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**The Politics of Offence in *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo* 1960-2015**

**by**

**Imen Neffati**

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Department of History

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

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# Abstract

This thesis looks at the French satirical magazines *Charlie Hebdo* and its predecessor *Hara Kiri* to evaluate the anti-religious discourse present in both titles throughout their histories, situating these closely interlinked publications within the broader context of French society and political debate since the 1960s. This helps bring into focus the growth of Islamophobia within France – much as in Europe more generally – over the last two decades, and *Charlie Hebdo*’s important role within this process. The printing of the Prophet Muhammad cartoons, both the firebombing of and the murderous attack on, *Charlie Hebdo*’s office, and theresulting global spread of the phrase ‘Je Suis Charlie’ pushed the magazine into a central role in debates about Islam, immigration, and *laïcité* (French secularism). Simultaneously *Charlie* became a symbol, employed in a manner that lacks deep understanding of its style and operation or a sense of its historical trajectory. This thesis fills a critical lacuna by providing a long, historicized view of the magazines, generating vital insight into their workings, significance, and reach.

The entire print runs of both titles are surveyed, as are the other available writings of those who contributed to the magazines. This allows the internal dynamics of the magazines and the aims and beliefs of the key editors and contributors to be brought into focus. Whilst the specific considerations necessary to examine satirical material are recognized, this approach allows *Charlie Hebdo* and *Hari Kiri* to be conceptualized as press media publications, matching many of the contributors’ self-defined image as journalists. Doing so helps identify the ideological component of the magazines and some of the complexities and contradictions of the activities of various contributors. It also allows for a more in-depth evaluation of *Charlie Hebdo*’s influence on French culture and mainstream political debates.

The thesis argues that although from the original launch of *Hari Kari* until the present there were some areas of continuity across both magazines as regards their recurrent attacks on religion, there was also a major point of divergence due to *Charlie* being closed in 1981 and later relaunched in 1992. In the first period – covered in Chapters 1 and 2 – the original founders of the magazines, François Cavanna and Georges Bernier, typically displayed an anarchic sensibility, which related to the spirit of May 1968. Religion, mainly in the form of the Catholic Church, was a common target of the magazines’ cartoons and editorials, though only one among many favoured topics. Consumerism was another common source of satire, and it is here that *Hari Kiri* and *Charlie* established their unique brand of *bête et méchant* humour. Often the true target of the ridicule was hard to discern, as racist and misogynistic imagery was deployed to supposedly mock those very same attitudes.

Both the style and approach of *Charlie* radically changed when the magazine was relaunched by Philippe Val, despite some resistance from Cavanna. As detailed in Chapter 3, *Charlie* changed from always attacking the establishment to often supporting it, especially as regards the idea of *laïcité*. The thesis examines Val and other contributors’ links to a certain section of the elite that championed French national identity and what they defined as Enlightenment values, which overlapped with Islamophobia. This persisted even after Val relinquished the editorship, and Chapter 4 tracks this dynamic, and *Charlie*’s response to and influence over public debates about Muslims, religion, and *laïcité* up until 2015.

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Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from French are my own. These include all primary sources, and all French secondary sources.

# Introduction

‘La presse parle de ce dont le public parle. Et le public parle de ce dont la presse parle’.

Florence Aubenas and Miguel Benasayag, *La Fabrication de l'Information*, 1999.

On 7 January 2015, Said and Cherif Kouachi attacked the *Charlie Hebdo* offices in Paris during the magazine’s weekly editorial meeting and killed the editor-in-chief Stéphane Charbonnier (pen name Charb) and his police-guard Franck Brinsolaro; four cartoonists: Cabu, Honoré, Tignous and Wolinski, along with two columnists: Bernard Maris and Elsa Cayat; the copy-editor Mustapha Ourrad; a guest attending the meeting, Michel Renaud; the receptionist Frédéric Boisseau; and Ahmed Merabet, a police officer. The journalists Philippe Lançon, Fabrice Nicolino, and cartoonist Riss were also shot in the face, leg, and shoulder respectively, but survived. According to BBC News, ‘Witnesses said they had heard the gunmen shouting “We have avenged the Prophet Muhammad” and “God is Great” in Arabic while calling out the names of the journalists’.[[1]](#footnote-2) The attack sparked an unprecedented debate about freedom of speech both internationally and in France, and about the Republican values of *laïcité* that *Charlie Hebdo* has been portrayed as representing. The literature that emerged immediately in the aftermath of the attack centred around four dramatic moments: the ‘Je Suis Charlie’ slogan, the Republican marches of 10-11 January 2015, *Charlie Hebdo*’s survivors’ issue published on 14 January 2015 (issue no. 1178), and the question of free speech. The government’s reaction, as well as those of the media and the elite, portrayed the perpetrators (the Kouachi brothers) through racial and religious streotypes, while the victims (*Charlie Hebdo* cartoonists but also the Republic as a whole) were depicted as heroes, and context was sacrificed in favour of drama. The political discourse in France filtered reality and led the public to perceive that the threat to *laïcité* and Republican values was more important than any other social problem.

The tendency of media reports to perceive and portray global events through the cultural and political prisms of their respective political and social elites is linked to the ability of governments to influence the output of journalists. Jennifer Fredette argued that in the years leading up to the attack French media, intellectuals, and politicians had nurtured a public narrative that vilified Muslims.[[2]](#footnote-3) The government’s official statements made after the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings on 7 January 2015 delivered by President François Hollande were highly contentious, as were his statements made ten months later after the Paris attack on 13 November 2015. In January, Hollande warned that ‘nobody can act in France against the spirit of the Republic’,[[3]](#footnote-4) while calling for all different social groups across society to come together in the name of ‘national unity’. In November, however, Hollande added a rhetorical dimension of ‘war’ that saw France pitted against its enemies – the perpetrators and their ideological allies. These individuals were depicted as representing not just themselves, but also everyone who did not believe in French Republican values. By expressing the situation in terms of war, Hollande imposed on French society a sense of polarization. This seemed to be well-aligned with the ‘Je Suis Charlie’ slogan which emerged on social media in January 2015 and which not only symbolized solidarity with the victims of the attack, but also imposed an unconditional consensus around freedom of expression.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Two weeks after the January attack, Prime Minister Manuel Valls explained the problems of French society in terms of the ‘social misery’ of ghettos and ‘daily discriminations, because one doesn’t have the right family name, the right skin colour, or because one is a woman’.[[5]](#footnote-6) Valls added, in a statement that shocked much of French society, that ‘there exists a territorial, social, and ethnic apartheid in France’.[[6]](#footnote-7) The responsibility for this ‘apartheid’ seemed to fall on the shoulders of Muslim communities themselves rather than the state, which implied that these communities deliberately created ‘isolated ethnic areas’.[[7]](#footnote-8) Valls’ statement ignored the reality that his own and former governments played an active role through political discourse and policies that aggravated this segregation.[[8]](#footnote-9) Eric Fassin commented on the heavily codified language of race politics surrounding the attack, and specifically commented on Valls’ statement:

Despite the Republican values, the good principles, and the beautiful words, the adopted policies, for decades, brought about the relegation, the ghettoization, the discrimination, and the stigmatisation, which affect in France communities defined by their origin, appearance and religion. Most often, this action is draped by universalism (we think ‘Islam’, but we say ‘*laïcité*’), or it is disguised in euphemisms (we do not say ‘Black’, or ‘Arab’, but ‘from immigrant background’) […] no matter the rhetoric, the result is always there.[[9]](#footnote-10)

Fassin observed that Valls’s statement deliberately used exaggeration through the choice of the word ‘apartheid’ to deter the public from thinking about the causes of racial discrimination in France, and thus get trapped in the polemic of is there or is there not an apartheid in France? In other words, Valls framed the debate through a hypothetical question (the reality or not of the so-called apartheid) rather than the deep-seated causes for the situation it described.

When eighty students in the primary school of Seines-Saint-Denis in Paris did not engage in observing a minute of silence for the *Charlie Hebdo* victims,[[10]](#footnote-11) the Minister of Education Najat Vallaud-Belkacem called for a number of actions devised to remedy the lack of identification that certain students appeared to have with the ‘Je Suis Charlie’ national consensus. The minister proposed sending in specialized educational inspectors to collaborate with the teaching staff, to address the issue of students who did not conform to the desired response. To reinforce the government’s stance, the Ministry of Education published a press release on 14 January 2015 which declared that the government would not authorize any behaviour that challenged Republican values.[[11]](#footnote-12) This incident was situated within a long tradition of the Republicanisation of French schools, a process in which *laïcité* was seen as key.[[12]](#footnote-13) The social and political pressure on Muslim citizens to demonstrate their allegiance to France became entangled with the expectation that they also reaffirm themselves as *Charlie*.[[13]](#footnote-14) In May 2015, historian and anthropologist Emmanuel Todd published *Qui est Charlie? Sociologie d’une crise religieuse* arguing that it was very difficult for intellectuals in France to resist or show disapproval of the ‘Je Suis Charlie’ ‘hysteria’.[[14]](#footnote-15) In his book, Todd questioned the notion of national unity that prevailed over the ‘Je Suis Charlie’ response to events.[[15]](#footnote-16) Todd described national reactions to the attack in terms of ‘a totalitarian flash’, in that disaccord with the national consensus surrounding the events had become, according to him, inconceivable.[[16]](#footnote-17) He argued that ‘Je Suis Charlie’ came to represent a national consensus about freedom of expression where what is held to be consecrated and transcendental is ‘not just the right to blaspheme but the duty to blaspheme in order to prove oneself a ‘true’ or ‘good’ French citizen’.[[17]](#footnote-18)

Social scientists Valérie Amiraux and Arber Fetiu read and analysed 83 books which were published in France addressing the attack and its aftermatch between January 2015 and July 2016 (excluding books published by academics and experts), making an average of 4.6 books per month focused on *Charlie Hebdo* during the period of study. The authors observed three axes that dominated the discussion in all the books. While the first axis concerned the traumatic events of 7 to 9 January, the second axis illustrated how these events served as an opportunity to tackle themes of religion and Islam, the crisis of French identity, and the future of *fraternité*. The third axis approaches the recurring questions that have framed the public debate about Islam in France: the issues of *laïcité,* the threat of communitarianism*,* and immigration. The authors concluded that there was no novelty in the way the books approached these same old issues, and the *Charlie* ‘event’ was merely an excuse to ‘rephrase a series of narratives very familiar to a French audience’.[[18]](#footnote-19) Most importantly, these publications discussed Islamophobia in a generic way divided between those who denied its existence and believe the term is used to censor any criticism of Islam (these in fact included two of former *Charlie Hebdo* members, Philippe Val and Caroline Fourest, as will be discussed in Chapter 3) and those who recognized the reality of anti-Islam sentiment (such as Laurent Joffrin, editor of *Libération*).[[19]](#footnote-20) Overall, the arguments and the discussions that took place in the publications analysed by Amiraux and Fetiu coalesced into a unified consensus that the defence of *laïcité* and the preservation of Republican values of freedom and free speech are an absolute and urgent necessity. According to John Bowen, the consensus in the aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* attack was that the country was deeply divided and must reconcile its *vivre ensemble*. This was interpreted by some officials as achievable by exerting more vigilance, and by strengthening and enforcing both assimilation and secularism, in a way that renders diversity invisible.[[20]](#footnote-21)

In France, there were voices that pronounced consternation with the notion of ‘l’unité nationale’, questioning what they described as a national consensus and the confusion of emotional and political responses to the events. On 15 January 2015 a collective of intellectuals (mainly historians, film critics, social scientists and philosophers), published a joint letter in *Le Monde*, entitled ‘Non à l’union sacrée!’, regretting how the genuine feelings of empathy with the victims of the attacks were preempted by a number of sanctimonous politicians who had attended the so-called Republican marches.[[21]](#footnote-22)

Others commented on *Charlie Hebdo’*s own response to the attack, expressed in the highly politicized survivors’ issue, published on 14 January 2015.[[22]](#footnote-23) Aude Seurrat argued that, just as with the 2006 *Charlie Hebdo* issue of the Muhammad caricatures, the survivors’ issue gave us access to the backstage editorial choices and provided insight on how the media ‘seized’ *Charlie* and ‘re-editorialized’ it to produce diverse readings and interpretations. The survivors’ issue invited, or rather pressurized, French and international media to position themselves within the debate, fully aware that the situation was different this time as compared to 2006, since journalists and cartoonists were now being assassinated for their journalistic choices.[[23]](#footnote-24) Similarly, the editorial of Gérard Biard, editor-in-chief, published in the *Charlie Hebdo* survivors’ issue, further stressed the theme of *laïcité* as both the magazine’s raison d'être and its most commendable value that guarantees the functioning of the society’s insitutions and laws:

We hope that starting from 7 January 2015, a firm defence of *laïcité* will be granted for everyone. That we will finally cease, out of posturing, out of electoral calculations, or out of cowardice, to legitimize or even merely to tolerate communitarianism and cultural relativism, which opens the way to only one thing: religious totalitarianism. Yes, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a reality; yes, international geopolitics is a succession of manœuvres and dirty tricks; yes, the social condition of what we call ‘communities of Muslim origin’ in France is profoundly unjust; yes, racism and discriminations should be fought relentlessly. Fortunately, there exist several tools to try and resolve these serious problems, but they are all inoperable if one thing is missing: *laïcité*.[[24]](#footnote-25)

