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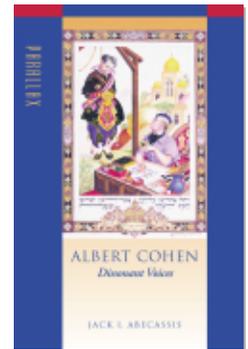
Albert Cohen

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## Notes

### Prologue: *The Cohen Paradox*

Epigraph: Cohen, *BdS*, 850: “Ici, dans cette chambre, il a le droit de faire ce qu’il veut, de parler hébreu, de se réciter du Ronsard, de crier qu’il est un monstre à deux têtes, un monstre à deux cœurs, qu’il est tout de la nation juive, tout de la nation française. Ici, tout seul, il pourra porter la sublime soie de synagogue sur les épaules et même, si ça lui chante, se coller une cocarde tricolore sur le front. Ici, terré et solitaire, il ne verra pas les regards méfiants de ceux qu’il aime et qui ne l’aiment pas.” French citations refer to the 1994 Bibliothèque de la Pléiade edition of *Belle du Seigneur*; the translations of *Belle du Seigneur* are based, with some modifications, on David Coward’s rendering of the novel, except for the stream-of-consciousness translations in Chapter 6, which are my own. All other translations of Cohen are my own.

1. See Bibliography for details of French and English editions of Cohen’s writings. The English translation of *Belle du Seigneur* is not currently in print.

2. Marks, *Marrano as Metaphor*, 62.

3. Cohen expresses this notion of the “catastrophe of being Jewish” in many different ways; e.g.: “Why was he Jewish? Why this unhappiness [*malheur*]?” (*Solal*, 123); “No, Sir Ézéchiél, Judaism is not a religion, it’s a catastrophe” (*Ézéchiél*, 788); “Enough, enough, finish with this Jewish leprosy”; “And above all the crime of being born a Jew” (*Mangeclous*, 551, 583); and, in particular: “She will not know the misfortune that awaits me, as it awaits all the Jews, these specialists in catastrophes. It is our house special [*spécialité maison*], misfortune. You know, in fancy restaurants, there’s the house pie. With us, it is the house misfortune, speciality of the house, [sold] wholesale, semi-wholesale, and retail” (“Chant de mort,” *France libre* 1 [June 15, 1943]: 105).

4. See Citati, *Kafka*.

5. I am thinking for example about the way René Girard uses the concept of the nineteenth-century “romantic reader” in his discussion of *Don Quixote* and the resistance of readers to acknowledging external mediation, who thus see in the novel “little more than the contrast between Don Quixote the *idealist* and the *realist* Sancho” (Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, 4).

6. Tonnet-Lacrois, *Littérature française et francophone de 1945 à l’an 2000*, 175–76: “Le grand thème du roman de Cohen, c’est la passion amoureuse, qui est

à la fois glorifiée et démythifiée parce que soumise elle aussi à la dégradation. En même temps l'œuvre peint avec beaucoup de verbe satirique les milieux de la diplomatie internationale à Genève dans l'Europe antisémite des années 30, tout en suggérant, par le jeu de la dérision, le néant et l'illusion des sentiments et des idéologies. Mais le roman est dominé par la figure fulgurante de Solal, le séducteur passionné quoique lucide. Le récit emporte par le soufflé puissant et baroque, est souvent lyrique, épique, tragique, mais également comique, burlesque même."

7. In 1919, upon his Swiss naturalization, the vowel "h" was added to Coen.

8. *Colloque de Cérisy: Albert Cohen dans son siècle* (forthcoming).

9. On the two endings of *Solal*, see Cohen, *Œuvres*, 155–56.

10. The 1995 English translation wisely retained the French title *Belle du Seigneur*, which does not translate easily.

11. See Cohen, *Écrits d'Angleterre*, 49–84; Valbert, *Albert Cohen, Le Seigneur*, 369–70.

12. See Bibliography for details of Bella Cohen's books about Albert Cohen.

13. Bernard Pivot interviewed Albert Cohen for *Apostrophes* in his Geneva apartment in December 1977 (Seuil Vision, I.N.A., 1977).

14. See esp. *Radioscopie de Jacques Chancel* (transcripts of a series of radio interviews with Cohen in 1980), *passim*.

