Thrower* the following month.¹⁹ He finished these images during the ensuing weeks, completing the final three images for the project, the *Lagoon* set, in mid-1944 around the time of the Allied landings at Normandy in the weeks leading up to the liberation.²⁰

¹⁷ Exhibiting were Piet Mondrian, Fernand Léger, Max Ernst, Roberto Matta, Yves Tanguy, Marc Chagall, André Breton, André Masson, Amédée Ozenfant and Jacques Lipchitz. Stephanie Barron, "European Artists in Exile: A Reading Between the Lines", in: *Exiles + Emigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler*, eds. Stephanie Barron, Sabine Eckmann and Matthew Affron, Los Angeles 1997, 11-29: 21; Sabine Rewald, "Pierre Matisse: Faithful Son, Fearless Dealer", in: *The American Matisse: The Dealer, His Artists, His Collection: The Pierre and Maria-Gaetana Matisse Collection*, ed. Sabine Rewald, exh. cat., New York 2009, 3-23: 17-18.

¹⁸ Spurling, *Matisse the Master*, 408.

¹⁹ Rabinow, "The Legacy of La Rue Férou", 96, n. 36.

²⁰ Duthuit, *Henri Matisse*, 445; Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 113. Duthuit notes that still using working captions, by August 4 1944 Matisse recorded the completed images as: (1) *Verve*; (2) *Cirque (Circus)*; (3) *Trapéziste ou aviator* (Trapeze Artist or Aviator); (4) *Clowns*; (5) *Toboggan*; (6) *Cauchemar de l'Éléphant blanc* (Nightmare of the White Elephant); (7) *L'Écuyère et le Clown* (The Horsewoman and the Clown); (8) *Enterrement de Pierrot* (Pierrot's Burial); (9) *Avaleur de sabres* (Sword Swallower); (10) *Codomas*; (11) *Loyal*; (12) *Poses plastiques* (Plastic Poses, later renamed *Formes/Forms*); (13) *Le Cow-boy* (The Cowboy); (14) *Lanceur de couteaux* (Knife Thrower); (15) *La Fatalité*; (16) *Le Loup Garou* (The Werewolf); (17) *Aquarium*; and (18) *Océanie*.

Symbols of cultural resistance

[13] The *Cirque* images contain many elements of the circus; they portray a circus master, clowns, a knife thrower, a sword swallower, a cowboy, acrobats, trapeze artists and a performing elephant. There are references to three well-known circus names, the ringmaster Monsieur Loyal, an acrobatic family he called the Codomas, and the clown Pierrot. Yet the images do not project the fun and joy of the circus and many have large swathes of black, recalling the black background of *Symphonie chromatique* and the linocut images of the tragic tale of prohibited love in *Pasiphaé*, the book that Matisse worked on just a few months earlier in March 1943.

[14] Many of the images contain mixed metaphors, and coupled with their bright colours has made their interpretation a topic of continuing debate.²¹ Art historian Jack Flam argues that "despite their vivid colours and circus themes, few of the compositions are cheerful; several are among Matisse's most ominous images." He asserts that these are images that "shout[s] its sorrows" and are perhaps the "closest thing to an autobiography that Matisse has left us". He considers that the images project a dark side, which he observes were "composed during the dark days of World War II". Discussing some of the images, he considers that the jagged shapes at the top and bottom of *The Toboggan* reflect violent action, the *Nightmare of the White Elephant* symbolises captivity, the red shards piercing the elephant depict violence, while *Destiny* is a "sombre image" of an intertwined couple facing menace and danger. Perhaps to provide some balance to these threats, Flam clearly considers that Matisse also generated hope in his images, as he likens *Monsieur Loyal* to General Charles De Gaulle.²²

[15] In her PhD thesis, Rebecca Rabinow, currently Director of the Menil Collection, Houston, acknowledges that "several of Matisse's wartime works carry subtle patriotic messages". For example, *Icarus* and *Nightmare of the White Elephant* refer to a "desire for freedom", while *The Knife Thrower*, *Sword Swallower* and *Cowboy* reflect "acts of aggression", and *Toboggan*, *Wolf*, *Burial of Pierrot*, *Heart* and *Destiny* project a "sense of lurking danger and/or death". She further argues that in four of the double-page images, *Cowboy*, *The Knife Thrower*, *Destiny* and *The Heart*, the "left side represents evil and the right, good". Tériade, she emphasizes, was convinced that the earlier *Jazz* plates, *Toboggan*, *Icarus*, and *Burial of Pierrot* reflect the tragic ambience of the time. She asserts that "Black is used as a threatening color in many of the book's images."²³

²¹ Flam, "Jazz", 43; Rabinow, "The Legacy of La Rue Férou", 119.

²² Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 5, 12-13, 44-45, 103.

²³ Rabinow, "The Legacy of La Rue Férou", 109-110.

[16] Art historian Pierre Schneider in his scholarly assessment of Matisse went further, judging that *Jazz* should "be placed in the context of the years in which it was developed 1943-4 - to be fully appreciated". He contends that this was a stressful period for everyone including Matisse, who was suffering with his sickness. He references Matisse's declaration to Tériade "but I am also affected by the same things that affect the community". Schneider concludes that *Jazz* "reflects these shared anxieties, responds to them; it is a nocturnal book".²⁴

[17] Former chief curator of MOMA, Riva Castleman, drawing an association with the Occupation, notes one image, *The Wolf*, as being "easily understood as a symbol for the threatening Gestapo", and references *Destiny* as "menacing and dangerous".²⁵ Art academic and historian Kathryn Brown in her analysis of Matisse's livres d'artistes suggests that "Troubling themes come to the fore..." in *Icarus, Wolf, Burial of Pierrot, The Codomas* and *The Toboggan*.²⁶

[18] Although the literature review for this paper reveals a strong scholarly consensus that the *découpage* images are dark and troubling and must be considered within the context of the difficulties of the Occupation, at the time of writing this article, over seventy-five years after their creation, many still remain to be deciphered within these parameters. While there is widespread scholarly acceptance that images such as *Icarus, Wolf, The Toboggan, Sword Swallower, Monsieur Loyal, Nightmare of the White Elephant* and *Destiny* directly reference the Occupation, others such as *The Codomas, Forms, Burial of Pierrot* and *The Swimmer in the Aquarium* have not been interpreted according to this criteria. This article contends that it is unlikely that Matisse depicted issues relating to the pain of the Occupation in some images while veering away from this framework for the others. The research for this article adopted the consensus view to help resolve the interpretative predicament of the remaining images.