Biard’s message aimed to redefine *laïcité* as a sanctified value, and the foundation of the Republic itself. The issue also included a selection of the cartoons left behind by those who lost their lives in the attack – Tignous, Cabu, Wolinski – as well as survivors such as Coco, Catherine Meurisse, and Luz; all treated the question of religious fundamentalism both in Islam and Christianity. Their approach to the question of religion and *laïcité* served to reflect the publication’s approach, which throughout its history has declared itself to be the defender of Republican values.[[25]](#footnote-26)

The survivors’ cover recalled a November 2011 cover by Luz for the special issue ‘Charia Hebdo’ which had generated huge discontent, leading to the firebombing of the magazine’s offices (see chapter 4). On both issues, the cover was a caricature of Prophet Muhammad dressed in a long white shirt, on a bright green backdrop (with its traditional association with Islam), with a head that resembled the shape of the male sex organ.[[26]](#footnote-27) The survivors’ issue caption ambiguously said in the passive voice ‘Tout est pardoné’, and the prophet held the ‘Je Suis Charlie*’* sign.[[27]](#footnote-28) It could be argued that the choice of this template in particular for the second time was *Charlie Hebdo* attempting to remind the public what it was that they had died for, especially as the release of the survivors’ issue was announced in a press conference where Luz explained the emotional and mental process of drawing the cover. The issue sold over seven million copies (even though only three million copies were initially printed). This figure is unprecedented in the history of the press in France, the previous record being held by *France Soir* in its 9 September 1970 issue commenting the death of Charles de Gaulle. The numbers are particularly telling when seen in the light of the percentage of sales increases in general: the *France Soir* issue sold 30% more than average, while *Charlie Hebdo*’s issue sold 13,900% more than average, 140 times more copies than a routine edition. The number of subscribers also went up from 10,000 to 220,000 that same week.[[28]](#footnote-29) Patrick Pelloux, one of *Charlie*’s journalists thus stated: ‘our magazine has become a global symbol’.[[29]](#footnote-30)

Beyond France, #jesuischarlie became an instant global sensation on Twitter less than twenty-four hours after the attack.[[30]](#footnote-31) Neville Cox argued that the dominant global reaction considered the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks as not simply an assault on a newspaper institution in France but as an assault ‘on a fundamental normative principle of Western civilization (and thus on Western civilization itself)’.[[31]](#footnote-32) *Charlie Hebdo*, he argued, has historically produced two different types of cartoons which generated ‘conceptually different concerns’.[[32]](#footnote-33) First are those which mock the Prophet Muhammad or the religion and offend a certain aspect of the Islamic faith from an ideological perspective, for the sake of being sacrilegious; and the second, which suggest that the Prophet had an inherent link to terrorism, thus demonizing Islam and Muslims. Those who joined the ‘Je Suis Charlie’ mantra were either unaware of the difference between the two, or else believed that the freedom to publish cartoons with either effect must be allowed and tolerated regardless of any feelings of offence.

The Paris attack had serious repercussions on the daily lives of Muslim communities worldwide. Fatima Khan and Gabe Mythen examined the issues that impacted the lives of young British Muslims after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks through focus groups and interviews, and they highlighted two key issues raised by participants: freedom of expression and speech deficits. The authors pointed at speech gaps, apparent in double standards whereby freedom of expression for Muslims is contingent while freedom of expression of non-Muslims is absolute. The restrictions felt by Muslims interviewed by the authors caused feelings of ‘frustration and resentment, whilst also exacerbating feelings of marginalization’, and a certain feeling of apprehension regarding terrorism apparent in political and media discourse – impacted British Muslims’ capacity to express firmly held opinions.[[33]](#footnote-34) Dustin Byrd demonstrates how the aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* attack was a continuation of an ongoing global struggle – intensified after 9/11 – between different types of right-wing politics, aggravated by the emergence of what he called ‘Enlightenment fundamentalists’ (those who styled themselves as inheritors of the Enlightenment’s modernist legacy) who represent a certain kind of secular leftist thought in Europe, which maintains that race is no longer the problem, religion and culture are, and so ‘in defense of the Enlightenment, anti-Enlightenment measures are taken against Muslims’.[[34]](#footnote-35)

The desire to understand – a sublime goal of academic research –the *Charlie Hebdo* attack has been wrongly undermined by a certain section of the French political elite. The need to understand has been misunderstood as finding excuses for what happened. In the commemoration of the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings in 2016, Prime Minister Manuel Valls said in the National Assembly that ‘no social, sociological, or cultural excuse should be sought’.[[35]](#footnote-36) This was a reiteration of a statement made a year before in the Senate when he said: ‘I have had enough of those who constantly search for cultural and sociological excuses and explanations for what happened’.[[36]](#footnote-37) This denial, and dissociation with academic research on current affairs, provides evidence for the necessity of this thesis. Exploring the past of *Charlie Hebdo*, thinking about the ideas of its founders and decision-makers, and having a conversation and a debate with these ideas, helps us transcend the denial and exclusion perpetuated by politicians such as Manuel Valls. That is why, in addition to exploring the Republican values of equality, liberty, and *laïcité* that the French political elite considers of paramount importance, it is vital to highlight factors that did not belong to the Republican tradition, but that have been important in how the country changed and adapted. Key events such as the new immigrations have augmented xenophobic views and forced France to deal with unfamiliar groups of people from diverse religious identities within its secular state. The response of France to such developments in the form of immigration policies had a direct impact on the rise of Islamophobia, and the crisis of the identity of the nation state. The focus will be on that part of society which is often penalized by the Republican system for not being French enough or conforming to French culture on the basis of ethnic origin, lifestyle, religious persuasion, and racial stereotypes. The period of Chirac and Sarkozy (1995-2012), with slight nuances between the two, was marked by the neutralization of any calling into question the colonial past, a process that had started with François Mitterrand (1981-1995) and his ‘foreign’ policy in Algeria.[[37]](#footnote-38) Therefore, it will be important for a thorough analysis of *Charlie Hebdo*’s anti-Islam discourse to study the evolving political discourse in its relation to France’s colonial past. This will entail a re-examination of the French Republic’s secular traditions, its emphasis on both the freedom of the press and a ‘neutral’ and secular public space grounded on a certain understanding of universalism. Therefore, before moving on to explore the literature on *laïcité*, and explore how it became entangled with the rise of Islamophobia in France, an explanation of Republican universalism is important in understanding the context in which secularism and the relationship between individuals and the state have been developed in France’s Republican system.

Universalism is by far the most defining characteristic of the French Republic. It is also its most abiding and protected principle. It acquired a nationally consensual status to the point that rejecting universalism is tantamount to betraying France itself. Universalism is the one principle that unites the succeeding French republics since 1792 and by which the Republic and its values are defined.[[38]](#footnote-39) Universalism, also referred to as the Republican pact, relies on three main values: liberty, equality, and fraternity. These three values officially constitute the motto of the Republic according to the 1958 constitution – the latter literally states that ‘the motto of the Republic is “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”. Its principle is: government of the people, by the people, and to the people.’[[39]](#footnote-40) The link between the Republic and universalism emanated from the French Revolution of 1789's reassertion of universal human rights, which in France were expressed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen – drafted by Abbé Sieyès, and Marquis de Lafayette. According to Joan Wallach Scott, ‘universalism is serious (if disputed) philosophical concept and a mythologised restatement of the principles of 1789.’[[40]](#footnote-41) Maurice Samuels defines it in the following terms:

Whereas in other countries, universalism connotes one law applying to all people equally, in France, universalism has also come to mean that the state accords rights only to individuals, not ethnic or religious groups, and that the individual must be shorn of all particularities in order to access those rights. It is this divorcing of the citizen from group affiliations that defines the singularity of the French case, the “exception française” to the liberal pluralism that prevails in the Anglo-American context.[[41]](#footnote-42)

As a philosophy, universalism concerns political representation and is grounded on two interlinked abstractions: abstraction of the individual and abstraction of the nation. The nation in a universalist political philosophy is the articulation of the will of the people or as Rousseau put it the ‘general will’. This general will – as stated by article six of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen – is the same for all, that is, the nation as an abstract notion is taken to represent everyone. The representatives of the nation do not represent existing and/or competing entities, they rather represent through their actions, a singular body of a nation that is one and indivisible. The representatives of the nation are citizens who are abstracted from their social or political or cultural specificities such as class, religion, occupation. Universalism in this sense is secular. The nation’s abstract individuals are equal and interchangeable joined together by a common understanding of rationality that defines political life. The nation they form is therefore equally abstract. In this system, abstraction means the removing of any reflection of the diverse or disparate constructions of society. The nation is in this sense an abstract collective entity. What is perceived as one of the main assets of this conception of the nation is that any and all individuals within it are regarded and treated as equal citizens.

However, critics of French Republican universalism ponder upon whether there can be limits to abstraction, and if so what forms these limitations should take. Jacques Rancière argues that democracy rests on a necessary tension between the abstraction of the nation and the social reality obscured by this abstraction, which Gary Wilder calls ‘the conventional opposition between abstract universalism and concrete particularism’.[[42]](#footnote-43) In other words what is referred to as the tension between the abstract and the social, which is not new to French society but has been apparent since the Revolution.[[43]](#footnote-44) The example that is often cited to illustrate this tension is of the 1790s Jews’ exclusion from citizenship based on their religion and only granted it when they pledged allegiance to the nation as individuals whose faith is a private matter.[[44]](#footnote-45) These limitations were extended to slaves and women at the time on the consideration that they were dependents while autonomy was a prerequisite for citizenship. Critics of assimilationist universalism that is inimical to difference included scholars such as Wendy Brown, Joan Wallach Scott and even French theorists such as Étienne Balibar, who have centred their arguments on the different ways Republican universalism have used narratives of equality and freedom to hide colonialist and neo-colonialist ways of thinking and of exerting power.[[45]](#footnote-46) On the other hand, scholars such as Maurice Samuels, Mona Ozouf, Jean Francois Chanet admit that French universalism could manifest itself in discriminatory behaviours, but they take issue with the argument that universalism is inherently racist, thus urging critics to historicize universalism in order to showcase its various pluralist articulations, and to highlight the ideal of justice at its heart.[[46]](#footnote-47) Samuels, for instance, argues that universalism has a history and that the Republican universalism that is often cited is in fact a Jacobin universalism which has not been the only interpretation of universalism that the French adopted.[[47]](#footnote-48)

The vehement reassertion of Republican Universalism that we have seen in the aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* attack is not novel. If it is now framed in terms of an antagonism with Islam and Muslim identity, the phenomenon was already existent in the 1980s and articulated in the racism against North Africans, Africans, and immigrants. It could be argued that this was a backlash to the May 68 spirit and a reaction to the emanation of the new social movements in the 1970s – *Charlie Hebdo* was at the heart of this backlash and a good illustration of the shift of a section of the political elite from the extreme libertarian left to join the reactionary (which traditionally resisted universalism under the pretext that it erodes France’s Catholic origins, but is now expressing a call to domesticate Islam in the name of universalism arguing that Muslims and Muslim women are a threat to *laïcité*) neoconservatism at the service of power, as will be demonstrated in chapter 3. A backlash articulated in the surge of the identity-based politics of the 1990s, which showed a resistance to afﬁrmative action, while the policies offered to end years of racism and sexism refused to resort to any understanding of diversity and multiculturalism, the latter always framed as incompatible with Republican universalism.

Public debate particularly hindered any policies in favour of immigrants. The consideration of individuals as members of groups was censored and denied repeatedly, and usually the constitution of 1958 and Article 6 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789), which reads, ‘All citizens are equal before the law and are equally admissible to all ofﬁces, places and public employments, according to their capacity and without other distinction than that of their virtues and talents’, is cited as whole and sufficient protection to all from all sorts of discrimination.[[48]](#footnote-49) The immigration question intensified with the rise of the ultranationalist Front National in 1983, and its leader steady increasing popularity in the presidential elections which manifested in 14 percent of the votes in 1988 and 17 percent in 2002. The party’s position was inspired by Arnaud Camus’s grand replacement theory and other racialised references fuelled by xenophobia and a heightened sense of nationalism, and Le Pen repeatedly called for immigrants to be sent back to where they came from, assuming that they were not born in France, and are not French citizens.[[49]](#footnote-50) A more multicultural approach accepting the complex and evolving ethnic make-up of French society, and imagining a more inclusive, accommodating, and globalised universalism has often been resisted.