15. See the chronology in the Pléiade edition of *BdS*, lxxi–cvii.

16. Cohen on Proust: "Proust cette perversité de tremper une madeleine dans du tilleul ces deux goûts douceâtres le goût épouvantable de la madeleine mêlé au goût pire du tilleul féminité perverse qui me le donne autant que ses hystériques flatteries à la Noailles en réalité il ne l'admirait pas ne pouvait pas l'admirer il la flattait pour des motifs sociaux non pas le lui dire ça la peinerait elle aime la petite phrase de Vinteuil les clochers de Martinville la Vivonne les aubépines de Méséglise et autre exquiseseries." *BdS*, 878.

17. This tendency to split Cohen, making him metaphysical or burlesque, can be seen in the work of Carole Auroy, who emphasizes the metaphysical and romantic Cohen, and Judith Kauffman, who emphasizes the burlesque Cohen. See Auroy, *Albert Cohen*, and Kauffmann, *Grotesque et marginalité*. On this contrast, see also Weingrad, "Juifs imaginaires."

18. *BdS*, 152–53.

19. See Bella Cohen's remarks on the subject of Cohen versus Solal in her prefatory essay "Albert Cohen" in *BdS*, lv, lvi.

20. See Braud, *Tentation du suicide dans les écrits autobiographiques*, *passim*.

21. Milkovitch-Rioux, "Tristan et Iseut: Fortune et avatars du mythe dans *Belle du Seigneur*."

22. See Lessing, *Haine de soi*, esp. the section entitled "Six vies humaines," 63–167; Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred*, esp. chap. 4, "The drive for assimilation"; Loewenstein, *Psychanalyse de l'antisémitisme*, chap. 3, "Psychopathologie collective."

23. For a similar formulation of the relationship of Cohen's work to the Shoah, see Kauffmann, *Grotesque et marginalité*, 159–73.

24. On criticism as delectable self-mutilation, and Judaism and masochism, see Mann, *Masocriticism*, esp. chap 2.

25. “Consonance is the quality inherent in an interval or chord which . . . seems complete and stable in itself. . . . The opposite of consonance is dissonance (or discord): the quality or tension inherent in an interval or chord which . . . involves a clash between adjacent notes of the scale and create the expectation of resolution on to consonance by conjunct motion.” *Oxford Companion to Music*, 297–98.

26. See the classic discussion of this predicament in Lessing, *Haine de soi*; Loewenstein, *Psychanalyse de l'antisémitisme*; and Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred*.

27. Cohen is acutely aware of this incongruity, see *Les Valeureux*, 864.

28. For an example of this kind of reading, see Morganroth-Schneider, “Literary Struggle with Ambivalence.”

29. See Blot, *Albert Cohen*; Valbert, *Albert Cohen: Le Seigneur*.

30. I am well aware that, due to its pejorative etymology (“little pigs”), my usage of the term *marrano* and its derivatives may elicit discomfort in some readers. I do not believe, however, that the term should be replaced by *crypto-Jew* because the latter term is to my ear and sensibility too sterile and simply does not possess the rich resonance of *marranism*. As with my analysis of Cohen, I tend to adhere to the vocabulary in which a speaking subject describes and/or understands himself (e.g., the Social, baboonery), rather than revise it to reflect current vocabulary. Being at heart a Montaignian nominalist, I know that in some abstract sense signs are arbitrary and at the same time words are laden with rich historical sedimentation, which is not arbitrary. This cannot be easily changed by fiat. I am skeptical of any semantic constructivism. Changes in vocabulary do not, to my mind, transform in any meaningful way the reality of what is being represented. They just impoverish its representation.

### *One: The Double Bar Mitzvah*

Epigraphs: Sibony, *Perversions*, 95: “L'enjeu est d'être identique à son nom, de l'incarner”; id., *Psychanalyse et Judaïsme*, 91: “[Le] Père . . . a cette manie de forcer le fils au sacrifice.”

1. See the Epilogue for a more extensive discussion of the terms *Israélite* and *Juif*; and see also Blot, *Albert Cohen*, 29–30.