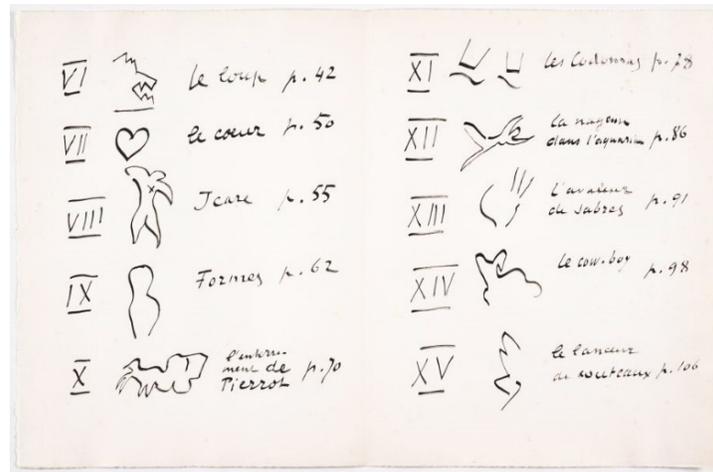
[19] Matisse cleverly disguised his intent. He created two interpretative devices to camouflage the symbolism of the motifs of cultural resistance that he embedded within his images. The first is the thematic interpretative device denoting the circus, which is reflected in the original title *Cirque* and can be applied to all images. The second is the caption interpretative device which is applied to each image individually according to the intricate and complex captions which Matisse created and recorded in the "Table of images" (Fig. 1). In seeking to interpret the underlying messages that Matisse embedded into his images, the analysis at various times

²⁴ Pierre Schneider, *Matisse*, New York 1984, 661.

²⁵ Riva Castleman, "Introduction to Jazz", xii-xiii.

²⁶ Brown, "Beyond the 'Ritual Space' of the Book: *Jazz*", 187.

switches between these two interpretative devices while taking into consideration the difficulties of the Occupation.



1 Henri Matisse, "Table of images", in: Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, Paris: Tériade 1947, 150-151 (© Succession H. Matisse/Copyright Agency, 2019)

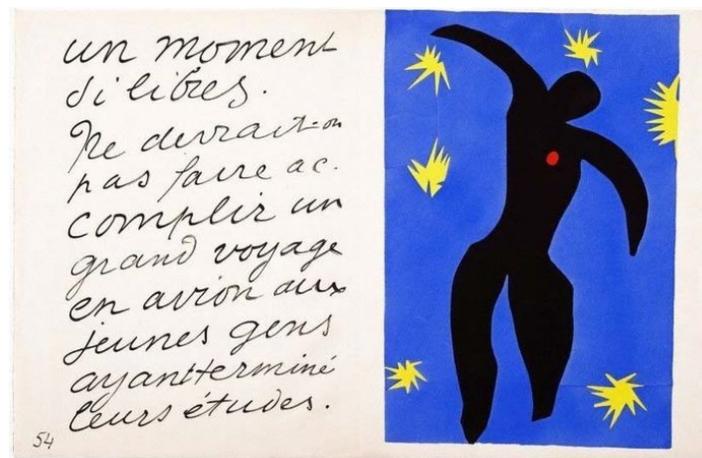
[20] To aid with their analysis, the images were placed into six loose thematic groupings. Not in any particular order, in the first group are four double-page images which depict the human form, *Forms*, *The Cowboy*, *The Knife Thrower* and *The Codomas*. In the second grouping are two images which show full-page human faces, *Monsieur Loyal* and *Sword Swallower*. Next are four images which portray animals, *The Wolf*, *The Nightmare of the White Elephant*, *The Horse*, *The Rider and the Clown* and *Pierrot's Funeral*. Fourth are two images that capture emotion, *Destiny* and *The Heart*. Another group is made up of the three *Lagoon* images. Finally, there is the group of five images that share a similar iconography of "Icarus"-type images, *Icarus*, *The Clown*, *Cirque*, *The Swimmer in the Aquarium*, and *The Toboggan*.²⁷

[21] Analysing this final group first, the lifeless stance of an anonymous *Icarus* is one of the most powerful images of a body in death (Fig. 2). In National-Socialist ideology, the well-developed athletic body became an accepted symbol of power and strength in society and represented the purity of the Aryan race that Hitler desired.²⁸ The collaborationist French artist Charles Despiau presented the healthy

²⁷ All *Jazz* images are readily accessible through one of the many internet search engines and so only a limited number of images are produced in this paper. The full range of images can be seen at https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/?document_id=10301 (accessed 6 May 2019).

²⁸ Kenneth R. Dutton, *The Perfectible Body: The Western Ideal of Male Physical Development*, London 1995, 12-21.

body in his images for Henry de Montherlant's book *Les Olympiques* as a symbol of French cultural and economic strength under the Germans.²⁹



2 Henri Matisse, *Icarus*, in: Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, Paris: Tériade 1947, 54-55 (© Succession H. Matisse/Copyright Agency, 2019)

In stark contrast, using semi-abstract imagery and rejecting the wholesome Aryan body, Matisse crafted the Icarus-figures as a formless shape, a broken body, and so conveyed his fears at the unfolding events around him. The Icarus-figures have no face and are in the opposite polarity to the expressive faces he composed for his other illustrated books. Long after Tériade published *Jazz*, Matisse explained in his 1951 interview with Georges Charbonnier that he created an anonymous face devoid of personality, so the viewer would focus on the whole body:

*I don't put in eyes sometimes, or a mouth for my figures. However, that's because the face is anonymous. Because the expression is carried by the whole picture. Arms, legs, all the lines act like parts of an orchestra, a register, movements, and different pitches. If you put in eyes, nose, mouth, it doesn't serve for much; on the contrary, doing so paralyzes the imagination of the spectator and obliges him to see a specific person, a certain resemblance, and so on, whereas if you paint lines, values, forces, the spectator's soul becomes involved in the maze of these multiple elements [...] and so, his imagination is freed from all limit.*³⁰

[22] *Icarus* adopts varying identities depending on which interpretative filter is applied. When considered through the thematic filter of the circus, *Icarus* is an acrobat flying through the air with circus spotlights beaming in the background. Applying the caption filter, *Icarus* becomes the mythical figure who escaped

²⁹ Swan, "Resistance and Resurgence", 95.

³⁰ Jack D. Flam, *Matisse on Art*, New York 1995, 141. Matisse made this statement in an interview with art scholar Georges Charbonnier in 1951, which Flam reproduced in his book.

imprisonment and flew too close to the sun, waxed wings melting in the heat causing Icarus to fall to his death as golden stars shine in the darkened sky.