In 1993, an ofﬁcial policy of integration – as a new interpretation of universalism – was adopted through reforms to the nationality bill and in a set of laws that came to be known as the Pasqua Laws. Integration was premised on abstract individualism. A report from the *Haut Conseil à l’Intégration* [created in 1989 as a response to the first veil affaire known as Creil affaire discussed in page 34) argued in 1993, that citizenship meant enjoying complete freedom of conscience, while rejecting ‘the logic of there being distinct ethnic or cultural minorities, and instead looking for a logic based on the equality of individual persons.’[[50]](#footnote-51) So while accepting the reality of culturally diverse France, integration did demand a unified national and collective identiﬁcation. Those who do not fit in this collective identification are cast as ‘communitarian’ whose political and economic interests are tangential, irrelevant, or a threat to the collective interest of the unified France, they should not have a reality of their own. The political elite still cannot imagine a solution to problems of discrimination outside of the universalist framework, whether it is a problem of national pride emanating from a cherished 1789 legacy, or a refusal to engage with France’s colonial history, or a desire to preserve a mythologised conception of French identity, any revision to the notion of the individual and the collective is discredited. This becomes particularly problematic in a postcolonial context and the intensification of a cultural conflict framed as a civilizational one that is fixated on the liberation of women. In fact, one of the most persistent issues with representation in the French universalist system has been the status of women. The difference in sex was irreducible and incompatible with abstraction argues Scott, ‘symbolic of a fundamental division or antagonism that could not be reconciled with the notion of an indivisible nation’.[[51]](#footnote-52) Scott’s analysis of the parity movement for equal representation of man and women in elected assemblies which heightened in the 1980s offers a valuable analogy to examine the positioning of Muslim women within the universalist framework. Scott points to the gender distinction preventing individuals – women – from having equal access to office. The difference in sex was deemed irreconcilable and resistant to abstraction or assimilation. There have been another group for whom equal access to office, and even housing, employment, education, and child services have been hindered: individuals from North African origin and/or Muslim affiliation. They have been pushed to the margin of French cultural capital on the basis that they are ‘immigrants’, outsiders, whose difference is deemed at odds with French universalist identity, even if they are born in France, are secular, and are perfectly attuned to the French social and cultural fabric. For instance, Alain Finkielkraut argue that the French republic would be imperilled by the adoption of models that acknowledge the right to difference, *le droit à la difference.* In his book *L’identité malheureuse* (2013), Finkielkraut justifies the 2004 ban on the Muslim veil in French public schools by appraising the distinctive French republican model of citizenship – the French specificity – against the pluralist model adopted in other Western countries such as the UK and the US.  According to Finkielkraut, French identity thrives in a form of universalism that is uniquely French. He criticizes a tendency in some native-French (*de souche*) people to accept and accommodate the ‘other’ more than they accept themselves; and he claims that for the first time in the history of immigration, the newcomer – immigrant – denies the host – *francais de souche* (the born and bred ethnic white French) – the faculty or option to incarnate France.[[52]](#footnote-53) In this mindset, immigrant, Muslim, Arab signify inherent otherness based on a presumed association with Islam. Individuals possessing these qualities are not trusted to speak in the name of the general will. The parallels between the treatment of French women in the Twentieth century and French Muslim women in the Twenty-first century offers context for the meaning of abstraction, particularly when attempts to incorporate women and Muslims into the body politic are undermined for fear of fracturing its national unity. As Joan Scott observes granting women the right to vote in the early 20th century meant they were accepted as individuals, but the constitution of the Fifth Republic, which granted women rights to run for office, could not eradicate real obstacles facing women when seeking political careers.[[53]](#footnote-54) Despite the progress both civil society and politicians achieved for French ‘white’ women, they are still unable to find a way to correct the persistent discrimination French Muslim women suffer.[[54]](#footnote-55) French school has always been the main and most contested site of conflict, Balibar states:

It is just as unbearable to see the school system, men and women together, fomenting a civilizational conflict, making the “unveiling of Muslim women” in the republican institution par excellence a point of honour, unknowingly repeating the gesture French soldiers perpetrated on the bodies of their mothers and grandmothers during the Battle of Algiers.[[55]](#footnote-56)

An Islamophobic act, the unveiling of the Muslim woman – by law- is rooted in France’s self-proclaimed civilising mission which did not end with decolonisation. France is now a secular Republic, right-based with a liberal legal and political order and history that experienced social revolutions in the 1960s and a culture-war backlash today, a complex legacy of orientalism, colonialism – a traumatic one in Algeria – and postcolonial immigration.

The rise of anti-Muslim rhetoric first in the extremes (the Front National) and more recently in the mainstream occured through a reframing of the narrative on *laïcité*. By invoking *laïcité*, the race equality and religious equality agendas have been intentionally separated, and this separation have spilled over the academic debate. As a consequence, it became easy and legitimate to speak about religion without referring to race and vice versa. This process helped remove Muslims from the broader struggle for equality. The debate in France is formulated in terms of ‘Islam’ and ‘Islam de France’ – as discussed in chapter 4 – because ‘religion does provide a convenient cover for those wishing to argue that they are attacking a belief and not people, and in a context where racism is allegedly unacceptable, wriggle out of or deflect such charges.’[[56]](#footnote-57) Speaking of *laïcité* as a fundamental pillar of universalism adds legitimacy to criticism of Muslim, but more specifically it is the evolution of the very definition of *laïcité* that facilitated this. Specifically, a certain interpretation of the neutrality of the state in regard to religion. Another term used by *Charlie Hebdo* to justify its anti-Muslim rhetoric has been a defence of the Republican idea of *laïcité*.

*Laïcité*  has been frequently evoked in a way that suggests that using the word itself is enough to mean the same thing for everyone, that it is a value that should be defended more than explained, and that the biggest threat to it comes from Muslims. Jean Baubérot speaks of historical *laïcité* and of a new *laïcité*. The latter designates a politically conservative (right wing, far right) interpretation of the term and manifests itself in the creation of a certain inequality between religions and religious people. Most importantly, Baubérot notes a shift from a historical universalist *laïcité* to a ‘new franco-French and identity-based *laïcité*’.[[57]](#footnote-58) Evidently, most attempts at defining the idea of *laïcité* in France are framed in terms of the separation of the church and state as per the 1905 law especially after the 2005 bicentenary of the law. Prior to that, the French Revolution used to be the reference. Due to the complex nature of the history of the Revolution it became more solid for intellectuals and media alike to refer to the 1905 law. *Laïcité*, ‘a fundamental principle of modernity’, according to Alain Tourraine, dates from the French Revolution.[[58]](#footnote-59) Article 10 of the Declaration of 1789 proclaimed, ‘no one shall be persecuted for his opinions, even religious opinions’, but nonetheless restricted the ‘manifestation’ of those opinions in the name of ‘public order’.[[59]](#footnote-60) Aimed at religious minorities, this caveat came to be used against refractory priests (those who rejected the Civil Constitution of the Clergy).[[60]](#footnote-61) The Civil Constitution of the Clergy of July 1790 confirmed the implicit nationalization of the dominant religion, which, without the pope’s agreement, modified the formation of the Catholic Church to become subject to the new revolutionary state. In addition, monastic vows, deemed incompatible with the rights of man, were abolished (February 1790), and the Constitution of 1791 established a new form of ‘religion’ by inaugurating ‘national holidays to preserve the memory of the French Revolution, foster fraternity among citizens, and attach them to the Constitution, the Fatherland, and the law.’[[61]](#footnote-62)

Although the 1801 Concordat between Napoleon Bonaparte and the Pope had reaffirmed Catholicism’s place as the dominant religion within France, it did not restore its prior status as the state religion. This definitively signalled the end of any official union between church and state, as many parts of the Civil Code (1804) contradicted canon law.[[62]](#footnote-63) The marriage ceremony was laïcized, as were birth and death records, and any linkage of citizenship and religious affiliation was sundered. Under the Third Republic, in 1882, the school programs were laïcized, and in 1886, teaching staff was laïcized before Church and state were formally separated in 1905. In fact, school has always been a battle-ground for *laïcité* which explains the success of the law to forbid religious signs in school in 2004.

*Laïcité* was, in the Republican narrative, then, a factor of progress in the process of society’s rupture with the Ancient Regime. Jean Baubérot offers a practical and historical definition of *laïcité* while making a distinction between *laïcité* and secularism:

Unlike ‘secularism,’ ‘*laïcité’* refers to three phenomena all at once: freedom of conscience, the no domination of any religion over state and society, and the principle of non-discrimination for religious reasons. The first theoretical definition of *laïcité* came in 1883 when the philosopher Ferdinand Buisson described it as a situation in which ‘the State remains neutral with respect to all religions, free from all clergymen,’ and so can promote ‘equality before the law [and] freedom for all religions.’ On the whole, the 1905 law on the separation of church and state (still valid today) corresponds to this definition, and this conception has remained the dominant influence in French legislation concerning religion since then.[[63]](#footnote-64)

*Laïcité* is supposed to guarantee religious freedom. To guarantee the equality of respect and the freedom of conscience.[[64]](#footnote-65) *Laïcité* rests on two further principles: the separation of church and state established by the 1905 Law; and state neutrality on religious matters. Two tendencies could be distinguished in the way Republicans instituted *laïcité*. Moderate Republicans, like Jules Ferry, who were not atheists, but rather deists, detached Catholics, agnostics, and even Protestants, like Jules Steeg, shared a dominant philosophy of positivism inherited from Auguste Comte and a certain spiritualism, and embraced a plurialist interpretation of *laïcité*.[[65]](#footnote-66) Others with strong laicising tendencies were more radical, leading a battle not only against clericalism but also against the Christian religion, and indeed all religions.[[66]](#footnote-67)

There has been a Republican obsession with the concept of *laïcité*, which shifted its utilization to become a dividing system used to differentiate between ‘the good French citizens’ who live by the Republican values, and ‘others’ who do not.[[67]](#footnote-68) Philippe Marliere argues that despite the acceptance of Catholicism in the French secular space, as well as the toleration of Juadaism and Protestantism, Islam remains an antagonized body within the French nation.[[68]](#footnote-69) It is in fact what Renaut and Tourraine call ‘laïcisme’ that explains the alienation of French Islam from the secular space. While *laïcité* is meant to facilitate the communication between different people on the basis of their citizenship, ‘laïcisme’ prevents the combination of universalism with difference, rendering *laïcité* incapable of answering the contemporary exigencies of equality.[[69]](#footnote-70) In a way, *laïcité* is based on a strong sense of assimilation where the other is considered same and even as oneself by creating an abstraction of differences, and more so when these differences are religious.

When it comes to public debate, Baubérot argues that the law is more famous than known, many who use it are not fully aware of the content of its 44 articles which have been modified a few times too, most notably in January 1907. The historian notes many errors in the way *laïcité* is evoked. First, people tend to use the expression the separation of church and state’ whereas the law talks of ‘churches’ thus referring to not just the church, and not just catholocism. Baubérot thus argues that by churches, the law means ‘cults’, which in itself in France is traditionally used to mean religions. Many aspects of the law show that it is politically liberal and religiously accommodating.[[70]](#footnote-71) In the process of its issuing in 1905, an amendement aiming at removing religious references from certain holidays was rejected by 466 votes against 60. An amendement to prevent churches from acquiring civil status and to act in the court of justice, including against the state was rejected by 425 votes against 155. This was very important because it shows that religious organisations belong to civil society and have rights in front of the State. Additionally, Baubérot shows that the distinction between voluntary religious manifestations which are allowed in article 27 of the 1905 law, and the religious marking of public space which was forbidden by the same law, except for cultural buildings such as museums or galleries, or funeral homes. The difference, he notes, is less in the public versus private divide, and more in what is socially optional or voluntary and what is imposed. It follows that most arguments which stipulate that the 1905 law establishes neutrality in public space, or that the same law relegates religion to the private sphere, or that the law does not concern itself with public space, are erroneous.

In fact, in a speech preceding the vote on the legislation outlawing all ostensible religious signs from French public schools in 2004, President Chirac himself further implemented the definition of *laïcité* by introducing the notion of neutrality. Speaking on December 17, 2003, he emphasized the spatial dimension of the word when he described the Republic as ‘the privileged site for meetings and exchanges, where everyone can give of their best to the national community. It is the neutrality of the public arena which permits the various religions to coexist harmoniously.’[[71]](#footnote-72) These claims aim to show that the restrictive measures of what Baubérot calls the new *laïcité* are contradictory with the 1905 law. For instance, in terms of religious dress and clothing Baubéort makes a difference between a liberal separatist *laïcité* and a gallican authoritarian *laïcité*. Using the example of the cassock, the author refers back to the circumstances of its interdiction in the French revolution and under Bonaparte in 1802, and its reappearance in the 19th century. For many anticlericals, the cassock constitutes a provocation, so during the parliamentary debates of the 1905 law, some wanted it banned on the basis that it is not a religious obligation, its more clerical than religious, it is an act of proselytism, it is a sign of oppression, and finally many priests would want a law that would ‘liberate’ them from this oppressive clothing – technically similar arguments made for the interdiction of the veil in 2004 and the burqua in 2010. Those advocating for its interdiction would want to help the progressive cause. This, Baubérot calls is a relative secularisation in the name of *laïcité*, which implies that *laïcité* is and should be more tolerant, less invasive, more pluralist and less political than secularism. The amendement to ban the cassock was thus rejected by 391 votes against 184.[[72]](#footnote-73) Baubérot concludes that for the proponent of the 1905 law, the laic change is essentially political: it is to replace the system of religious authority with a system of liberty: public space is pluralist without drama nor violation of the Republic. Everyone dresses like they want and the differences in clothing are no longer important: every particular dress becomes like any other dress. *Laïcité* does not imply the secularisation of individuals, it constitutes the political regulation of individuals who entertain different rapports to secularisation’.[[73]](#footnote-74)Henceforth, a certain French perception of universalism and *laïcité* based on abstraction, on the supposed neutrality of the state, and articulated in laws that regulate religious identities in public space, has been weaponized to channel a narrative against the visibility of Islam. Muslims are denied recognition of their complex characteristics and history. It then becomes clear why and how the anti-Muslim rhetoric is corollary of the universalist one.