2. See detailed discussion of this “election” in Chapter 2.

3. Cohen is verging here on the Augustinian and Pascalian type of argument, which has its ultimate origin in a conception of matter as fallen, or as stained forever by original sin. This strand of thought exists in some marginal Jewish thought, but is never dominant. On the other hand, it is true that exilic Judaism, which was concerned with, survival, transmission of the Law, and the pragmatic patriarchal management of the community, tended to become more puritanical. See, e.g., the discussion of marriage and sexuality in the Sephardic book of bibli-

cal commentaries *MeAm Lo'ez, Genesis I* [People of Strange Language (The Torah Anthology)], in Hebrew, 124–29. For a discussion of the duality of nature and anti-nature in Cohen, see Schaffner, *Le Goût de l'absolu*, 39–46.

4. *Pirke Avot* [The Ethics of the Fathers], 3,9, in *Daily Prayers*, trans. Philips, 469. And see also *Living Talmud*, trans. Goldin, 127–28.

5. Sibony, *Trois Monothéismes*, esp. appendix, “Lecture des Dix Commandements.”

6. *BdS*, 899–900.

7. I am borrowing the notion of God’s actions as “blessing or scattering” from Harold Bloom’s commentary on Genesis in *Book of J*, trans. Rosenberg, ed. Bloom, 192.

8. Cohen, *Paroles juives*, 47.

9. Schaffner, “Paroles juives,” in *Albert Cohen: Colloque du centenaire*, 69–86.

10. For a general description of the concept of romance, see Rougement, *L'Amour et l'Occident*.

11. Cohen substitutes the name of the Popular Front prime minister Léon Blum (1936–38) for that of Alfred Dreyfus, the army officer falsely accused of treason.

12. This pogrom corresponds to a real (or the threats of an) anti-Semitic pogrom in Corfu that took place in 1891, which precipitated the decline of the Jewish community there and resulted in the emigration of the Coen family in 1895. See Valbert, *Albert Cohen: Le Seigneur*, 29, and Blot, *Albert Cohen*, 17–23.

13. For a differing viewpoint on the mother and on the image of Jewish women in Cohen, see Bensoussan, “Aude, Adrienne, Rébecca, Rachel,” 54–59.

14. Sibony, *Psychanalyse et Judaïsme*, 139.

15. See, e.g., Glenn Frankel “For Jews in France, a ‘kind of Intifada’: Escalation in Hate Crimes Leads to Soul-Searching, New Vigilance,” *Washington Post*, July 16, 2003, A1, and, more extensively, Taguieff, *Nouvelle Judéophobie*, passim.

16. Celan was similarly inclined to see himself as having a homeland in a particular language, German in his case. See Felstiner, *Paul Celan*, 94.

17. Here’s how Romain Gary, *Les Clowns lyriques*, 33–34, explains the ideal that France represented politically to a Polish Jew at the beginning of the twentieth century. “When [La Marne, nom de guerre] was a child and his Polish classmates treated him as a kike [*youpin*] and gave him a good thrashing, he did not begrudge them, because they were not French. They were poor little barbarians. . . . At that time, they taught in the Russian and Polish ghettos about France, the Revolution, the rights of man, liberty, equality, fraternity to teach the children to breathe, and it so happens that La Marne was particularly sensitive to this breathing exercise.”

18. These pages are a perfect illustration of the situation of persons of Jewish origin in France from the time of Napoleon to 1945. See Finkielkraut, *Juif imaginaire*, 79–80.

19. See Prager, *Presenting the Past*, esp. chap. 4, “Trauma and the Memory of Wars.”

20. See Michon-Bertout, “Cohen et l’antisémitisme,” 55–74.
21. See Miernowska, *Dialogue des discours dans les romans d’Albert Cohen*, 129.
22. Valbert, *Albert Cohen: Le Seigneur*, 393.

*Two: Identity Montage*

Epigraphs: Mann, *Joseph the Provider*, 109. Trigano, *Philosophie de la Loi*, 230: “Joseph . . . —est l’expérience et la problématique d’Israël pour s’assembler, pour former un peuple, constuire sa multiplicité et lui donner un sens.”

1. Cohen repeatedly uses the term *le Social* to refer to the sense of familiarity, comfort, and belonging in the world of European Gentiles, and I am using “the Social” here in the same sense.

2. For a recent example of this tendency of favoring European over Hebrew origins, see Schaffner, ed., *Albert Cohen: Colloque du centenaire*, where the first section of the book, “Itinéraires intertextuels,” includes papers on Virgil, Homer, Tristan and Isolde, Proust, and Albert Camus, but no reference to the biblical intertext.