[23] Yet, in *Jazz*, or in its original incarnation, *Cirque*, *Icarus* is no more a circus identity than a mythological figure. Removed from its circus theme, stripped of its mythic caption and examined within the context of the Occupation, *Icarus* takes on another tragic role. Aragon explained the symbolism of *Icarus*, and its pair, *The Fall of Icarus*, arguing that it was in the summer of 1943, in "the darkest moment of that whole period", that Matisse created this image of a corpse. By drawing from Matisse's own confidential comments, he confirms that "the yellow splashes, suns or stars according to a mythological interpretation, stood for bursting shells in 1943 and the red patch resembles a stain of blood".³¹ Thus the wartime-coded transmutation of Icarus becomes a body in the aftermath of execution.

[24] *The Clown*, the startling opening Icarus-figure in the book, is a warning of what is to unfold, and according to Flam, is an isolated figure, a "metaphor for the artist", presumably reflecting Matisse's incapacity, both physical and wartime, to freely move around (Fig. 3).³²



3 Henri Matisse, *The Clown*, in: Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, Paris: Tériade 1947, 6-7 (© Succession H. Matisse/Copyright Agency, 2019)

When removed from its circus theme and its caption and viewed within the context of the Occupation, it is a dark gloomy depiction of imprisonment. The body floats in front of a black threatening void, held captive behind prison bars, represented by the six vertical elongated strips at the top and bottom of the image. The clown is emblazoned with eight sharp pointed red shards evoking the flow of blood from a

³¹ Louis Aragon, *Henri Matisse: A Novel*, trans. Jean Stewart, 2 vols., London 1972, vol. 2, 35.

³² Flam, *Matisse on Art*, 110-111.

wounded body. The viewer is left to ponder whether the clown is walking into the black void or is trying to flee it, while warning others against entering it.³³ *The Clown* has an autobiographical element to it. Matisse's practice with his illustrated books was to acknowledge the author with a portrait, often as a frontispiece. By placing this frontispiece next to the title page, which displayed his name, Henri Matisse, and the title, *Jazz*, it is argued that Matisse was not only asserting his authority as author and artist but also projecting himself as a prisoner.

[25] The second image with an Icarus-type figure, captioned *Cirque*, was originally designed to be the cover of the print album. It shows a book fold with the word CIRQUE cut vertically which resembles the *découpage* title *Verve* which Matisse created for *De la couleur*. The black hunched Icarus-figure, conceivably a trapeze artist or a tightrope walker, with a scarf or long flowing hair, perhaps a woman, is bathed in a white shaft of light and seems to be fleeing from an unknown danger, a river of blood flowing below. The danger propagated by this image stands in contrast to the light-heartedness projected by the *Cirque* title.

[26] Another Icarus-figure, *Swimmer in the Aquarium*, whose caption conjures up a circus performer diving into, or perhaps rising up in a small tank of water (Fig. 4). Detached from its thematic and caption interpretative devices and considered within the context of the Occupation, the stark white body, arms and feet opened out, floating on top of a split dominating black background becomes a dark ominous image, portraying a dead body floating in a river, a covert wartime protest.³⁴

³³ Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 103. Matisse used similar sharp jagged shapes to depict violence in *Icarus* and *Toboggan*. The red shards in *The Clown* recall Matisse's 1938 costume design for the two principle dancers in Léonide Massine's ballet *Rouge et Noir* set to Dmitri Shostakovich's Symphony No 1.

³⁴ French artist Jean Fautrier (1898–1964) also used images of dead bodies in a river as a symbol of protest in the illustrations he created for Robert Ganzo's (1898–1995) poetry, *Orénoque*, see Jean Fautrier and Robert Ganzo, *Orénoque*, Paris 1944. There is no evidence that Matisse was aware of these images at the time he created *Swimmer in the Aquarium*.



4 Henri Matisse, *Swimmer in the Aquarium*, in: Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, Paris: Tériade 1947, 86-87 (© Succession H. Matisse/Copyright Agency, 2019)

[27] The fifth Icarus-figure, *The Toboggan*, was one of the two earliest images that Matisse showed Tériade at their 1 June 1943 meeting. Tériade considered the image to reflect the tragic ambiance of the time.³⁵ It presents a curled-up figure in an upside-down foetal position, hands and feet in the air, as it falls uncontrollably downhill. Aragon identified the illustrative congruence between *The Toboggan* and *Icarus*:

*This all the truer in that the book ends with the drawing called "The Toboggan" where the blue silhouette of the figure being dragged forward, feet in air, by the toboggan has almost the same shape as the Icarus falling amid the bursting shells on the green and white cover of "De la couleur" 1945.*³⁶

The Toboggan became the closing image, appearing just after the tranquillity of the *Lagoon* images. The falling tobogganist sandwiched by red and yellow shards recalls the yellow shards in *Icarus*, which Flam argued "appear to express violent action", perhaps an end to the Occupation.³⁷

[28] The quartet of double-page cut-outs of images, *Forms*, *The Cowboy*, *The Knife Thrower* and *The Codomas* each showing a pair of bodies, different in style to the Icarus-figures, seem to propagate an undercurrent of violence. The first of this group, *Forms*, shows two bodies lying side by side, decapitated, absent a head,

³⁵ Rabinow, "The Legacy of La Rue Férou", 109.

³⁶ Aragon, *Henri Matisse: A Novel*, vol. 2, 35.

³⁷ Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 103.

arms and legs, an intense image of bodies in death. Not a circus image, Matisse originally titled this *La Fatalité*, thus revealing his true intent.³⁸

[29] The second double-page image in this grouping is a frightening image, *The Cowboy*, which Rabinow emphasises was one of the double-page images "in which the left side represents evil and the right side, good".³⁹ The cowboy on the left, the "evil" component, perhaps the oppressor or the occupier, is whipping the right-hand figure, the "good" component, who is arched back in pain as the whip curls around its body, perhaps the oppressed or the occupied. The dominating black of the two figures emphasises the violence inherent in the image.

[30] The third double-page image is *The Knife Thrower* and according to Rabinow is another dual "evil-good" composition. The aggression inherent in the knife thrower on the left, the "evil" figure, is analogous to the cowboy with the whip, aiming at the heart of the "good" figure, the woman on the right, hands held high as if in surrender. The woman evokes Matisse's painting *Représentation de la France*, a depiction of the French symbol Marianne, which Tériade placed as the frontispiece in his wartime edition of *Verve, Nature de la France*.