## On Islam and Islamophobia in France

The neologism Islamophobia has roots in the French language. Jocelyne Cesari states that the term ‘Islamophobie’ was first used by the Orientalist Etienne Dinet to describe a dislike or mistrust of Islam in *L’Orient vu de l’Occident* (1922).[[74]](#footnote-75) However, Jean-Loup Amselle and Emmanuelle Sibeud show that the term goes back to 1910 when it was first used by a French administrator in colonial French West Africa, Maurice Delafosse.[[75]](#footnote-76) The contemporary popularization of the English term ‘Islamophobia’ dates back to 1997 with the publication of a report by Runnymede Trust in the UK titled ‘Islamophobia: A Challenge For Us All?’.The report describes Islamophobia as ‘a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam—and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims’.[[76]](#footnote-77) The report extends the term to cover ‘the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs’.[[77]](#footnote-78) The word has become unavoidable after 9/11, including among scholars who question the validity of charges of Islamophobia. José Pedro Zúquete argued that the use of the term should be restrained, especially amongst social scientists, because it is a broad term that could be referring to narratives that have different, and even opposing, intentions and objectives. Also, the ‘indiscrimate’ use of the label carries with it a moralistic element, and could potentially be used to stigmatize those who investigate or try to grasp some features of Islam.[[78]](#footnote-79) In a similar vein, Marcel Maussen emphasized the imperative to distinguish between ‘academic discussions on the relations between Islam and modernity, public discussions on whether Islam recognizes the principle of separation of church and state, public outcries about Islam as a “backward religion” or as a “violent religion”, and hate speech’.[[79]](#footnote-80) Both Zúquete and Maussen thus argue that not everyone who questions Islam is necessarily inspired by bias, fear, or hate against Islam. It is therefore necessary to look at the history of the word Islamophobia in the Anglophone world, as well as France.

Tariq Modood, Fred Halliday, Chris Allen, Martin Reisigl, and Ruth Wodak were amongst the first to conduct academic research into Islamophobia in the Anglophone world. They argue that the problem of defining Islamophobia lies with the terminology itself. The conceiving of discrimination as a collection of pathological beliefs (implied by use of the term phobia), leads those who deploy the term to overlook the active, aggressive aspects of discrimination. The terminology also does not satisfactorily signify the nature of the prejudice experienced by Muslims. This argument was advanced by Fred Halliday, who states that the term ‘Islamophobia’ accepts that Muslims are discriminated against due to being Muslims. Nevertheless, Halliday contends that the term is deceptive as it obscures the true focus of the discrimination: not Islam as a ‘monist abstraction’, but rather Muslims as people, and he offers the infelicitous term ‘anti-Muslimism’.[[80]](#footnote-81) Modood comments on Halliday’s point and argues that it overlooks that ‘the majority of Muslims who report experiencing street level discrimination recount that they do so when they appear conspicuously Muslim more than when they do not.’[[81]](#footnote-82) As this is linked to the wearing of Islamic attire, it becomes difficult ‘to separate the impact of appearing Muslim from the impact of appearing to follow Islam.’ Modood points to the rise of racial profiling since 9/11 and 7/7 in which the perceived ‘Islamicness’ of the victims has been the primary reason for the discrimination. This suggests that prejudice and/or hostility to Islam and Muslims are much more intertwined than Halliday’s thesis suggests.

Since one of the problems with defining Islamophobia resides in the intersection of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic prejudices, Islamophobia should be perceived as a multidimensional social phenomenon which – like racism – contains intertwined layers composed of prejudice, practice, and ideology. In addition, if the question of the etymological pertinence of the term remains an issue, it is important to define the social phenomenon that the term designates. The presence of Muslims in France and Europe is not new, but their visibility in the public sphere (as a site of consensus as well as of antagonism and confrontation) started to stir debate from the mid-1990s onwards, especially around issues of mosque and minaret construction, ritual slaughter, Sharia councils, burqa/veil bans, love and marriage, and women’s rights.[[82]](#footnote-83) The confusion about the evidence of a correlation between anti-Muslim sentiment and cultural racism could have many explanations. On the one hand, there is the idea that since Muslim identity is religious and voluntarily chosen, the conceptualization of racism does not apply to Muslims as a group; racism assumes that racial minorities are conventionally conceived and involuntarily constituted.[[83]](#footnote-84) On the other hand, contemporary societies have disregarded and discredited religion and classified it as an ideology, which implies that any debate on Islam (whether derogatory or reverent) is a sign of an intellectual endeavour and is thus not used as a tool to devalorise Muslims. Also, while ethnic identities are to an extent tolerated in the public sphere, there is widespread consternation and apprehension about religious minorities. Finally, because the public narrative does not allow sympathy for a minority that is associated with terrorism Muslims are portrayed as a threat, rather than as a disadvantaged minority that is assailed by a damaging racialized discourse.

Conversely, a marked long durée of historical continuity in conjunction with the recent dominance of cultural racism provides evidence of the link between Islamophobia and racism.[[84]](#footnote-85) According to Ramón Grosfoguel and Eric Mielants, ‘Islamophobia as a form of racism against Muslim people is not an epiphenomenon’, but is rather structured in terms of a set of global racial, religious, linguistic, and epistemic hierarchies.[[85]](#footnote-86) Moreover, Islamophobia correlates with racism in the way religious difference in the colonial era evolved into racial and ethnic differences in the postcolonial era.[[86]](#footnote-87) The first marker of *otherness* in the Western world system, Maldonado-Torres argues, was around religious identity when Jews and Arabs were characterized as ‘people with the wrong religion’ and indigenous people were constructed as ‘people without religion’.[[87]](#footnote-88) Tariq Modood also argues for a conception of Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism; the passage from a scientific racism to a hegemonic form of cultural racism framed in terms of the inferior customs, behaviours, or principles of others, which essentializes the culture of the racialized people. What had previously centred on racial tropes such as *uncivilized*, *barbarian*,or *backward*, today become tropes that serve to brand the other’s religious practices and beliefs. [[88]](#footnote-89) In a similar vein, Mayanthi Fernando and Eric Fassin maintain that racism and anti-Islamic prejudice are interlaced; Islamophobia is therefore highly racialized.[[89]](#footnote-90) David Tryer rightfully observes how the pursuit to determine whether the nature of Muslim identity is racial or not act as a mechanism that fosters a rhetoric of denial instead of engaging in a constructive analysis of experiences of Islamophobia.[[90]](#footnote-91) In fact, from the moment we accept that race has no scientific bearing, and rather refers to the way in which subjects are socially constructed as racial, then we accept that Muslim identity also has no biological bearing either. As Tyrer concludes: ‘Muslim identities lack a phenotypical basis’. Those who maintain ‘phenotypal race as the logical arbiter of whether racism can be said to exist’ are perpetuating ‘the attempt to deny the racist nature of Islamophobia (and) extending a particular racial politics without risking accusation of racism’.[[91]](#footnote-92) If anything, denying any link between Islamophobia and racism has served the proliferation of a politics of offence.

Chris Allen identifies three elements to Islamophobia. First the need to understand Islamophobia as an ideology because it functions as one. Second component to Islamophobia are ‘the prejudices, opinions, and attitudes held by certain individuals, groups, organisations and communities that are informed by the overriding ideology.’[[92]](#footnote-93) Finally, it is the acts of violence that constitute the manifestations of these exclusionary prejudices, opinions, and attitudes. Islamophobia is thus ideological because it sustains the misconceptions that Muslims and Islam are threatening ‘Others’ through the dissemination and consolidation of dominant unchecked discourses best defined as normative truths. Hatem Bazian agrees with Allen that Islamophobia is an ideological construct which has been legitimized in the post-Cold war era as way to bring together a fragmented West after the collapse of the Soviet Union.[[93]](#footnote-94) Evidently, Samuel Huntington’s ‘Clash of Civilisation’ thesis was the timely, one-dimensional, reductionist, irrational, notion that managed – and still does – to capitalize on a perceived threat of Islam, the new enemy, and translate it into a foreign policy paradigm. Bazian also observes that Islamophobia is an ideology shared by many political groups from the right as well as the left:

the emergence of the “Clash of Civilizations” thesis allowed for the state, the far-right counter-jihad movement, the neoconservative movement, sizable segments of the transnational Zionist movement, and assorted liberal groupings including the pro-war left and the new atheist movement to unleash a barrage of Islamophobic discourses to rationalize the new world order and their central role in countering it.[[94]](#footnote-95)

In this sense, Islamophobia becomes a meeting point where previously discordant groups can now ally their political interests using Islam and Muslims as the common threat – which explains why it has been difficult to try to pin *Charlie Hebdo* (a perceived left-wing and progressive publication) to one specific political ideology particularly since its relaunch in 1992.

Maleiha Malik, meanwhile, stressed that anti-Muslim prejudice is not simply a French phenomenon. Due to anti-Muslim prejudice having shared European roots, the problem has consistently been extending across the continent. The far-right political parties in Europe have been communicating with each other quite effectively with the purpose of forming a voting bloc in the European Parliament (though they have failed so far).[[95]](#footnote-96) This is not to say that anti-Muslim prejudice is exclusive to far-right political ideology. As this thesis will show, anti-Muslim prejudice and Islamophobia span political, gender, and class divisions. The rise of Islamophobia in the public and political debate in France has been linked to the Creil affair in 1989, which happened at the propitious moment of the fall of the Berlin Wall. This does not mean that Islamophobia did not exist or did not manifest itself in the public debate or the social behaviour before the Creil affair, this only means that the affair helped re-introduce the problematization of French Muslims to the political debate in France. In Creil in 1989, 14-year-old Fatima and 13-year-old Leila and Samira were denied access to their classes because they wore the traditional Maghrebi headscarf.[[96]](#footnote-97) The interdiction imposed by the school principal, his threat to expel the girls if they did not obey the exigency of *laïcité*, the schoolgirls’ insistence in exercising their rights (at the time – banned in 2004) of wearing a headscarf, and the hysteria of the national media sparked the first ‘veil affair’ in France.[[97]](#footnote-98) In fact, in February that year, Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa against Salman Rushdie as a response to the publication of the Satanic Verses in 1988. In the West, the fatwa and its ramifications in terms of censorship and repression were perceived as a dangerous aggression of political Islam on public space. The discovery of a ‘threatening’ Islam was articulated in France in the form of three veiled schoolgirls at the heart of its Republican laic school. Claude Askolovitch opined that the Creil affair offered France a new enemy after the fall of communism, adding that Islamophobia should not be blamed on the National Front. A class of ‘esteemed’ intellectuals – who styled themselves as totally democratic – prepared the terrain for the far-right party to express its agenda freely and without censorship, argued Askolovitch.[[98]](#footnote-99)

Talking about Islam in France has always been motivated by a sense of mistrust of Muslims and the questioning of their allegiance to the Republic. A striking example of this behaviour is the representations in many French and European media of European Muslims who are described as living with multiple allegiances: Muslim and French, Muslim and British, Muslim and German. They carry with them the ties of their Muslim communities, and equally the bonds of their national identities. More generally, there remains an unsolved historical contention: the feeling that Muslims belong only fraudulently to the nation, and that young Muslims are rejecting the French ‘civilization’ through their ostentatious adherence to Islam.[[99]](#footnote-100) The discourse surrounding urban riots, crime, and Islamic radicalism is strongly associated with *les jeunes issus de l’immigration*, in the *banlieues* (working-class neighbourhoods at the outskirts of cities also referred to as *quartiers difficiles*), who happen to be of Muslim origin.[[100]](#footnote-101) They are constantly seen as a challenge to a sacred assumption of French identity politics.[[101]](#footnote-102) That is, to be European, one must be Christian or secular in the Western Enlightenment tradition, which also has clear Judeo-Christian roots, a leitmotif that is recurrent within the French public mind.[[102]](#footnote-103)

The nature of the religious crisis that became very visible in the aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings was preceded by a strong flow of anti-Islam rhetoric that has come to characterize French public life post 9/11. This was perfectly exemplified recently by Michel Houellebecq’s novel *Soumission*which was published on the same day as the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings, as well as the success of Eric Zemmour’s *Le Suicide Français*(2014) which laments the failed project of the integration of Muslims into the French society, or his previous long essay *Mélancolie Française* (2010) which advocates that France should consider deporting Muslims. Renaud Camus’ *Le Grand Remplacement* (2012), now considered one of the texts that inspired the Christchurch New Zealand mosque shootings in March 2019, also postulates that Europe is undergoing a process of substitution of its white European population by a non-European African and Maghrebi population. The abundance of bestselling literary works which address the question of Islam in France and demonstrate the interlocking of society around ‘the threat of Islam’ include, amongst others: Mathias Enard’s *Boussole* (Prix Goncourt 2015), Boualem Sansal’s *2084: The End of the World*, Hedi Kaddour’s *Les Prépondérants* (2015), and Alexis Jenni’s *L’Art Français de la Guerre* (2011).