3. See *Radioscopie de Jacques Chancel*, passim.

4. Judith Kauffmann has certainly understood the concrete historical dimensions of Cohen’s fiction. See Kauffmann, *Grotesque et marginalité*, 159–73.

5. This point is strongly made by Blot, *Albert Cohen*, 15; and Marks, *Marrano as Metaphor*, 62.

6. Trigano, “Mystère d’Esther et de Joseph,” 11.

7. All my citations from Genesis are based on Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*. All other biblical citations are based on the New Oxford Annotated Bible.

8. I am referring here to the “documentary hypothesis” with respect to the composition of the Hebrew Bible, according to which the biblical text consists of four distinct layers: Jahwist (J); Elohist (E); Deuteronomist (D); and Priestly (P).

9. Trigano, “Mystère d’Esther et de Joseph,” 13.

10. Survival is paramount, even at the price of transgression, including incest. Even very modern texts are marked by this “obsession,” as is evidenced, e.g., by A. B. Yehoshua’s *Mr. Mani*, in which transgression and survival play a pivotal role in a modernist retelling of Genesis.

11. Whedbee, *The Bible and the Comic Vision*.

12. See Auroy, *Albert Cohen*, 63–75.

13. *Solal*, 306.

14. Solal’s repeated provocations are in stark contrast to Joseph’s prudential attitudes: “[Potiphar] is not greater in this house than I, and he has held back nothing from me except you, as you are his wife, and how could I do this great evil and give offense to God?” (Gen. 39: 9).

15. The father substitution here (Maussane for the “old man with the beard”) is just one more in a long chain of family romance type of substitutions, of which

Adrienne de Valdone, Solal's first lover, is the first, because she substitutes for Rachel, who is as repulsive to Solal as his father, Gamaliel, that "old man with the beard."

16. Kauffmann, *Grotesque et marginalité*, passim.
17. On the *Fort! Da!* game, see Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 14.
18. *Book of J*, trans. Rosenberg, ed. Bloom, 237.
19. Mangeclous, 570.
20. *Book of J*, trans. Rosenberg, ed. Bloom, 235.
21. Trigano, *Philosophie de la Loi*, 230.
22. Trigano, "Mystère d'Esther et de Joseph," 17.
23. Mann, *Joseph the Provider*, 358.
24. *Ibid.*, 379.
25. See Aciman, "Le Juif intérieur."
26. McGaha, *Coat of Many Cultures*, xv.
27. Whedbee, *The Bible and the Comic Vision*.
28. See discussion in the Epilogue.
29. Mann, *Joseph the Provider*, 109. See also Sibony, *Don de soi ou partage de soi*, 264, where he offers the following definition of the Hebrew person: "The Hebrew book symbolizes an identity broken like the famous Tables of the law, but alive, out of place, de-centered, in movement vis-à-vis itself and the others, thanks to this brokenness which resonates with the ontological brokenness between *being* and that-which-is. It's less about inclusions than *passing* through inclusions. This is what the word *passeur* [Hebrew] means."
30. See McGaha, *Coat of Many Cultures*.
31. Doniach, *Purim*, 36.
32. Judith Kauffmann sees in the Purim festival a major chronotope in Cohen's fiction. See Kauffmann, *Grotesque et marginalité*, 144–55.
33. Quoted in Díaz-Mas, *Sephardim*, trans. Zucker, 139–40.
34. Quoted in Gopnik, "Purim Story," 130.
35. I am referring to Giles Deleuze's concept of *habitus*, in Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*.
36. Armand Abécassis, *Pensée juive*, 3: 323.
37. See Yovel, *Spinoza*, chap. 4, "Marranos in Mask and a World Without Transcendence: Rojas and *La Celestina*."
38. Roth, *History of the Marranos*, 188.
39. Yovel, *Spinoza*, xl, cited in Marks, *Marrano as Metaphor*, 134.
40. Aciman, "Le Juif intérieur"; Marks, *Marrano as Metaphor*.
41. Jama, *L'Histoire juive de Montaigne*, 23–24.
42. See Hertzberg, *French Enlightenment and the Jews*, 268–313.
43. See Blot, *Albert Cohen*, 183–97, and Valbert, *Albert Cohen: Le Seigneur*, 325–30.
44. The principal reason for this failure was the opposition of the Quai d'Orsay (the French Foreign Ministry), motivated by British fear that such an army would eventually be detrimental to British interests in Palestine. See Valbert, *Albert Cohen: Le Seigneur*, 330.