[31] *The Codomas*, the final double-page image of this grouping is intriguing (Fig. 5). With 91 separate paper fragments this is the busiest of the images in *Jazz*. The two yellow swirls seemingly leaping out of the trapezes in *The Codomas* hint at two acrobats performing high above the black safety net. This image references a well-known circus family called the *Flying Codonas*, an acrobatic group seeped in tragedy, who were scheduled to perform at the opening night of the renowned *Cirque Medrano's* Jubilee Gala on 12 September 1937 in Paris. Although the lead acrobat Abelardo (Lalo) Codona (1895–1951) injured his shoulder during practice in the afternoon, he went on to perform at the gala, he missed his trapeze catch and seriously injured himself in a fall. The ringmaster, Georges Loyal, used a ladder to climb into the net to rescue Lalo. Severely injured, Lalo ended his trapeze career and the *Flying Codonas* came to an end.⁴⁰

³⁸ Duthuit, *Henri Matisse*, 445.

³⁹ Rabinow, "The Legacy of La Rue Férou", 110.

⁴⁰ For the history of tragedies to befall the Flying Codonas see Dominique Jando, "The Codonas", in: *Circopedia*, http://www.circopedia.org/The_Codonas (accessed 10 May 2019).



5 Henri Matisse, *The Codomas*, in: Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, Paris: Tériade 1947, 78-79 (© Succession H. Matisse/Copyright Agency, 2019)

[32] Matisse created two faces, *Monsieur Loyal* and *The Sword Swallower*, both of which have direct allusions to the Occupation. *Monsieur Loyal* likely references Georges Loyal, the ringmaster of the Paris-based *Cirque Medrano*, who as mentioned earlier climbed into the net to rescue an injured Lalo Codona, an action that was widely publicised throughout Paris. Flam argues that the image "appears to suggest Charles de Gaulle", at the time the exiled leader of Free France.⁴¹ In Matisse's depiction, de Gaulle is wearing his signature peaked military cap immersed in the now recognisable blue uniform and is surrounded with his military gold buttons. At the time Matisse created *Monsieur Loyal*, the French were increasingly viewing de Gaulle as the symbolic leader of a free France.

[33] The second face, *Sword Swallower*, which Rabinow refers to as an act of aggression, shows a pained face, a guillotined head, with three swords partially immersed in the sword swallower's mouth causing the neck to bulge. Depicting the Gestapo and parodying the cruel behaviour of the German occupiers, Matisse claimed that he made the head small "because a sword swallower is not generally a refined person".⁴² The *Sword Swallower* and *Monsieur Loyal* are a matched pair. A likeness of the *Sword Swallower* emerges when *Monsieur Loyal* is turned upside down. In using similar shaped paper cut-outs Matisse may have been linking the two figures, the leader of Free France against the Gestapo.

[34] *The Wolf*, a menacing-looking creature with a red eye is one of four double-page images of animals. Matisse described it as a "werewolf", a bloody-eyed beast that is prepared to bite, likening it to the wolf of Little Red Riding Hood. Rabinow argues that the image is menacing and "conveys a certain sense of lurking danger

⁴¹ Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 105.

⁴² Rabinow, "The Legacy of La Rue Férou", 111.

and/or death".⁴³ Far from being a circus animal, it is an alarming figure, which according to Castleman "was easily understood as a symbol for the threatening Gestapo".⁴⁴

[35] The second double-page image of an animal, *The Nightmare of the White Elephant*, shows an elephant balancing on a white decorated ball surrounded by black cut-outs which projects a feeling of entrapment. Matisse explained that the elephant "dreams of his childhood in the bush", and his assistant Lydia recalled that the elephant's agony is symbolised by the "red flames that pierce him like arrows" and white "is the colour of trained animals and captivity". In a clear case of self-identification Matisse revealed: "And the white elephant; it is me".⁴⁵ In this instance the caption emphasises a threatening message in a seemingly benign circus image.

[36] *The Horse, the Rider and the Clown*, the third double-page animal image, like *The Cowboy*, demonstrates a violent action with the whip once again as the central element of violence, an image with a message of despair and pain which is disguised by the caption. Flam considers that the rider, wearing a black-and-white skirt, is sitting on top of the horse on the top right-hand side of the image. The black, yellow and green patterning on the bottom left he says is the clown.⁴⁶

[37] The horse also features in the final double-page animal image, *Pierrot's Funeral* (Fig. 6). Pierrot is the sad clown who emerged in the seventeenth century representing emotion and melancholia, a defenceless character featured in art, literature and music. A pitied figure who, as the fable goes, yearns for the beautiful Columbine, who rejects him for Harlequin. Pierrot the clown generated pleasure and became a children's favourite. In the circus the clown was often killed only to re-emerge to the delight of the audience. In *Jazz*, Matisse kills Pierrot with no hope of resurrection by depicting a funeral, leaving no doubt with his caption. Flam considers that the funeral refers to Matisse's own near death experience at the commencement of the Occupation; the red flower-like object inside the coffin may be the heart of "Pierrot - and perhaps of the artist."⁴⁷ Matisse also used the heart in *Icarus*, *Pierrot's Funeral* and *The Knife Thrower* to accentuate the emotive interpretation of the images.

⁴³ Rabinow, "The Legacy of La Rue Férou", 110-111.

⁴⁴ Castleman, "Introduction to Jazz", xiii.

⁴⁵ Rabinow, "The Legacy of La Rue Férou", 99.

⁴⁶ Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 106.

⁴⁷ Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 109.



6 Henri Matisse, *Pierrot's Funeral*, in: Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, Paris: Tériade, 1947, 70-71 (© Succession H. Matisse/Copyright Agency, 2019)

[38] The two double-paged images *Destiny* and *The Heart* are aesthetically and thematically linked and according to Rabinow also present a "left-side evil and right-side good" theme.⁴⁸ Matisse's assistant Lydia described the central icon in the right hand side of *Destiny* as "the small human couple" who kneels, while facing their destiny, the "menacing and dangerous" image on the left hand side. Flam considers *Destiny* to be "one of Matisse's most somber images" created during the dark days of the Occupation and which Di Crescenzo argues shows a "fearfully embraced pair" who faces a "threatening and awful" destiny.⁴⁹ The red heart in *The Heart* suggests tenderness as it faces a threatening black shape on the left hand side, which Castleman calls a "black void". According to Flam the work "juxtaposes an image of human tenderness with one of impersonal fate".⁵⁰

[39] On 6 June 1944 the Allied forces landed in Normandy signalling the beginning of the liberation, and it was during this tumultuous period that Matisse commenced on the three *Lagoon* compositions, the final images he executed for *Jazz* (Fig. 7).⁵¹ These tranquil images are very different in style and interpretation from the others. These are not circus images, but recall the peacefulness and joy of his trip to Tahiti in 1930, which Castleman refers to as "Matisse's own Paradise".⁵² The calm of

⁴⁸ Rabinow, "The Legacy of La Rue Férou", 110.