As regards academic research, the question of the construction of Islam as an external or internalthreat overlaps with debates on immigration, security, and terrorism. It was Vincent Geisser’s *La Nouvelle Islamophobie*, published in 2003, that introduced the concept of ‘Islamophobia’ into French public debate. Then, Thomas Deltombe’s analysis of Islamophobia in French media discourse in 2005 located the Iranian Revolution of 1979 as the moment when Islam became a hot topic in France.[[103]](#footnote-104) Additionally, and as a response to Sylvain Guggenheim’s book *Aristote au mont Saint-Michel: Les Racines Grecques de l’Europe Chrétienne* (2008), in which the author argued that the Arab-Muslim world played a minor but overrated role in the transmission of knowledge from the Greeks to the Western world, a group of fourteen French historians published *Les Grecs, les Arabes et Nous: Enquête sur l’islamophobie savante.*[[104]](#footnote-105) They demonstrated the existence of a symptom they called *islamophobie savante*, to describe a tradition of hostile and anti-Islamic statements that are often perpetuated by French intellectuals, from Montaigne to Claude Levi-Strauss and beyond, who have repeatedly accused Muslims of supposedly patriarchal and sexist abuse of women. In a similar vein, Fatima Khemilat engaged with anti-Muslim prejudice in France through a broader prism by looking at the concept of epistemicide, referring to the deliberate, often silent, eradication of knowledge that is not produced by, or in, the Western hemisphere. Khemilat warns against the hegemony of countries like France, the UK, and the USA over the production and dissemination of knowledge. The author then traces anti-Muslim prejudice back to the fall of Granada and its aftermath (as well as the Valladolid debates which decided the treatment of the New World’s indigenous cultures).[[105]](#footnote-106) *L’islamophobie savante* is usually part of a broader feminist discourse ― the best examples are of Elisabeth Badinter, a philosopher; and Sihem Habchi, president of the association *Ni putes, ni soumises*, who worked hand in hand with the National Assembly to pass a law banning the face veil on 13 July 2010. In fact, one of many manifestations of *l’islamophobie savante* could be seen in the creation, by president Nicolas Sarkozy, of the *Fact-finding mission on the practice of wearing the veil on the national territory* (Mission d’information sur la pratique du port du voile intégral sur le territoire national), in 2010 which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

After the January attack, the French political class chose to focus on themes regarding Republican norms and values, which almost exclusively revolved around freedom of speech and *laïcité*(rather than égalité and fraternité) and the perceived ‘Islamic’ threat to their ‘national unity’. The absence of calls for equality in the aftermath of the shootings brings into focus Étienne Balibar’s notion of ‘equaliberty’, which commemorated the inauguration of modern universal citizenship in France, namely equality and freedom.[[106]](#footnote-107) In his book, Balibar argued that, historically, the dominant classes have deemed freedom more important than equality.

Vincent Geisser argues that the French exception on the subject of Islamophobia resides in the fact that when Islam started to become a national Franco-French reality, a rejection of religious references started to polarize, as if ‘ordinary racism’ was looking for its new xenophobic capture: ‘Islam as an identity irreducible marker between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’’.[[107]](#footnote-108) One of Geisser’s major hypotheses is that Islamophobia is not simply a transposition of anti-Arab racism, anti-Maghreb racism, or anti-*jeunes-de-banlieues* racism. Instead, it is mainly a religiophobia; in fact, many Islamophobes are Arabophiles. This helps explain in Chapter 4 how Charb and many of his colleagues at *Charlie Hebdo* presented themselves as anti-racists and pro-Palestinians sharing great affinities with their fellow citizens from the Arab world. Geisser concludes:

Islamophobia constitutes a profoundly modern anti-Muslim racism, which takes shape in a racialist post-revolutionary ideology, gradually evolving into a universalism that is missionary. The imperial politics of France, in particular, the colonization of Algeria represented the ‘moment fort’ of the putting in practice of an institutional Islamophobia as a modality of domination and exploitation of indigenous Muslims compensated, in reality, by paternalist and Islamophile gestures.[[108]](#footnote-109)

Askolovitch critized a certain tendency amongst some politicians and some intellectuals [such as Manuel Valls and Alain Finkielkaraut], who claim that the social and cultural inclusion of Muslims in France is impossible, and use *laïcité* as a preventive measure.[[109]](#footnote-110) This argument was also advanced by Olivier Roy who observed that the notion that Muslims are unassimilable in French society stems from an essentialist and erroneous claim. Roy believes that there is no Muslim community, per se, in France. There are Muslims, individuals, the majority of whom are perfectly integrated in French society. For many, the *Charlie Hebdo* attack reinforced the flawed idea of the clash of civilizations. Roy not only criticizes the theory of a clash of civilization but also asks why French society accuses Muslims of communitarism, only to then blame them for not reacting against terrorism as a community. [[110]](#footnote-111) Roy remarks that when the French media talks about Muslims who are integrated, they cite particular exceptions. For instance, Ahmed Mrabet, the Muslim police officer who died defending *Charlie Hebdo* in the January attack was not valorised as an example or a prototype of the rest of Muslims but rather as a counter-example.[[111]](#footnote-112)

Marwan Mohammed and Abdellali Hajjat surveyed the deployment of the word Islamophobia by media intellectuals in France such as Caroline Fourest, Fiammetta Venner (Venner was also a former member of *Charlie Hebdo*), and the New Philosopher Pascal Bruckner who, as explained above, defended the idea that Islamophobia was a modern Iranian invention to censor criticism of Islam. [[112]](#footnote-113) Mohammed observed that in France, the debate focuses more on the terminology than on the phenomenon, in the sense that Islamophobic acts interest intellectuals, media, and politicians less than the word itself. Mohammed asserts that the definition of the term has undergone a rigorous examination and should by now be established. Islamophobia, like racism, is a process of identitarian attribution and a process whereby the Other is reduced to a sign of religious belonging, either real or presumed. Mohammed and Hajjat thus agree with Mayanthi and most of the scholars consulted in this literature, that Islamophobia is a phenomenon of racialization that negates the plurality of Muslims.[[113]](#footnote-114)

Based on the research question set for this project, the following definition will not be optimal in all circumstances but will serve as a working definition for this thesis. Erik Bleich describes Islamophobia as ‘indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims’.[[114]](#footnote-115) Firstly, the choice of the word ‘indiscriminate’ suggests that not all criticism and disagreement constitutes Islamophobia. In other words, it is easier to assess whether attitudes and emotions are indiscriminate rather than to determine whether these attitudes or emotions are illegitimate, unjustified, unfounded, or unwarranted. Secondly, Islamophobia is here taken to connote a broad set of negative attitudes and emotions directed at individuals or groups because of their perceived membership of a defined category. Islamophobia is thus analogous to terms such as racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism. ‘Negative attitudes or emotions’ include ‘aversion, jealousy, suspicion, disdain, anxiety, rejection, contempt, fear, disgust, anger, hostility’,[[115]](#footnote-116) and this idea brings up the evaluative and affective (gut-level reactions such as fear) aspects of Islamophobia that can be distinguished from beliefs and actions such as discrimination or physical violence, which are rather direct consequences of Islamophobia.[[116]](#footnote-117) Finally, by saying that Islamophobia is ‘directed at Islam and Muslims’,Bleich legitimately recognizes that Islam – as a religion – and Muslims – as people – are inextricably intertwined in public perceptions. Henceforth, adopting Bleich’s definition, the more consistently negative the attitudes and opinions of the editors and cartoonists of *Charlie Hebdo* towards Muslims and Islam were, the more confident we can be that they were expressing Islamophobia. Manifestly, this line of argument helps critique Charb’s own conception of Islamophobia. While acknowledging that Muslims increasingly found themselves having to endure racial profiling by the state, and widespread hostility and racial discrimination, Charb argued that he could not be labelled or described as Islamophobic, forIslamophobia is simply another face of racism, and *Charlie Hebdo* has repeatedly proved its anti-racism. Charb argued:

The sectarian militants who try to impose on the judiciary and political authorities the notion of ‘Islamophobia’ do not have any other goal than to push the victims of racism to identify as Muslims. That racists are also Islamophobes, sorry, but that goes without saying. They are first racists and, through Islam, it is actually the foreigner or the person with foreign origins that they target. In considering only the Islamophobic character of the racist individual, we minimize the racist threat. [[117]](#footnote-118)

Charb also makes a clear distinction between race and ideology while maintaining that to interpret a racist act as an Islamophobe one serves only to shield Islam from genuine criticism.

John Bowen is optimistic that Islam can become an accepted part of French society, despite the double standards that public figures hold vis-a-vis Muslim French citizens, and observed how ‘very seldom do we hear from Muslims who are *not* in the business of denouncing their own kind’.[[118]](#footnote-119) Rather, Bowen focuses on the forms of Islamic ideas that will allow Muslims who desire to exercise their religion to do so openly and without restriction in areas of schooling, marriage, worship, and banking.As Bowen and Fernando’s work demonstrates, and as Roy and Askolovitch argued, Muslims in/of France have been actively practising their Republican citizenship through civic associations or associative activities, offering social and cultural venues (including for example Arabic language classes or job counselling) to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Despite this evidence, and as Dounia Bouzar observed, Republicans often charge Muslim associations with communitarianism while discrediting their efforts and questioning their loyalty to their Republican citizenship.[[119]](#footnote-120) This is because in the Republican mindset, there is an inherent incompatibility between public Muslim identity and Republican citizenship as we have shown.

The most important, and dangerous, aspect of anti-Muslim prejudice is that it redefines all visible and physical Muslim religious difference – the minaret, the beard, the halal food, the headscarf (often presented as a sign of rejection of gender equality) – into a certification of the ‘Islamification’ of French public life. Thus, anti-Muslim prejudice – by choosing religion over race – disguises itself behind a façade of the socio-political engagement of protecting *laïcité* and women’s rights and fighting obscurantism and ‘seclusion’. What follows is that any Muslim or liberal resistance to such discriminatory rhetoric is translated and misconstrued as a backward obstruction of free speech. Instead, Muslims who are ‘in the business of denouncing their own kind’ as Bowen put it, are the ones who are given a platform in French media in general, and in *Charlie Hebdo* in particular, through the employment of controversial voices such as Zineb el Rhazoui, amongst others.

## On Free Speech

The question of Islamophobia is intricately, and sometimes deceptively, linked to the issue of free speech on one hand, and *laïcité* on the other. Islamophobia is dismissed on the grounds of the protection of free speech, and *Charlie Hebdo*’s contributors have repeatedly explained their attack on Islam in the name of *laïcité*. So, what does freedom of speech mean to *Charlie Hebdo*? Philippe Val, editor of *Charlie Hebdo* from 1992 to 2009, and responsible at the time for the publication of the Muhammad caricatures, argued in response to accusations of causing offense to French Muslims:

The problem is that we don’t spit on Muslims. In fact, we never pretended to fight for a freedom of expression that is not restricted by the freedom of others: we acknowledge the necessity of the boundaries that French laws pose, such as the prohibition of incitement to hatred, and defamation. Our battle, in this magazine, is to resist the amalgam that, precisely we are blamed for, between criticism of religion and racism. If we consider that criticizing Islam, or drawing Muhammad, is evidence for anti-Muslim racism, we close the door against every critique of religion, and we re-establish a crime of blasphemy which will take us back to the starting square of democracy.[[120]](#footnote-121)

Val then subscribes, albeit loosely, to the idea that free speech has a limit which is only regulated by French law. This is a loose allegiance because Val lacks consistency in his reasoning and is capable of saying and doing contradictory things, as will be shown in Chapter 3. Freedom of speech is thus synonymous with democracy for Val, in the sense that it has been achieved thanks to the joined efforts of civil society overthrowing blasphemy laws.[[121]](#footnote-122) This view is supported by Caroline Fourest, a close ally to Val in *Charlie Hebdo*. Together these two figures formed a sort of union inside the magazine that will also be explored in Chapter 3. Fourest posits that the absence of any blasphemy law in France is what makes debate on religion happen.[[122]](#footnote-123) She further affirms that she fights so that free speech could be practised even if, and especially when, it hurts certain beliefs. Both Val and Fourest repeat that, in reference to the publication of the Danish cartoons and the Muhammad caricatures in 2006, they were simply doing their jobs as journalists. They also argue that if there should be a limitation to free speech it would only be in order to protect individuals from incitement to hatred in the context of racist speech, but defamation against religion is not part of this category. *Laïcité* comes into play when Fourest maintains that in a secular society all beliefs are equal, or in other words there is no religion or faith that is more sacred than another. *Laïcité* in this sense establishes a certain equality of treatment that is overseen by the Republic, which remains neutral and detached. Fourest assumes that Muslims, by protesting representations of their prophet in drawings in accordance with Islamic teachings, are constraining the freedom of the press. Fourest then adds that if she – and by extension French society – has to respect Islamic teachings on these grounds then she should not draw Jesus either and remove crosses from churches lest they hurt Muslim feelings. Similarly, one of *Charlie Hebdo*’s allies, Sam Harris, a member of the ‘New Atheist’ movement, used similar arguments that normalized Islamophobia when he coined a simple and simplistic definition: ‘a word created by fascists, and used by cowards, to manipulate morons’.[[123]](#footnote-124) This is exactly the sort of alarming and propagandist rhetoric that is quite resonant with the far-right, particularly in the absence of such an analogy in the Muslim mind in France and elsewhere.[[124]](#footnote-125)