45. Mann, *Joseph the Provider*, 404.
46. See *Mangeclous*, 855–64, for a final recap of the story of the Valorous. On their language, see Elbaz, *Albert Cohen*.
47. *Solal*, 93.
48. Weingrad, “Juifs imaginaires,” 12.
49. *Mangeclous*, 569.
50. Whedbee, *The Bible and the Comic Vision*, 118–19 (Gen. 45: 3).
51. Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, 234.
52. *Ibid.*, 171.
53. Whedbee, *The Bible and the Comic Vision*, 122.

### Three: *The Jewish Saint-Germain*

Epigraph: Trigano, *Philosophie de la Loi*, 232.

1. See on eyes and castration, Freud, “The Uncanny,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. Strachey et al., 17: 219–52.

2. For a more extensive discussion of this point, see J. I. Abecassis, “Camus’ Pulp Fiction,” 633.

3. See Zard, *Fiction de l’Occident*, 167, on “la tentation marcionite de l’Occident.” And see also Lowenstein, *Psychanalyse de l’antisémitisme*.

4. Brazilai, *On the Structure of Judaism*, esp. 143–65.

5. Sibony, *Trois Monothéismes*, esp. “Religion et point de vue de l’être,” 292–97.

6. Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, esp. the third essay, “Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel.”

7. Steiner, *No Passion Spent*, esp. the essay “Through a Looking Glass Darkly,” 328–47.

8. See Benhaïm, “Synagogue perdue.” And see also Von Simson, *Gothic Cathedral*, 121 n.

9. See Lowenstein, *Psychanalyse de l’antisémitisme*, esp. the reference to Arnold Toynbee, for whom Jews are “fossils of the Syrian civilization” (115).

10. Sibony, *Trois Monothéismes*, 328: “L’origine de la haine, c’est la haine de l’origine.”

11. Zard, *Fiction de l’Occident*, 172.

12. On the chronotope of the cave/cellar in Cohen, I consulted Léwy-Bertaut, *Albert Cohen*, 307–11, 340–43; Schaffner, “Château gothique de Solal”; Zard, *Fiction de l’Occident*, 164–74; and Kauffmann, *Grotesque et marginalité*, 38–53.

13. “[L]a pratique de la religion ne se borne pas aux cérémonies accomplies par la communauté à des moments prescrits. Au contraire, tout acte de la vie courante, comme le fait de manger ou de travailler, tend à être sanctifié par Dieu ou encore le devoir religieux tend à pénétrer même dans les actes qui, chez les Chrétiens, restent profanes.” Lowenstein, *Psychanalyse de l’antisémitisme*, 179.

14. The association between blood rituals and Jewish origin is so strong that even in otherwise “liberal” authors such as Thomas Mann the imputation is clear. In *The Magic Mountain*, Naphta’s origin as the son of a *shohet* (ritual Kosher butcher) is described in gory detail as being soaked in fresh blood.

15. See Lowenstein, *Psychoanalyse de l’antisémitisme*, on the blood of Christ dripping on the Jews, 243–46.

16. Steiner, *No Passion Spent*, 334.

17. Sibony, *Psychoanalyse et Judaïsme*, 260: “Si la grace remplace la loi, la jouissance remplace l’interprétation.”

18. Solal has already characterized his mother as a worm: “Rachel Solal, une épaisse creature larvaire qui se mouvait avec difficulté, et dont les yeux faux lui-saient de peur ou de désir” (*Solal*, 97). According to Cohen in his interview with Bernard Pivot, the title of his first poem was “Dans l’antre de la négation” (In the den of negation).

19. This analysis of the name Solal des Solal is consonant with an important insight by Alain Schaffner in *Albert Cohen: Colloque du centenaire*, 75: “All of Albert Cohen’s work seems to be a product of the will to vindicate the name of Cohen, which signifies priest in Hebrew.”

20. See the original ending of the novel *Solal*, reproduced in full in Cohen, *Œuvres*, 1255–56.

21. On the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, see Sibony, *Trois Monothéismes*, 318–34.

#### Four: *Kaddish and Shivah*

Kadish: Jewish prayer of sanctification for the departed; Shivah: ritual “sitting” on the ground for seven days after burial of a dead Jew.