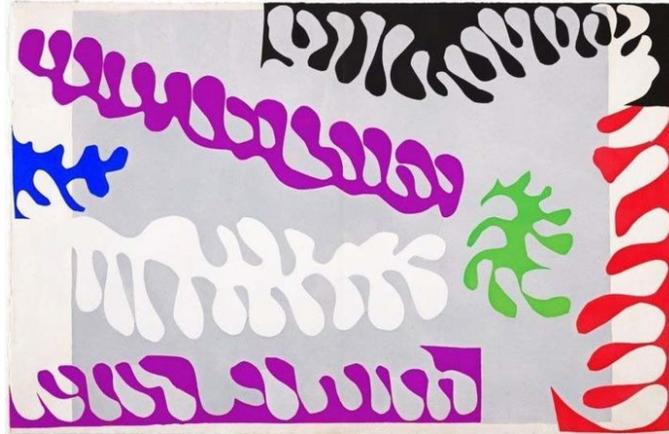
⁴⁹ Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 112-113; Di Crescenzo, *Matisse and Tériade*, 59.

⁵⁰ Castleman, "Introduction to Jazz", ix; Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 107.

⁵¹ Duthuit, *Henri Matisse*, 446; Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 113; Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, trans. Sophie Hawkes, xviii.

⁵² Castleman, "Introduction to Jazz", x.

Lagoons reflects the high expectation of the Liberation. They form a bridge from the jarring wartime *découpage* images, described in the first part of this paper, to the peacefulness of the text which he was to commence in April 1946, long after he created the images and well after the liberation of France, and which is the focus of the next part of the paper.



7 Henri Matisse, *Lagoon 1*, in: *Jazz*, Paris: Tériade 1947, 122-123 (© Succession H. Matisse/Copyright Agency, 2019)

From *Cirque* to *Jazz*

[40] The concept of converting *Cirque* from an album of colourful prints to an illustrated book titled *Jazz* emerged slowly from around April 1944.⁵³ An early clue to Matisse's thinking was revealed in an article published by art critic Gaston Diehl on 29 April 1944, revealing that Matisse's album would be called either *Cirque* or *Jazz* and that Tériade would provide the text.⁵⁴

[41] Despite the many years since its publication, there is still no agreement on the origin of the title *Jazz*. Castleman argues that the decision seems to have been made by 7 March 1944, just prior to Diehl's article, and "that it was Tériade who began to call the book *Jazz*".⁵⁵ On the other hand, Tériade remembered that Matisse chose the title *Jazz* because "the *découpages* correspond to the spirit of jazz. Music was indispensable to Matisse and the title reflected Matisse's fondness of jazz".⁵⁶ Art historian John Bidwell asserts that Matisse was attracted to the aesthetics of the

⁵³ Flam, "Jazz", p. 47, n. 28.

⁵⁴ Castleman, "Introduction to Jazz", xi; Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 101; Rabinow, "The Legacy of La Rue Férou", 106.

⁵⁵ Castleman, "Introduction to Jazz", viii.

⁵⁶ Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 101.

word, "because of its calligraphic potential, the stately capital J and the syncopated double z".⁵⁷ Aragon recalls Matisse's treatise on the aesthetic qualities of "J" as the artist declared "I know what a J is like now" and reflected on the difficulties of "A".⁵⁸

[42] It was around April 1946 when Matisse decided that he needed a visual pause between the bright pictures to give the eye a rest. Having tested and rejected blank sheets of paper and pages of printed text, he decided instead to use the graphic quality of his handwritten text for the purpose.⁵⁹ The handwritten text was not entirely new to Matisse. In early 1943 he had painstakingly copied out thirty-five rondeaux and sonnets for his as yet unpublished livre d'artiste *Poèmes de Charles d'Orléans*. He had also experimented with the handwritten text at the early stages of his work on Ronsard's *Florilège des amours*.⁶⁰

[43] Matisse was also aware of the handwritten illustrated books created by two of his artist friends, Georges Rouault's (1871–1958) *Divertissement* (1943) and Pierre Bonnard's (1867–1947) *Correspondances* (1944), the first two of the series of *Manuscrits modernes* that Tériade instigated and published. By April 1946, Tériade had also commissioned Pierre Reverdy (1889–1960) to handwrite his poems *Le Chant des morts* which Picasso illustrated, and he was negotiating with Fernand Léger (1881–1955) to handwrite a text for his livre d'artiste *Cirque*.

[44] Believing that there were no suitable texts and encouraged by Tériade, Matisse decided to author his own. This was at a time when, as Rachel Perry recalls, France had begun its transformation from the destructive years of the Occupation into the post-Liberation period of national reconstruction. Writing in regards to Fautrier's 1945 *Les Otages* exhibition at the Galerie René Drouin, Paris, she states that by that time in France "the context had changed irrevocably" and that "the year 1945 promised to be a new beginning, a slate wiped clean of the experience of four defiling years of Occupation".⁶¹ Mara Holt Skov agrees, explaining that many of the French people, having compromised their ideals, now simply wanted to forget the Occupation.⁶² The focus had shifted, and as Natalie Adamson asserts, from 1944 the

⁵⁷ Bidwell, *Graphic Passion: Matisse and the Book Arts*, 183.

⁵⁸ Aragon, *Henri Matisse: A Novel*, vol. 1, 285.

⁵⁹ Di Crescenzo, 58-59; Hanne Finsen, *Matisse: A Second Life*, Paris 2005, 200.

⁶⁰ Duthuit, 420.

⁶¹ Rachel Eve Perry, "Jean Fautrier's Jolies Juives", in: *October* 108 (spring 2004), 51-72: 70.