When *Charlie Hebdo*’s offensive humour to Muslims comes under scrutiny, readers are dismissed on the basis that they do not understand French humour and culture. Damien Stankiewicz rightfully observes that ‘any analysis premised on the idea that large population groups lack the tools to uncover the true nature of cartoon satire is dubious’. [[125]](#footnote-126) Instead, Stankiewicz suggests that cultural power and discursive context should be considered when Muslims [especially non-French] do not interpret supposedly humorous images identically to other French cultural groups. The gap in interpretation is likely due to a multitude of possibilities in which a media receptor’s assessment may vary from that assumed by the author. However, when the argument of the French exception in terms of humour or cartoon culture fails, the right to free speech comes to the rescue. In other words, when the argument that there is a specifically unique French humour – that could be obscure to those not familiar with the culture – fails to convince, some resort to the argument of the universal right to free speech. Simon Dawes analysed the initial media framing of the *Charlie Hebdo* attack in terms of an absolutist interpretation of the Republican values of free speech and free press, and the politics of Val’s editorial decision to republish the Muhammad caricatures. Dawes talked about the ‘fetishization of the right to offend’, and the ‘depoliticization of the right to be offended’ in the sense that French media’s concentration on free speech overshadowed other possible frames of cultural difference and counter-speech.[[126]](#footnote-127) Reflecting on the ‘liberal rhetoric’ exposed during the media coverage of the twentieth anniversary of the Salman Rushdie Fatwa in 2009 [the 2006 Muhammad caricature affair followed a similar pattern], Anshuman Mondal observed that a ‘secularized cultural supremacism surfaced during the Rushdie affair’, which fostered an absolutist interpretation of freedom of expression.[[127]](#footnote-128) In such an absolutist interpretation, free speech is perceived as an end in itself, sacred, undivided, uncompromised, and a value that does not and should not yield to ethical responsibility.[[128]](#footnote-129) Even if Val himself and Fourest do not subscribe to an absolutist reading of free speech, the polemics raised by and around controversies such as the *Satanic Verses* or the Danish cartoons affairs, or even *South Park* and *Hustler* magazine, did bring into discussion passionate and opposing readings of free speech. Brian Winston’s work on free speech and the right to offend is a critique of the circumspection and the suspicion of Enlightenment values by intellectuals, which he called ‘trahison des clecrs’.[[129]](#footnote-130) Winston’s position is very clear: ‘the right to free speech and the right within it to offend, because without it we have no free speech, must be maintained. At whatever cost.’[[130]](#footnote-131) Additionally, in the case of offence – which he perceived to be ‘self-attested’ at most cases, and thus irrelevant – and based on his analysis of the Salman Rushdie affair, Winston established that defending censorship in the name of the Islamic faith is itself an insult to Islam and Muslims. This is a point he shares in making with Philippe Val. [[131]](#footnote-132)

## Corpus

In a video that circulated heavily on YouTube on 2 January 2018, in a local TV show a French presenter asked his guest Luz (one of *Charlie Hebdo*’s survivors) about the racist and Islamophobic accusations that the magazine has faced for many of its covers.[[132]](#footnote-133) The presenter asked Luz if he could explain *Charlie Hebdo*’s cover published on 22 October 2014. This cover was signed by Riss and featured veiled black Muslim women, who were captive of Boko Haram, shouting ‘don’t touch our benefits’.[[133]](#footnote-134) As soon as he was shown the cover, Luz burst into laughter, and when asked what made him laugh, he said: ‘The characters’ faces: I find that funny’. So, the presenter insisted: ‘Their faces, okay! but also it is about what it *says*, right?’. For over one minute and 20 seconds, Luz struggled to think of anything beyond a long embarrassed and confused ‘euuuuh’, interspersed by ‘wait’, ‘why did we do this’, and ‘it’s true that this should be read according to its context’ and another long ‘euuuh’. Far from trying to stigmatize Luz, this video shows the difficult task of creating meaning out of humorous or satirical images, especially when we are not the authors of them and particularly when the context has long passed. Through a textual and contextual analysis of the publication since its inception, as *Hara Kiri* in 1960up until the Paris attack in January 2015, this thesis studies how *Charlie Hebdo*’s unique and provocative, crass and brutal brand of humour mirrors deeper cultural perceptions in French society apropos of religion, and how satire functions as a powerful vehicle for culturally and politically shaped ways of thinking and feeling peculiar to French society. *Charlie Hebdo*’s self-proclaimed mission was to challenge the mores of 1970s French society through graphic images, deliberately utilizing scatological images, pornographic material and grotesque humour.The thesis focuses on *Charlie Hebdo*’s anti-Islam discourse to understand how, by the late twentieth century, the pursuit of artistic freedom through visual blasphemy had become emblematic of freedom of speech in France.[[134]](#footnote-135) It explores the many factors that pushed *Charlie Hebdo* after its relaunch in 1992 under the editorship of Philippe Val into increasingly political satire directed at Islam and Muslims, illustrating the ability of caricature to provoke controversy and appropriate the values of the Republic, and redefine the place of Muslims within it.

The primary sources for the thesis are the magazines themselves, and the methodological approach has been a close reading of the published content (textual and visual) supplemented by memoir, interviews, and life writing by the protagonists alongside some of their other journalism. The mains corpus consists of the whole print run of the monthly *Hara Kiri* from September 1960 to December 1985 (312 issues), the whole print run of the weekly *L’Hebdo Hara Kiri* from February 1969 to November 1970 (22 issues), and the whole print run of *Charlie Hebdo* from 1960 to 1981 and from 1992 to 2015 (1768 issues). My approach was to focus on covers, editorials, and stories (text and image), selecting content that either treats the question of religion directly or relates to a theme that helps understand the identity and the editorial line of the publication. Other primary sources included the autobiographies of the founders of the publication, François Cavanna and Georges Bernier, and a biography by Philippe Val.[[135]](#footnote-136) The latter published three autobiographies *Les Ritals* (1978), *Les Russkoffs* (1979)*,* *Bête et méchant* (1981), and *Lune de Miel* (2010) wherein he provided insight unto his childhood, heritage, experience of the war, and career centring on the launches of *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo*. Philippe Val published his autobiographical homage to *Charlie Hebdo* after the January attack – chapter 3 will detail the conflicts, the betrayals, and the factions that happened between Cavanna and Georges Bernier, Val and Cavanna, and Val and Siné. All the above-mentioned memoirs are highly subjective, showing how two different generations in *Charlie* tried to write and rewrite the history of the magazine from a very personal perspective, where stories are retold, and historical errors are rectified. My approach to using them values the testimonial side more than the historical facts.

The memoirs and autobiographies are consolidated by interviews available online and in print with some of the members of *Charlie Hebdo*, including Cabu, Wolinski, Willem, Charb, Luz, Siné, and Reiser. Two films celebrating the legacy of *Charlie Hebdo* were also consulted as they offered important live testimonies: *Choron Dernière* (2006), directed by Pieere Carles and Eric Martin, celebrates the work of Georges Bernier, alias Choron, also known as Professeur Choron. *Cavanna, Jusqu’a l’ultime seconde, j’écrairai* (2015), directed by Denis Robert and Nina Robert, celebrates the life and work of François Cavanna, and includes testimonies by other journalists for the publication.

The literature on the history of *Charlie Hebdo* before the attack is quite limited and most of it is either nostalgic or celebratory of the spirit and the people behind the publications. Denis Robert’s *Mohicans* (2015) was published after the attack to comment on the media attention given to the second generation of the magazine, specifically its editor from 1992 to 2009, Philippe Val, and criticized how the latter hijacked the narrative around the legacy of the paper.[[136]](#footnote-137) Robert’s counter-discourse retaliates against the official story and retells the history of *Charlie Hebdo* by stressing the vital role of Cavanna and Choron in creating and curating the *Hara Kiri*/*Charlie Hebdo* enterprise and in reshaping the satirical press in France. Stéphane Mazurier’s *Bête et Méchant et Hebdomadaire, Une histoire de Charlie Hebdo (1969-1982)* was published in 2009 and constitues the only historical account of *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo* for the period under Cavanna and Choron’s editorship. The monograph offers very little source analysis but it provides important biographical details on the composition of the publication, the dynamics between the contributors, the most important dates related to censorship, who joined and who left, when and why.[[137]](#footnote-138) It also discusses major themes and gender dynamics in the publication. Overall, the tone of the book is dedicatory to Cavanna and the publication as a whole, but it does so while staying focused on evidence, making it an important reference in this thesis. Two biographies have been published about the *dessinateur* Reiser who joined *Hara Kiri* in 1960 and remained a core contributor until his death in 1983: Yves Fremion’s *Reiser* published in 1974 and Jean Marc Parisis’s *Reiser* published in 1993.[[138]](#footnote-139) Fremion’s account focused on the artistic and technical side of Reiser’s skills as a *dessinateur*, his anarchist vision, his dark humour, and a certain sense of ‘cruelty’ in his style, calling him ‘one of the most important moments in the history of graphism’.[[139]](#footnote-140) Parisis’s account traced the journey of Reiser in *Hara Kiri*, *Charlie Hebdo*, and the world of *bande dessinée*, and offered valuable details about his relationship with Cavanna and his fellow *dessinateurs* as well as the evolution of his politics before and after May 1968. The book contains interviews with Reiser, Wolinski, Cabu, Choron, and Delfeil de Ton, which include valuable commentary on the changes that happened in French society during the 1970s, and which uncovers relevant information about the contact that took place between *Charlie Hebdo* and the Movement de Libération des Femmes.

*Le Canard Enchainé*’s journalist, Jean Egen, published *La Bande à Charlie* in 1976, a literary account of the history of *Hara Kiri*.[[140]](#footnote-141) Being a friend of Cavanna, Egen’s work was approached with caution and used only to provide reference on the reception of *Hara Kiri* in the press scene in France, and society as a whole. However, Numa Sadoul’s *Dessinateurs de presse* published in 2014 contains a series of interviews with five members of *Charlie Hebdo*.[[141]](#footnote-142) The book sketches the profiles of these *dessinateurs* and provides information about their social backgrounds, their political views, and their role and self-image in the profession of journalism as well as comparisons with experiences working for other newspapers. Finally, Jane Weston Vauclair published two academic articles on *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo*, as well as a co-authored book after the January attack based on research done as part of a PhD thesis completed in 2009.[[142]](#footnote-143) Weston Vauclair’s book provides a detailed non-specialist summary of the history of *Charlie Hebdo* since its inception in 1970 up to the Paris attack while looking at the clash between editors and the factions inside the magazine. The monograph also discusses the question of ‘conviction’ versus ‘responsibility’ in *Charlie*’s practice of free speech. The book argues that, contrary to common belief in the leftist and multicultural English-speaking world, *Charlie Hebdo* cannot be described as articulating anti-Muslim prejudice because a quantitative study shows that only two per cent of the covers in the magazine are about Islam while the dominant editorial line is anti-racist, anti-Jean-Marie and Marine Le Pen, anticlerical, and overall progressive.

This thesis strongly disagrees with Vauclair and Weston Vauclair’s argument and demonstrates the limits of a quantitative approach to the question of Muslim representation in the magazine. Through looking at the history of *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo* and reading the autobiographies and memoirs of its founders François Cavanna and Georges Bernier, this thesis evaluates *Charlie Hebdo*’s perspective in attacking religion, considering the arguments presented by the magazine vividly, clearly, and fairly. I argue that a close reading of *Charlie Hebdo* uncovers reliable indicators of their anti-Muslim rhetoric. Since the expression of political opinion is not always explicit in the content when it comes to hard news, but is instead evident in the structure and selection of stories and the hierarchy of sources, it is important to look at how opinion and preferred readings were inserted into the stories chosen by the editors of *Charlie Hebdo*. This particularly considers the manner of singling out certain social questions (in this case religion, particularly Islam) and foregrounding them above others as a way of promoting certain political perspectives. The way to identify this is by answering the following questions: what themes are given more space? Whose opinions are valued (even if this means, in the magazine’s context, being subjected to ridicule)? Who is given more direct and privileged coverage? Who, amongst the contributors of *Charlie Hebdo*, is presented as the reliable commentator who reproduces a consensual view of the world as the readers wish to see it? Most importantly, as it will become clearer in Chapter 3, the anti-Muslim prejudice in *Charlie Hebdo* is an essential part of its worldview that is expressed not only through the race question, but also through social and economic questions. In other words, it is more productive to ask what kind of political and social system is *Charlie Hebdo* supporting and promoting in its pages, and what is the place of the powerful, the rich, the poor, and the under-privileged in it.