Epigraph: The Pakistani Urdu poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz to Alun Lewis, Burma, ca. 1943; see *The True Subject: Selected Poems of Faiz Ahmed Faiz*, trans. Naomi Lazard (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), v.

1. See Cohen, *Œuvres*, 1258–67, “Dossier de presse.”

2. Marcel Pagnol quoted in Valbert, *Albert Cohen: Le Seigneur*, 380: “La grande réussite et la grande audace d’Albert Cohen, c’est d’avoir écrit un chef-d’œuvre sur le plus commun des lieux communs.”

3. Georges Altmann quoted in *ibid.*, 379: “André Gide, ce Lucifer petit-bourgeois, proclamait un jour qu’on ne peut faire de bonne littérature avec de bons sentiments. Bien des œuvres du passé et du présent démentent cette boutade. *Le livre de ma mère* est de celles-là.”

4. *Book of My Mother*, trans. Bella Cohen, 11. English translations here are my own.

5. Although the texts studied here differ completely from those studied by Leo Strauss in *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, I am certain that my analysis of concealment in Cohen owes a considerable debt to Strauss’s approach.

6. Duprey, *Albert Cohen*, esp. chap. 2, “Les Figures parentales,” 35–40.
7. On the femininity of the boy Albert Cohen, see Winter, *Errants de la Chair*, 68–77.
8. The critical literature on this issue is prolific. I find Barzel, *On the Structure of Judaism*, 152–65 (“Man’s unique place—here and now”) particularly persuasive and richly documented. Unfortunately, it is in Hebrew.
9. See Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, chap. 8, “Narrative Transaction and Transference.”
10. *Mangeclous*, 570.
11. A particularly good example here is *BdS*, chap. 94.
12. Shivah is the name for the seven-day mourning period that follows the burial of a close family member. “The expression ‘sitting shivah’ alludes to the custom of mourners’ remaining at home during the first seven days of mourning, sitting unshod on a low stool.” Birnbaum, *Book of Jewish Concepts*, 578.
13. On mourning, see Freud, “Mourning and Melancholy,” 152–70, and Klein, “Mourning and Its Relation to Manic-Depressive States,” in *Selected Melanie Klein*, ed. Mitchell, 146–74 and Sánchez-Pardo, *Cultures of the Death Drive*, chap. 2, “Kleinian Metapsychology,” 55–71.
14. See Adam, *Promises, Promises*, “Coming to Grief,” 257–66.
15. Cohen’s text here takes on the rhythm of the mourning incantation, achieved by its usage of repetition of the same phrases and syntactical structures, akin to the mourner’s tearful monologue. For example: “Jamais plus . . . Jamais plus” (*LM*, 720); “Amour de ma mère . . . Amour de ma mère” (*LM*, 740–41); and “Autour de ma mère . . . Autour de ma mère (ibid.).
16. On the regression fantasy, see Klein, “Mourning and Its Relation to Manic-Depressive States,” in *Selected Melanie Klein*, ed. Mitchell, 148.
17. Kristeva, *Génie féminin*, vol. 2: *Melanie Klein*, 104.
18. For discussion of Christlike scenarios in Cohen, see Auroy, *Albert Cohen*, 63–74.

### Five: Purim in Berlin

For an earlier version of this paper, see J. I. Abecassis. “Les clous d’Albert Cohen.” Fragments of this article are translated and reprinted here with permission.

Epigraph: *BdS*, 501. Said by Rachel.

1. I am using the 1995 English translation by David Coward of *Belle du Seigneur*. However, I have considerably modified all these translations.
2. Blot, *Albert Cohen*, 162–69, develops this point.
3. Here, I cannot but think of Prosper Mérimée’s fantastic tale “Lokis,” in which a countess is raped by a bear and bears a son who is half human, half animal.
4. *New Oxford Annotated Bible*.
5. See Schaffner, “Paroles juives,” in *Albert Cohen: Colloque du centenaire*, 76.

6. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10.

7. See, by way of analogy, Sibony, *Don de soi ou partage de soi*, esp. chap. 1, “Un Éthique de coupable,” for the idea that the relationship between the “I” and “Thou” only makes sense if mediated by a third, superior “being” (i.e., God).

8. On Solal’s mother, see *Solal*, 123. Cohen reproaches himself for not being able to rescue his parents in “Chant de mort,” *France libre* 6, no. 33 (July 15, 1943): 198.