⁶² Mara Holt Skov, "Representing the Unthinkable: Images of Loss in the Mid-Century Work of Jean Fautrier" (MA thesis, San José State University, 1997), <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.sjvn-vv58> (accessed 10 May 2019).

aim was for French artists to once again become "the world's supreme creative force".⁶³

[45] Matisse, sensing the changed mood of the French people avoided authoring a text that mirrored of the violence of his images. Picasso faced a similar dilemma. Just after the liberation, Tériade commissioned Picasso to illustrate Pierre Reverdy's wartime poetry, *Le Chant des morts*, which depicted the pain of the Occupation. Picasso, aware that the French were moving from the war years, rejected representational imagery, choosing instead an abstract arabesque format derived from medieval manuscripts, a decorative motif that sat independent of Reverdy's forceful text.⁶⁴ This was a period of regular contact between Picasso and Matisse during which they exchanged views on their art. Picasso, with his images for *Le Chant des morts*, and Matisse, with his text for *Jazz*, faced similar challenges, and both adopted nonconfrontational solutions.⁶⁵ Matisse's text implanted a calmness and exuded a sense of optimism which now co-existed with his Occupation-driven images, creating a book which reflected the changing socio-political history of this unique period in twentieth-century France.

[46] Matisse commenced his text in mid-1946 around the same time he wrote a revealing essay "Comment j'ai fait mes livres" [How I made my books] for publisher Albert Skira's *Anthologie du livre illustré par les peintres et sculpteurs de l'École de Paris*, published in September 1946.⁶⁶ While "How I made my books" is a single composition with a unified message, the text for *Jazz* comprised 16 different sections each with their own heading and interpretation. In both writings Matisse addressed the principles of the text-image relationships he adopted for his livres d'artiste. This article argues that these two writings are linked and critical sections of both may be considered as a single composition.

[47] In "How I made my books" he wrote of the complexity of the text-image relationship, citing as examples his first illustrated books, Stéphane Mallarmé's *Poésies* and Montherlant's *Pasiphaé*. Referring to *Poésies*, he described the delicate

⁶³ Natalie Adamson, *Painting, Politics and the Struggle for the École de Paris, 1944-1964*, Farnham 2009, 9.

⁶⁴ Rodney T. Swan, "Turning Point. The Aesthetic Genealogy Surrounding Picasso's Illustrations of Reverdy's *Le Chant des morts*", in: *Art and Book. Illustration and Innovation*, ed. Peter Stupples, Newcastle upon Tyne 2016, 85-104: 90-91.

⁶⁵ Swan, "Turning Point", 94.

⁶⁶ Henri Matisse, "Comment j'ai fait mes livres", in: *Anthologie du livre illustré par les peintres et sculpteurs de l'École de Paris*, ed. Albert Skira, Geneva 1946, xxi-xxvi. Skira's book was one of many to emerge in post-war France that propagated the leadership and aesthetic innovation of the French illustrated book.

balance of the white pages comprising images created with the thinnest of black lines against the pages of black text, printed with heavy twenty-point Garamond italic font. Using an analogy, he said these were like the white and black balls held by a juggler, "so different" yet made an "harmonious whole" by the art of the juggler.⁶⁷ He asserted that *Pasiphaé* achieved the same text-image balance as *Poésies* even though the *Pasiphaé* images are at the opposite polarity, constructed with white lines cut into the black background of linocuts balanced against the white pages with black text.

[48] Another key principle, he asserted, is the rapport between the image and the literary character of the text. Neither dominate, they operate in harmony to form a unified whole. He listed his other books awaiting publication, *Visages, Poésies de Ronsard* and *Lettres portugaises*, as being visually different but all adhering to the principle of "Rapport with the literary character of the work".⁶⁸ Even though he made comments on linocuts, a relatively new technique for him which he used for *Pasiphaé*, significantly he did not mention *Jazz*, which he was working on at the same time, and he remained silent on his emerging *découpage* technique.

[49] Matisse knew that *Jazz* was different. In it he breaks his own principle that the image must have a "Rapport with the literary character of the text". In *Jazz*, he used his handwritten text merely as a visual device. He made this clear in "Notes", the first textual section, and in the final textual section, titled "Jazz", bearing the same name as the book, when he revealed the new text-image dynamic he adopted for *Jazz*. In the first paragraph of "Notes", he declared that his handwritten text has no interpretative relationship with his images, casting the text into a secondary decorative role, designed only to accompany the dominant partner in the book, the *découpage* images.

*The exceptional size of the writing seems necessary to me in order to be in a decorative relationship with the character of the color prints. These pages, therefore will serve only to accompany my colors, just as asters help in the composition of a bouquet of more important flowers. THEIR ROLE IS PURELY VISUAL (sic).*⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Flam, *Matisse on Art*, 107.

⁶⁸ Flam, *Matisse on Art*, 107. – At the beginning of 1946, Matisse had published only two of his wartime books, his collaboration with Louis Aragon, *Dessins: Thèmes et variations* (1943), and Henry Montherlant's *Pasiphaé* (1944). Still to be published were Marianna Alcaforado's *Lettres portugaises* (1946), Pierre Reverdy's *Visages* (1946), Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* (1947), *Jazz* (1947), Pierre Ronsard's *Florilège des amours* (1948), *Poèmes de Charles d'Orléans* (1950), André Rouveyre's *Apollinaire* (1952), and John-Antoine Nau's *Poésies Antillaises* (1972).

⁶⁹ Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, trans. Sophie Hawkes, , xv.

He emphasised this new text-image relationship by highlighting the words "Their role is purely visual" in upper case and left no doubt this was his decision, using the words "I must" and "I decided":

*I'd like to introduce my color prints under the most favorable of conditions. For this reason I must separate them by intervals of a different character. I decided that handwriting was best suited for this purpose.*⁷⁰

In the final textual section, "Jazz", he reiterated his authority, emphasising his authorship of the text and its supportive role to the image:

*I've written these pages to mollify the simultaneous effects of my chromatic and rhythmic improvisations; pages forming a kind of 'sonorous ground' that supports them, enfolds them, and protects them, in their peculiarities.*⁷¹

[50] Although the text played a secondary role to the image, Matisse did not expect its literary quality to be ignored. In the second paragraph of "Notes", he revealed an autobiographical basis for his text and asked the reader for patience when reading his words. "All that I really have to recount are observations and notes made during the course of my life as a painter. I ask of those who will have the patience to read these notes the indulgence usually granted to the writings of painters."⁷² With these words, Matisse proclaims that the interpretive message of the text does not lie within the book *Jazz* but as an external series of autobiographical annotations.

[51] Since *Jazz* departed from the text-image relationship that Matisse articulated in "How I made my books", he seems to have considered that the new text-image association needed a separate explanation, and so he deliberately excluded *Jazz* from that essay. Instead, he posited this new explanation in its own distinct space within the text of *Jazz* itself. Although they are two separate writings, the thematic and grammatical links between *Jazz* and "How I made my books" are strong, as if they originate from a single composition. The use of the first person and the short form remarks are common elements to both writings. The texts in "Notes" and the final section "Jazz" perform well when read together and take on the role of a clarifying addendum to "How I made my books", thus unifying the two writings.