## A note on the vocabulary of the *dessins de presse* in *Charlie Hebdo*

Within this thesis, certain terms will be used in order to refer to the images used in the analysis as well as the people who drew them. In the specific context of *Charlie Hebdo*, the literature in France refers to ‘political cartoonists’ who work in the press such as Cabu, Reiser, Wolinki, Gébé, Willem, Charb, Luz, Riss, Catherine, Coco as *dessinateurs de presse,* or shortly *dessinateurs*.[[143]](#footnote-144) Neither cartoonists, nor caricaturists, nor journalists are precise enough terms to encapsulate their status and their self-image. The choice of terminology made in this thesis acknowledges the complex nature and history of words such as caricature, *bande dessinée* (also known as Franco-Belgian comics, as seen in Hergé’s Tintin or Goscinny’s Asterix series), cartoon, *dessin* de presse, comic strips etc. Therefore, the word *dessin* will be used to refer to the images produced by the *dessinateurs*. Historian of the French press Christian Delporte surveyed the transformations that happened in the profession of *dessinateurs* de press over the course of the twentieth century, and observed that the *dessinateur* used to self-define as artist in the early twentieth century, for he estimated his journalistic contributions as only accessories to his art, and he had almost a contemptuous look at the activity.[[144]](#footnote-145) The interwar period, however, was marked by a crisis for journalism; journalists for the first time started to organize around a trade union in 1922, and by 1935 they were granted a professional status, followed by a professional journalist ID card in 1936.[[145]](#footnote-146) Delporte observed that during the Belle Epoque, *dessinateurs* used to self-define as ‘humoristes’ breaking up with the caricaturist label, and choosing humour over grotesque portraits.[[146]](#footnote-147) By the postwar period, the press scene had definitively admitted the profession of *dessinateurs* de press as a profession of journalism having the same rights as journalists. Furthermore, they even formed their own union in 1935 to defend ‘the double specificity of the *dessinateur*, that of creator and of journalist’. Their main demand was to obtain copyrights. Delporte concluded that as of then, *dessinateurs* identify voluntarily more as journalist writers than as monmartrois aritists of the Belle Epoque.[[147]](#footnote-148) Reiser did testify: ‘for me the *dessin* is a form of journalism. To play the artist does not do it for me. My exposure is on the pages of the magazine. A *dessin* is just a matrix, its only destiny is to be reproduced in thousands of copies’.[[148]](#footnote-149) Therefore, the use of the word dessinateurs throughout the thesis helps delineate their combined roles of both journalists and political illustrators.

## Thesis Synopsis

The first chapter will focus on *Hara Kiri*’s texts and images, looking at the covers, editorials, and selected stories in order to identify and explore the journal’s dominant themes. A large proportion of the primary literature consulted in this chapter examines the founding editors and contributors of the publication and their social and political backgrounds and interests. The chapter identifies their motivations amid the state of the publishing market in the 1950s and 1960s with reference to censorship restrictions. Furthermore, this chapter provides a detailed analysis of primary sources to identify the different themes and interests of the publication. While keeping the main research question of the thesis in mind, images of sexually explicit and grotesque content are explored in relation to the overarching amoral spirit of the paper, particularly its anticlerical agenda. Throughout, the chapter will reflect on the cultural transformation of French society and the profound socio-political transformations of the post-war *Trente Glorieuses* – the period of great economic growth between 1945 to 1975 – to see how *Hara Kiri* fitted into the broader cultural production of the 1950s and 1960s.

The second chapter will look at the launch of *L’Hebdo Hara-Kiri* (the weekly supplement to *Hara Kiri* launched in 1969), and then *Charlie Hebdo* (launched in 1970). The foundation of *L’Hebdo* *Hara-Kiri* demands critical attention, and so the chapter delineates who founded it, what their intentions and interests were, the logistics, the team dynamics, the wider political and cultural context of May 1968 and its aftermath, as well as the state of the publishing market at the time. As Cavanna aspired to make a newspaper that dispensed with daily news and transcended politics, it will be also worthwhile to analyse the themes of the publication, its definition of humour, its ideals, and the structure of the team of writers and cartoonists involved and how they presented their ideas. As a publication that protested against capitalism, consumerism, and Gaullism, it will be crucial to scrutinize how the magazine reflected the cultural transformation of French society and the profound socio-political implications of the post-de Gaulle new era: how did *Charlie Hebdo* fit into the political, cultural, and ethical changes in French society? The chapter will first trace the genesis of *Charlie Hebdo* to see how it served to channel the aspirations, interests, and politics of its very individualistic members. It will then draw the profiles of its most emblematic *dessinateurs*.

The third chapter starts with an analysis of *Charlie Hebdo*’s terms of relaunch under the new editorship of Philippe Val in 1992. The work will also examine the symbolic struggle over intellectual property that erupted between the founders François Cavanna and Georges Bernier. Through reading memoirs and correspondences between the old and new cohorts of the magazine workers, it is important to identify what place in the French press *Charlie Hebdo* came back to claim. The chapter then examine the resurrected newspaper’s themes and politics and expose any differences or similarities with the original publication. The analysis will concern the ban on the veil in 1994 and 2004, 9/11, the 2005 riots, and the 2007 trial that pitted *Charlie Hebdo* against the Grand Mosque of Paris and other representatives of the Muslim minority in relation to the publication of the Danish cartoons. My analysis of Islam in France is premised on the inference that French Muslims are predominantly North African Arabs and former colonial subjects, many of them second- and third-generation migrants. The chapter will then look at the *Affaire Siné* which involved Philippe Val and the cartoonist Siné over questions of anti-Semitism and freedom of speech. This will precipitate an exploration of questions as to why Jews were seen as a community that holds to their religion and culture and yet are accepted in society and looked at as French, whereas North African immigrants have been rejected because of their religion, Islam. Why is anti-Semitism taboo while anti-Islamic sentiment is emblematic of freedom of speech? The controversy over these issues will be discussed beyond the reductionist terms used to debate French Republican ideology, particularly in its principles of universalism and *laïcité*.

The fourth and last chapter focuses on the era when Charb acted as the magazine’s editor-in-chief, from 2009 to January 2015. During this short period, *Charlie Hebdo* intensified its attack on religion, especially Islam. Analysis is conducted through a textual and contextual survey of the news stories chosen by *Charlie Hebdo*, with focus on both images since they were most controversial, and Charb’s editorials since they were the hardest to make sense of. The chapter explores how the newspaper framed and explained its fixation on Islam. This will lead to an unpicking of the core principles of the Republic: what *laïcité* really is and how it has become a devotion and raison d’être for the magazine, displayed in the application of anti-clerical methods to the critique of Islam.

# Chapter 1: The Rise and Fall of *Hara Kiri* (1960-1985)

## Introduction

*Hara Kiri* was created in September 1960 by François Cavanna and Georges Bernier. They had met at *Zéro*, a monthly satirical newspaper, in 1954, where Cavanna was editor-in-chief and Bernier was the sales manager. Joined by Fred, a *dessinateur* ex-member of *Zéro*, they felt frustrated by the restrictions of a low-profile small-scale monthly appearance in *Zéro*, and decided to launch a ‘quality’ publication that reflected their own definition of humour or, as Cavanna put it, ‘a monthly humour magazine which is strictly devoted to quality [...] for readers who demand quality’.[[149]](#footnote-150)

A significant impact of the *Trente Glorieuses* on culture was the emergence of a plethora of mass circulation magazines and newspapers in the 1950s and 1960s.[[150]](#footnote-151) *Elle* (founded in 1945) had become France’s leading lifestyle magazine by the 1950s.[[151]](#footnote-152) The period was also marked by the predominance of the conservative weekly magazine *Paris Match* (launched in 1949), which relied on photography for its coverage of French and international celebrity lifestyle, and whose circulation numbers were estimated at 1.5 million copies per week in 1961.[[152]](#footnote-153) However, *Hara Kiri* belonged to a quite restricted genre of satirical press appreciated by a niche readership. In fact, art historian Michel Ragon points out:

From 1881 to 1914, satirical reviews multiplied: *La Caricature* in 1880, *Le Rire* in 1894, *L’Assiette au beurre* in 1900. The violence, illustrated in the graphics as well as the expression, made that period the golden age of caricature. We had to wait until the 1960s and 1970s for caricature to recover its vigour, its contesting power of the years called la Belle Époque. From *l’Assiette au beurre* to *Hara-Kiri* to *Charlie Hebdo*, the spirit is the same, superbly recovered after a rather faded intermission of 50 years.[[153]](#footnote-154)

Ragon clearly situates *Hara Kiri* within the well-established French satirical tradition of caricature, which enjoyed significant success in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.[[154]](#footnote-155) This is a common analogy made by critics and media alike based on the idea that *Hara Kiri* belongs to the genre of the satirical press. The singularity of *Hara Kiri* however resides in the fact that it incorporated the post-war style of *bande dessinée*,with the more traditional and classic style of caricature. Indeed, in a televised interview from 1982, Cavanna responded to a recurrent comment that tended to compare *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo* to *L’Assiette au Beurre* (a weekly satirical magazine of anarchist bent, which ran from 1901-1912). He said: ‘don’t bring up *Le Rire* and *L’Assiette au Beurre*,try to read it and you will see, it’s sad, it’s stupid, and it’s ugly, sometimes it’s well-drawn’.[[155]](#footnote-156) Additionally, in Cavanna’s autobiography *Bête et méchant* nothing indicates that he was inspired by publications such as *l’Assiette au Beurre,* in spite of using clips of it in some of the features in *Hara Kiri*. Cavanna mentioned he was fascinated by the American *Mad* magazine, but this appears to be its medium of humour rather than its aesthetic style. Also, Wolinski deprecated the classic *bande dessinée* character of Tintin in a series of parodical strips titled ‘Tintin pour les dames’ where the protagonist is involved in salacious activities of heavy drinking, cigarettes smoking, and wreaking havoc.[[156]](#footnote-157)

The first cover of *Hara Kiri*, designed by Fred, featured a drawing of a samurai practising the ritual of Japanese suicide, a man’s head with a smirky smile protruding from his belly. The disembowelment evoked in both the cover and the name of the paper was reinforced by Cavanna’s editorial manifesto that ran over three issues. It described the state of the press at the time, according to Cavanna, and how this presented material that was mediocre to a public he dismissed as ‘the herd’: ‘We craft at leisure the opinion of this herd with a meticulous planning [...] That’s the caricature of public opinion that is fabricated by the merchants of newspapers’.[[157]](#footnote-158) There is however no historical record of Cavanna commenting on his choice of the Japanese ritual as a title, and Fred’s choice of the Samurai as first and second covers. But it is worth mentioning that the logo that was kept for over 20 years to represent Hara Kiri’s journalistic trademark is the picture of a laughing Asian man. It is not clear either whether this choice holds any political significance, whether Cavanna and his team reflected on the possible interpretation of the visual as a racist or stereotypical imagery. The magazine’s anti-military editorial line did focus on the Vietnam and the Indochina wars on many occasions, and Bernier’s deployment in different Asian bases did leave a permanent trauma on him, which may or may not have reflected in his journalistic style. In our contemporary standards, using the image would definitely be perceived racist.

From the very first issue, Cavanna aimed to set his publication apart from, and above, the mainstream newspapers of the time. Set against the consumerist mass media and its audience, journalism, he believed, should be an ‘ascetic mission’ for those who practised it, and it should aim at elevating their readers’ intellectual level as well as transcending material profit:

What would be a man’s concern in making a newspaper, if he does not have an ascetic conception of his mission, he would quickly become nothing more than a merchant of print paper, for whom only sales numbers matter. Why would he look for elevating the intellectual level of his reader, why would he teach to soundly judge events, to think soundly. [[158]](#footnote-159)

Even though there was no tabloid tradition in France akin to the one in Britain, Cavanna still identified and berated a mainstream readership, and at its centre ‘le français moyen’,[[159]](#footnote-160) who could be easily manipulated by a press that commanded them to be chauvinistic and nationalist one day, and progressive the next, all according to its political agenda. He castigated public opinion as malleable and rarely immune to what he called ‘the merchants of toilet paper’, namely editors. Clearly, Cavanna stressed his determination to make *Hara Kiri* a serious journalistic effort. The editorial manifesto took pride in the countervailing discourse of the young contributors, who were portrayed as the ‘real youth’, dismissing the recent cultural movements that emerged in the 1950s such as ‘the new wave’, and ‘the new look’. He boasted: ‘We are the young men who want our place in the sun. We are hungry and we are ambitious. NOBODY OWNS US, AND WE DON’T BELONG TO ANYONE [capitalization in original]’.[[160]](#footnote-161)

So, from in the first issue of *Hara Kiri,* Cavanna expressed a disparaging view of the established press and the contemporaneous cultural reality, and he made strong vows to provide novelty in terms of content as well as style. In this manifesto, he enumerated many of the themes that were relentlessly fed to the public by the press, and which were not of any interest to *Hara Kiri.* These all centred on the type of material presented in fashion and celebrity magazines.[[161]](#footnote-162) It is thus no surprise that publications such as *Elle* and *Paris Match* were recurrent targets for mockery and ridicule by *Hara Kiri*. The credit page of the first issue listed Georges Bernier as the publishing director, Cavanna as the editor-in-chief, and Fred as the artistic director, and had a print run of 10,000 copies, all distributed in Paris.[[162]](#footnote-163) In December 1960, for its third issue, the magazine started to sell in kiosks. If the two first issues ‘passed completely unnoticed’ according to Bernier,[[163]](#footnote-164) *Hara Kiri*’s sales increased noticeably afterwards, although the statistics vary according to different sources.[[164]](#footnote-165) Bernier claimed that the first months were very difficult, and that during this period *Hara Kiri* was merely surviving.[[165]](#footnote-166)

The term *bête et méchant* (stupid and mean) was first coined to label *Hara Kiri*’s satirical ethos in 1961 after a letter by a reader named Victor de Blancpré was published in issue number 7 (April 1961) saying: ‘Never have I read such a heap of insanities and foolishness. It’s disgraceful! I’m suffocated with indignation. You disgraced the French press. You must be thinking you are very smart? Oh well, let me tell you that you are actually stupid and mean’.[[166]](#footnote-167) The reader’s expression of distaste for the paper’s vulgar and puerile humour was derided, twisted, and appropriated by Cavanna to describe his own paper by adding the expression *bête et méchant* as a permanent subtitle from issue 7 onwards, and later he used the phrase as the title for his autobiography. *Bête et méchant* humour subsequently became directly associated with *Hara Kiri* and then *Charlie Hebdo* so as to distinguish Cavanna’s vision of the comedic.