9. Reality deflates the Rabelaisian verbal plethora of the narrative here, ending its seriocomic verve. See Elbaz, *Albert Cohen*, 93.

10. E.g., Goitien-Galperin, *Visage de mon peuple*, 101–3.

11. *BdS*, 857.

12. On the one-way election, see Fix-Combe, “Sous le soleil de Solal.”

13. See discussion of a similar point in Chapter 4: “Comme quoi on peut être presque antisémite même avec sa mère” (“Chant de mort,” *France libre* 1 [June 15, 1943]: 103).

14. It is revealing that David Coward, the English translator of *Belle du Seigneur*, is clearly resisting the force of the French syntax, and here therefore the meaning of the whole stream of consciousness. “Je veux tout aimer de mon peuple” does not translate into “I will treasure my people and everything about my people.” There is no hint of the future tense in the French verbal construction; only strong insistence on the act of conscious volition “Je veux,” which contrasts with the absence of such conscious volition, such hard work on oneself, when it comes to the sentences in the same stream of consciousness describing his love for Ariane.

### Six: Ariane-Solal

Epigraph: Winter, *Errants de la chair*, 71: “Ariane, c’est tout autant Albert Cohen que Solal.” I met the psychoanalyst Jean-Pierre Winter at the “Albert Cohen dans son siècle” colloquium at Cerisy-la-Salle in September 2003 and learned that he had come to the same conclusion as I had concerning the fluidity and transitivity of Ariane’s and Solal’s identities.

1. For a formal discussion of this intimate “notebook” (*cahier*), see Stolz, *Polyphonie dans “Belle du Seigneur” d’Albert Cohen*, 180–83.

2. See Léwy-Bertaut, “L’Androgyne,” 124–44, and Politis, “Bisexualité chez les personnages d’Albert Cohen,” 145–54.

3. I am aware that in psychoanalytical literature the term “phallus” is not synonymous with the penis but has a more complex symbolic function. But for my purposes here, I use “phallus” to refer to the anatomical penis (it makes sense in terms of what Ariane says in her stream of consciousness), and I use “phallic order” to refer to the more symbolic patriarchy based on strict power, which Cohen abhors throughout his writings. See Cohen’s description of the world of baboons in *BdS*, 366, as a perfect illustration of what I mean in the Cohenian context by

“phallic order.” See *Dictionnaire de la psychanalyse*, 599–609, s.v. *phallus*. In the same vein, I make a distinction between the terms “fantasy” and “phantasm.” “Fantasy” connotes a conscious wish fulfillment thought, whereas “phantasm” refers to unconscious or subconscious desire of scenarios that are most readily available to the reader in the seemingly random montages of themes of which the streams of consciousness are constructed.

4. See Stoltz, *Polyphonie dans “Belle du Seigneur” d’Albert Cohen*, 27–38. For a more general discussion, see Boone, *Libidinal Currents*, 142–71.

5. Cohn, *Transparent Minds*, 225.

6. See *Solal*, 186.

7. Calasso, *Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*, 7.

8. *Ibid.*, 4.

9. Zard, *Fiction de l’Occident*, 263–64; emphasis added.

10. Calasso, *Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*, 27.

11. There is another variation of this phantasm in which Ariane takes refuge with her grandfather, with whom she essentially repeats the same scenario of refuge from the world at the edge of natural boundaries (here, it is in a mountainous forest). See *BdS*, 181.

12. See full discussion in Chapter 4.

13. “Ma mère était mon gui” (“My mother was my mistletoe”), *Livre de ma mère*, 743.

14. He looks at himself in Ariane’s bedroom mirror thinking that he is “sickeningly beautiful” (*beau à vomir* [*BdS*, 9]); Ariane, in turn, gazes upon herself and thinks that she is “the most beautiful woman in the world” (*la plus belle femme du monde* [*BdS*, 34]); see previous discussion of this scene in Chapter 5.

15. See Duprey, “Marianne.”

16. Exactly the same scene is related by Cohen’s daughter Myriam about their cohabitation in Paris during the 1930s. Myriam Champigny Cohen, *Livre de mon père*, 86–87.