[52] Although the sixteen separate textual sections in *Jazz* stand independent and may be read separately, they can be loosely clustered into three thematic groups. As previously discussed, the first section "Notes" and the final section "Jazz" comprise one such thematic group. Another relates to art; "The bouquet", "The character of a face", "If I have confidence in my hand", "Drawing with scissors", "My

⁷⁰ Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, trans. Sophie Hawkes, xv.

⁷¹ Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, trans. Sophie Hawkes, xvii.

⁷² Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, trans. Sophie Hawkes, xv.

curves are not mad" and "A new painting". In "The bouquet" he evokes the newness of freshly picked flowers from a garden but cautions against using metaphors from the past, "reminisces of long dead bouquets" to view these flowers. In "The character of a face" he declares that different drawings of the same face still portray the same character and in "Drawing with scissors" he equates the cutting of his coloured images to that of creating sculptures.

[53] There is a certain joyousness in another grouping, "The Airplane", "A musician once said", "Happiness", "Lagoons", "Happy are those who sing" and "The afterlife". "The Airplane" presents a vision of hope and freedom in which he concludes with a tribute to Tériade and Lamotte who had died before *Jazz* was published: "I give homage here to Angèle Lamotte and to Tériade for their perseverance and for their support for me during the realization of this book."⁷³

[54] In addition to the *découpage* images and the hand-written text, Matisse introduced a third visual element, hand-drawn abstract arabesques using the same brush and ink as for the text. These arabesques, a concept he discussed in "How I made my books", play a visual role in all his other books, where they partner with the images to foster a balance with the text. However, the reverse occurs in *Jazz*, where the arabesques partner with the text to emphasise the visual character of his handwriting. He created sixteen arabesques, using twelve as textual tailpieces, two as textual interruptions and two as full-page drawings, placing one at the opening of the book and one within the book, just before *Forms*.

[55] Having drafted his initial compositions, to ensure the text performed its visual supportive role, he experimented with different-sized letters, words, spacing, thickness of his handwriting, size of arabesques and titles.⁷⁴ He finally settled on an oversized text, written with a large brush using black ink, similar to the handwritten text of Rouault's *Divertissement*. However, in *Jazz* the text occupied the whole page, with no margin, unlike the decorated central textual column with the white surrounding space of *Divertissement* or his *Poèmes de Charles d'Orléans*.

[56] Although Matisse approached the text-image dynamic of *Jazz* from a different spatial and visual polarity from his other illustrated books, he seems to have assembled them in a similar manner. He sequenced the text and images not on the date of creation, or textual, pictorial or interpretive themes, but according to his own aesthetic criteria. For his other artist's books, his starting point was the text written by established authors to which he progressively added his images, rearranging images and texts until he achieved the text-image balance he wanted.

⁷³ Henri Matisse, *Jazz*, trans. Sophie Hawkes, xviii.

⁷⁴ Bidwell, *Graphic Passion*, 181; Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 102.

[57] He understood that the introduction of images into an accomplished text creates a different and complex dynamic. As more images are added, their influence grows until a crossover point is reached when the image takes over and sets the agenda.⁷⁵ Matisse made sure that this crossover point was never reached. For *Jazz*, where his starting point was his images, he adopted the opposite approach, where he added his handwritten text to his images, moving text and images until he achieved his desired visual balance. He gave himself greater flexibility by creating each textual package as an independent composition, and all but one beginning on a fresh page.

[58] After trying numerous text-image pairings, he adopted a recognisable architectural structure. He inserted four pages of handwritten text as an anticipatory pause prior to each double-page image and two pages of text prior to each single-page image, discarding the surplus textual sections and images he had prepared in anticipation of their possible use.⁷⁶ He enhanced the status of the image as the dominant partner in the text-image relationship by inserting his images into the textual sections at precisely these page intervals, even though on eleven occasions his image placement interrupted the flow of the text.⁷⁷

[59] He locked down his chosen text-image sequence by giving each page a number but avoided interfering with the images, leaving them unnumbered. However, to remove any doubt as to their location he created a "Table of images", in which he listed the image captions with their page numbers. Through this "Table of images", a concept he created only for *Jazz*, he introduced yet another visual element, a hand-drawn vignette of each *découpage* image. In this manner, and in the absence of a table of textual content, he once again highlighted the primacy of the image in *Jazz*.

[60] Placing *Jazz* in its aesthetic context, it was the third illustrated book in Tériade's innovative *Manuscrits modernes* series, his modernised version of the medieval

⁷⁵ Aron Kibédi Varga, "Criteria for Describing Word-and-Image Relations", in: *Poetics Today* 10 (1989), no. 1, 31-53: 32; J. H. Schwarcz, *Ways of the Illustrator: Visual Communication in Children's Literature*, Chicago 1982, 10.

⁷⁶ Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 115; Schneider, *Matisse*, 662-663. Among those sections he did not use, were *Psalm 45*, *Psalm 92* and other self-authored texts on old age, love and space/light which he copied out in a notebook, *Répertoire: 6*. He also created another image, *Le Dragon*, which he did not use.

⁷⁷ The eleven textual interruptions are: *Circus*, *M. Loyal* and *Nightmare of the White Elephant* in "Notes"; *Horse, Rider and Clown* in "The bouquet"; *The Wolf* and *The Heart* in "The airplane"; *The Heart* in "My curves are not mad"; *The Cowboy* in "A musician once said"; *Destiny* in "Young painters, painters misunderstood or understood too late, bear no hate"; *Lagoon I* in "Jazz".

manuscript with its handwritten text, following the lineage established by Rouault's *Divertissement* and Bonnard's *Correspondances*.⁷⁸ Tériade publicly released *Jazz* on 3 December 1947 at Librairie Pierre Berès in Paris and Galerie Europa, Arte Antiga e Moderna in Rio de Janeiro, both galleries owned by Pierre Berès (1913–2008). The replicated images seemed to lack the luster of the originals and the French art critics gave it a somewhat subdued reception, although the Americans responded much more positively when Berès exhibited *Jazz* in his New York Gallery beginning 20 January 1948.⁷⁹

[61] Matisse was not happy with the *Jazz* reproductions and called them "absolutely a failure". Rouveyre told Matisse the reproductions were "dry and cold. Just exactly opposite of that which is your genius".⁸⁰ This assessment hasn't changed till today: "Although the printed book preserves much of the 'cut-paper' quality of the originals, the maquettes are much fresher, [and] have a much greater variation in texture and in colour application as well as colour."⁸¹ Matisse even referred to the *Jazz* images disparagingly, telling Rouveyre in reference to some surplus *découpages*: "I do not know what I will do with these new *découpages*, certainly not another *Jazz*."⁸² After *Jazz*, Matisse never used *découpage* to illustrate the text in another livre d'artiste, preferring instead to return to his line drawings.