17. Cited in Blot, *Albert Cohen*, 000.

18. See Sibony, *Don de soi ou partage de soi*, 264.

19. See *Solal*, 164.

20. The orgasmic end of Ariane’s stream of consciousness recalls the end of Molly Bloom’s stream of consciousness in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, 643–44: “. . . a girl where I was a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes.”

21. For a discussion of the Passion in *BdS*, see Schaffner, *Goût de l’absolu*, 158–66.

22. For a different interpretation of the last paragraph of *Belle du Seigneur*, see Kauffmann, *Grotesque et marginalité*, 196–67.

*Epilogue: Ézéchiel, or, Abject Origins, Suicidal Destiny*

A earlier version of this chapter was presented at the Colloque de Cérisy, “Albert Cohen dans son siècle,” September 3–8, 2003; see *Colloque de Cérisy: Albert Cohen dans son siècle* (forthcoming).

Epigraph: Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Fagles, 212.

1. *Mangeclous*, 548.

2. Solal does return once to Cephalonia in the novel *Solal*, but remains in the hotel, never visiting his father.

3. See Freud, “Mourning and Melancholy,” in *Collected Papers*, ed. Jones, 4: 152–70.

4. I would like to thank Mme Daisy Politis for providing me with all the available documents at the Atelier Albert Cohen, Paris.

5. On the specific nature of Jewish humor, see Rabinovitch, *Sourire d’Isaac*, passim; Ted Cohen, *Jokes*, passim; and Kauffmann, *Grotesque et marginalité*, 174–88.

6. Birnbaum, *Book of Jewish Concepts*, 533.

7. Cohen, *Œuvres*, 1337.

8. It is true that by the 1930s, many Eastern European Jews had immigrated to Paris and could be seen, but they had not yet made any inroads into French society, and they were, in fact, the first to be sent to the death camps under the Franco-German Vichy regime.

9. Finkielkraut, *Juif imaginaire*, 79–80.

10. *Ibid.*, 80.

11. See discussion of this point in Chapter 1.

12. Albert Cohen was offered an ambassadorship to the state of Israel but declined. He never visited Israel, where a forest was planted in his honor close to Jerusalem.

13. Valbert, *Albert Cohen: Le Seigneur*, 277.

14. Cohen, *Œuvres*, 1326.

15. See Roth, *Reading Myself and Others*, 205–11.

16. We recall that in *Mangeclous*, Solal hides his father in a secluded villa.

17. On the specific nature of Jewish self-hatred, see Lessing, *Haine de soi*; Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred*.

18. Valbert, *Albert Cohen: Le Seigneur*, 271.

19. See *BdS*, 1003–27, “Dossier de presse.” I have also consulted the archives of the Atelier Albert Cohen.

20. Politis, “Presence d’Albert Cohen dans le secondaire,” 131–34.

21. André Gide, *Journal*, 175–76, cited in Marks, *Marano as Metaphor*, 59–60;

translation modified, emphasis added. For a more general discussion of Judaism in French literature, see Weingrad, “Juifs imaginaires,” passim.

22. Cohen is a self-consciously anti-Gide novelist: see *Solal*, 175, and *BdS*, 334, where he pokes fun at the refined French novel and its elegant prose.

23. Valbert, *Albert Cohen: Le Seigneur*, 78.

24. Marks, *Marrano as Metaphor*, 62, insists on the uncompromisingly Jewish character of Cohen’s writings: “Albert Cohen (1895–1981) is one of the major French writers of the twentieth century who is Jewish by birth and whose narrators are never not conscious of their own Jewishness and the Jewishness, or relation to Jewishness, of most of the important characters in their fictional world.”

25. Lilla, *Reckless Mind*, passim.

26. I thank Cohen’s translator Nitsa Ben Ari for discussing Cohen’s place in Israel with me. I also thank Professor Judith Kauffmann of Bar Ilan University for her insights on the subject of Cohen in Israel.

27. See Bensoussan, “L’Image du Sepharade dans l’œuvre d’Albert Cohen.”

28. See Horn, *Facing the Fires*.

29. Sibony, *Don de soi ou partage de soi?* 65: “le rapport sado-maso du tout-pour-l’autre.”

30. See Lilla, *Reckless Mind*, chapter on Derrida; Delacampagne, *Le Philosophe et le Tyran*.

31. See Hertzberg, *French Enlightenment and the Jews*; Mehlman, *Legacies of Anti-Semitism in France*; Kaplan, *French Lessons*.

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