[62] After the war the French honored Matisse for his resilience and bravery and for remaining in France. As the war years receded, the extent of Matisse's use of his book illustrations as instruments of cultural resistance became clearer. In *Poèmes de Charles d'Orléans* [1394–1465], a livre d'artiste he embarked on prior to *Jazz*, Matisse adopted medievalism as a symbol of national unity. He created *Poèmes de Charles d'Orléans* with patriotic images embedded with covert codes and symbols

⁷⁸ Rodney T. Swan, "Cultural Resistance through the Manuscrit Moderne. Tériade's Editions of Rouault's *Divertissement* and Bonnard's *Correspondances*", in: *Relief: Revue Électronique de Littérature Française* 11 (2017), no. 1, 40-65: 62. This paper discusses the emergence of Tériade's *Manuscrits modernes* series.

⁷⁹ For a good assessment of the public reaction to *Jazz* see Rabinow, "The Legacy of La Rue Férou", 122-125.

⁸⁰ Rouveyre to Matisse, 20 December 1947, in: Friedman, "Game and Endgame", 126-128.

⁸¹ Flam, "Notes to the Catalogue", 102. These differences were clearly evident in the unique display of the *Jazz* images and their respective *maquettes* at the exhibition "Henri Matisse – The Cut-Outs" at the Tate Modern, London, 17 April – 7 September 2014, and later at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 25 October 2014 – 9 February 2015. Flam refers to the only previous viewing of the *Jazz* maquettes at the 16 May – 3 September 1973 exhibition "Hommage à Tériade" at the Grand Palais, Paris.

⁸² Matisse to Rouveyre, 22 February 1948, in: Friedman, "Game and Endgame", 126.

of hope and rebirth to defend France's long cultural heritage.⁸³ In *Pasiphaé: Chant de Minos (Les Crétois)*, his illustrations, dramatized by the deep black background of the linocuts, recalling the black in *Jazz*, exude a sense of gloom. Matisse's biographer Pierre Schneider argued that Minos, the mythic king of Crete who terrified his wife Pasiphaé after she fell in love with a bull, reminded Matisse of the "hostile forces that made the nights so oppressive in France between 1940 and 1944".⁸⁴ Art historian Kathryn Brown adds that the tragic qualities of the images depict an expression of suffering.⁸⁵

[63] In another example, working with Aragon, a known member of the communist party who had to constantly move around to avoid being arrested, they produced the illustrated book *Dessins: Thèmes et variations* (1943), a work of barely disguised defiance in which Aragon's preface, "Matisse-en-France", praised the artist for his bravery in remaining in France and where Matisse's images proclaimed his continuing aesthetic proclivity in the face of challenge.⁸⁶ Further cementing their relationship, and increasing the risk to himself, Matisse contributed a portrait of Aragon as frontispiece for a book, *Brocéliande* (1942), in which Aragon portrays, in coded medievalist text, the difficult situation facing the French. Matisse also provided images to a magazine, *Poésie 42, No 1*, and *Poésie 42, No 5*, edited by poet Pierre Seghers (1906–1987), a backer of the Résistance. Through his association with *Poésie 42* Matisse allied himself with other writers supporting the resistance like Robert Desnos (1900–1945), Paul Éluard (1895–1952) and Francis Ponge (1899–1988), who wrote for the same editions of the journal. But it was in the images of *Jazz* that he made his most emphatic statement about the Occupation.

[64] Symbolizing France's long cultural heritage Matisse's *Jazz* was a vigorous demonstration of the safeguarding and regeneration of French culture at a time when it was endangered. *Jazz* with its bold covert symbols embedded in colourful images was an act of cultural resistance. In confirming Matisse's position, artist

⁸³ Rodney T. Swan, "Cultural Resistance in Henri Matisse's *Poèmes de Charles d'Orléans*", in: *Visual Resources* (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1080/01973762.2018.1507475>.

⁸⁴ Schneider, *Matisse*, 630.

⁸⁵ Kathryn Brown, "The War Book: *Pasiphaé, Chant de Minos (Les Crétois)*", in: idem, *Matisse's Poets: Critical Performance in the Artist's Book*, New York 2017, 83-112: 91. The relationship between Matisse, Henri de Montherlant the author and Martin Fabiani the publisher of *Pasiphaé* is complex and has been analysed by others and goes beyond the scope of this article. Perhaps one of the best scholarly accounts is presented by Brown in her chapter "The War Book: *Pasiphaé: Chant de Minos (Les Crétois)*" published in her landmark book on *Matisse's Poets*, 83-112.

⁸⁶ Aragon, *Henri Matisse: A Novel*, vol. 1, 36-38; Spurling, *Matisse*, 405; Swan, "Cultural Resistance in Henri Matisse's *Poèmes de Charles d'Orléans*", 4.

Françoise Gilot (born 1921) declared publicly that Matisse did not sympathise with Vichy or the Occupation.⁸⁷ Aragon had released his reflection on Matisse which saluted the artist's anti-Vichy stance, and as an example highlighted the wartime symbolism of *The Fall of Icarus*.⁸⁸ As this article has recalled, scholars such as Flam, Rabinow and Schneider have argued that many of the images should be interpreted within the context of the Occupation. This paper has confirmed and deepened this understanding by analysing all of the images within this wartime context and asserting that Matisse camouflaged his messages of cultural resistance within the circus theme he adopted for the images which he originally created for an album called *Cirque*. It was after the liberation that Matisse, sensing the change in the mood in France, muted the violence depicted in the images by authoring a text which projected calmness and optimism and which according to the artist played a secondary role to the images. In this way he created a text-image dynamic that broke his own principle that the image must have a rapport with the text, an idea which he articulated in "Comment j'ai fait mes livres". Importantly, *Jazz*, begun as *Cirque* in 1943 and published in 1947, turns out to be a bridge between the dark years of the Occupation and the post-liberation rebuilding of France. Through *Jazz*, Matisse actively participated with the French authorities' objective of recapturing France's pre-war artistic leadership. It became one of the most celebrated illustrated books of the 20th century.

About the Author

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⁸⁷ Françoise Gilot, *Matisse and Picasso: A Friendship in Art*, London 1990, 349.

⁸⁸ Aragon, *Henri Matisse: A Novel*, vol. 2, 35.

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