The 60-page magazine was predominantly graphic and contained single-panelled loose cartoons, *bandes* *dessinées*, photomontage, short pieces of humorous prose, and advertisement parodies in text and images. The title *Hara Kiri* was also Cavanna’s choice, on the grounds that it sounded different and violent.[[167]](#footnote-168) Short and shocking, the title aimed at articulating the above-mentioned fierce ambition to radically change the genre of journalism. Cavanna shouldered the heaviest burden in filling the textual gap. During the first year, 1961, he micromanaged the whole publication on his own, including the pagination and design, as most of the contributors he recruited were young cartoonists and caricaturists with little journalistic experience. As the main editorialist, his features were primarily textual, but he also introduced a column, *L’aurore de l’humanité* [the dawn of humanity], where he infiltrated his own *dessins*. [[168]](#footnote-169) Cavanna influenced the idiom, style, layout, and format that made up the magazine’s identity. His features were narrative and somewhat lyrical, while the combination of text and image helped add a literary aspect. Cavanna’s expansive and eclectic style also affected how he managed the contributors in the sense that he gave them total freedom to pursue whatever interests and styles they desired. He claimed in his autobiography that the contributors were granted total liberty, and that no instructions were given:

Each one was a master of his own pages. This resulted in a magazine made of as many magazines as there were authors. A sort of bulletin board. No instructions, not even a concertation before the printing. Each person chooses their own topics. We had, at some point, a project of devoting every issue to a specific theme with every contributor treating one aspect of the general theme, then we all worked on the general theme together in meetings, and we would thus have shared pages. There was an issue on snobs, another on hunger, and another on occults (paranormal). It did not last. Individualistic like hermit crabs we were.[[169]](#footnote-170)

This experimental approach to journalism led by Cavanna allowed for the integration of members – such as Bernier – who were not originally among the contributors. Bernier was tempted by the paper’s innovative, experimental, and hybrid style and form, and decided to get involved in the production process circa 1963. He adopted a press name – Professeur Choron – and started to invest in the editing by creating and participating in the fake ads, the photomontages, writing text and featuring in the photo stories. Nevertheless, Choron’s editorial participation did not distract him from his position as sales manager, a post he held until *Hara Kiri*’s discontinuation in 1985.[[170]](#footnote-171) Even though from September 1960 to September 1963 the covers consisted of colourful caricature-based artwork signed by Fred, they shifted to photography for the rest of the publication’s existence until 1985. A close reading of the covers as well as the content shows an evolution of its material and style, which was in part the result of Fred leaving the team in 1963, and Choron taking over the production of the covers and the introduction of new features. Choron’s columns consisted mainly of photo strips following the style of *bande dessin*ée and comic strips. The columns relied heavily on sexually explicit material and female artists borrowed from the burlesque scene – Le Crazy Horse de Paris – to pose and perform for Choron’s stories. As the analysis below will show, *Hara Kiri* covers were particularly vulgar. Good taste was undermined. Cavanna recalled in his autobiography:

Something happened. The baby *Hara Kiri*, like Gargantua in the cradle, started to break out of its clothes and cradle, and break the walls. The colossal infant is born out of us, barely born, runs faster than us […] This total freedom that we claim without really knowing where it’s going to take us, we burn it like pure oxygen. We dared to use it, we were aware of our tags and shackles falling down.[[171]](#footnote-172)

The editor-in-chief revealed that his paper, through the joint effort of its eager contributors who often shared a similar taste in humour, exceeded the expectations of its own creators. On many occasions, the shocking sexually explicit and amoral tone of the imagery published in *Hara* *Kiri* offended both Catholic and Gaullist French moral principles. On two occasions, this resulted in government censorship for ‘obscenity’ under the July 1949 Law for the Protection of Youth Morality. A ministerial order, on 18 July 1961, after the publication of issue number 5, banned the display of *Hara Kiri* in kiosks, and classified the paper as a ‘publication dangerous for children and youth, almost pornographic and sadistic’.[[172]](#footnote-173) Cavanna and Choron contested the decision by seeking further explanations from the Ministries of Interior Affairs and Justice who condemned *Hara Kiri*’s ‘vulgarity’, and blamed its founders for their own self-proclaimed identity of producing a journal that was *bête et méchant*, a phrase the editors had taken as their own. In his autobiography, *Bête et Méchant*, Cavanna described the uncomfortable feeling of having to explain the often misunderstood metaphor: ‘we proclaimed our paper to be *bête et méchant* out of derision, and out of disappointment of seeing idiocy and pettiness ruling everywhere under the cover of intelligence, good taste, dignity, love, and kindness … because we are furious’.[[173]](#footnote-174) The Youth Publications’ Censorship Board mentioned in its banning letter that *Hara Kiri* was ‘an excessively pernicious moral threat’.[[174]](#footnote-175) Therefore, in order to appease the authorities and survive, *Hara Kiri* had to slow down its *bête et méchant* velocity. The director of the cabinet of the Ministry of Youth and Sports alerted the Censorship Commission in a note that said, ‘the regular reading of such a paper by the youth could in the long run undermine their fundamental values of society, love, nation, and religion’.[[175]](#footnote-176) When interrogated, Cavanna and Choron were advised to get rid of two of their *dessinateurs* – Fred and Topor – who were judged incomprehensible by the Censorship commission.[[176]](#footnote-177) The well-known artist Jean Cocteau, when asked about the ban on *Hara Kiri*, stated that the magazine’s contributors lacked the good taste to know when they had gone too far.[[177]](#footnote-178) For six months in 1961, Cavanna produced a paper aimed solely at convincing the Censorship Commission Board that they were following the rules, as a ban meant death for the paper. They had to send a redacted sketch to the Censorship Commission Board before publication. If the commission were satisfied, the sketch would go for printing. In November and December 1961, policed and emptied of all explicit content, issues 12 and 13 were printed and sent to the Commission before distribution.[[178]](#footnote-179) The ban was finally lifted in time for issue 14, on 7 February 1962.

The 1949 law, which was actually drafted under the Vichy regime in 1940 as the Family Protection Decree, was reinforced by other prescriptive legislation against the publication of erotic literature up until the mid-1970s. Some of this legislation did not even require the vote of the National Assembly and was passed as an *ordonnance* that prohibited the display of any publication that is ‘licentious, pornographic, or violent in nature’.[[179]](#footnote-180) As a result:

Between 1958 and 1967, a hundred or so books were banned, and in 1966, both *Le* *Figaro* and *Le Nouvel Observateur* ran into legal difficulties after running advertisements for books subject to proscription.[[180]](#footnote-181)

Indeed, another ban more destructive in its impact fell on *Hara Kiri* in 1966 at a time when the magazine was already struggling financially despite good circulation figures.[[181]](#footnote-182) Fred and Topor had left in 1963 and 1965 due to problems in getting paid. Cavanna argued that the magazine could not make a profit because it did not support any advertising or promotional revenues. The second ban came directly from the Ministry of Interior Affairs, and Choron claimed it was instigated by the first lady, Yvonne de Gaulle, an idea that was reiterated by historian Stéphane Mazurier.[[182]](#footnote-183) Choron believed that the first lady did not appreciate *bête et méchant* humour: ‘For me, de Gaulle was the symbol of censorship. He cut the balls of the paper. He was the one behind the first and the second bans … before that *Hara Kiri* was selling more than 200,000 copies per month’.[[183]](#footnote-184) Though ignored by the press, the ban brought the attention of and support from famous writers such as Jean Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Edgar Morin, and Louis Aragon. Jane Weston Vauclair observed that ‘such endorsement illustrated the capacity of *bête et méchant* humour in *Hara Kiri* to resonate with prominent left-wing French intellectuals’.[[184]](#footnote-185) The ban was not lifted until January 1967 but already aggravated the financial situation and forced the magazine to move offices. Cavanna admitted that they were ‘shamefacedly expelled from Rue Choron because of who knows how many unpaid bills’.[[185]](#footnote-186)

*Hara Kiri*’s provocative amoral tone was part of a larger movement in which society was opening up to a new moral diversity.[[186]](#footnote-187) In cinema, as well as in music and literature, the cultural productions of the time were full of audacious material. To name but a few, Serges Gainsbourg wrote *les sucettes* in 1966 for singer France Gall, a song that was deemed too explicit to be broadcast on national TV. In 1969, Gainsbourg produced another highly suggestive and erotic song, *Je t’aime…moi non plus!* which was thought offensive by the authorities, and banned in many European countries as well as the Vatican.[[187]](#footnote-188) The 1960s was also a time where cinema became more ‘adult’ and ‘dirty’, and where Brigitte Bardot and Roger Vadim laid the ground and pushed the boundaries of sexual representation when they created, in 1956, the classic *Et Dieu… créa la femme*.[[188]](#footnote-189) Louis Malle had also made *Les Amants* in 1958, a succès de scandale that was taken to court in the United States for its ‘obscene’ scenes. Another succès de scandale was Françoise Sagan’s first novel at the age of 18, *Bonjour Tristesse*, published in 1954, which portrayed the ‘amoral’ life of a sexually independent 17-year-old girl. These are just a few examples to attest to the French cultural revolution in the 1950s and 1960s.

This is the context in which circulation numbers for *Hara Kiri* reached 250,000 in 1965-1966 according to Mazurier, while Cavanna claimed that they reached 250,000 for the period between 1962 and 1966, just up to the second ban. In an attempt to make profits and get more exposure, Choron launched the book Series *Bête et Méchante 4 Rue Choron*, which included albums and articles by Cavanna, Topor, Gébé, Berck, and Wolinski. Choron used his marketing skills in the hope of increasing the exposure of the newspaper by making mutual publicity agreements with Jean Christophe Averty, a television and radio director who founded his reputation on his eccentric taste for television material deemed ‘anachronistically surrealist’.[[189]](#footnote-190) *Hara Kiri* got publicity through Averty’s very controversial show *Les raisins verts* which ran in 1963 and divided viewers due to its iconoclastic and provocative humour. Choron used this platform to promote his publication while using the catchy phrase: ‘Buy *Hara Kiri*, journal *bête et méchant*, otherwise, steal it’. It is noteworthy that at that time there was only one TV station in France, so in the wider scheme of things, the publicity *Hara Kiri* got through *Les raisins verts* should be considered very important, particularly as the show earned a very prestigious award – la Rose d’Or – for best variety show in 1964.[[190]](#footnote-191) However, according to its editors *Hara Kiri* never recovered from the 1966 ban, in the sense that it lost its momentum. Finding itself overshadowed by the launch of *Charlie Hebdo* as a weekly production in addition to Choron’s reported bad financial management, the *Hara Kiri* adventure ended in December 1985.

## François Cavanna and his sense of humour

Cavanna was born in Paris in 1923 to a working-class Italian immigrant family.[[191]](#footnote-192) He left school at the age of 14, and tried different jobs before entering journalism first through cartooning, then through writing and editing. In *Bête et Méchant* (1981), Cavanna went into great details in describing how different *Hara Kiri* was in comparison to other newspapers available in the press scene. The terms he used to describe *Hara Kiri* were ‘more beautiful than the others’, ‘inaccessible’, ‘unthinkable’, and a ‘crazy dream’.[[192]](#footnote-193) Cavanna anticipated that the reader would find this attitude ‘elitist’ and ‘pretentious’, to which he replied that he would not yield to such moral criticism, and added that all morality is religious morality, and for that exact reason it should be dismissed.[[193]](#footnote-194) He described as frustrating his experience working with other publications, because there the material he produced was criticized for being not ‘servile enough’, and not ‘Parisian enough’ – in other words, not intellectually bourgeois enough.[[194]](#footnote-195) Placing his work within the broad spectrum of non-conformist alternative cultures, Cavanna admitted that he was expecting society to reject the new magazine the way it had always dismissed outsiders as ‘absurd’, ‘complex’, ‘avant-garde’, ‘anarchist’, ‘rude’, ‘brutal’, ‘vulgar’, ‘b*ête*’, and ‘*méchant*’.[[195]](#footnote-196)

Cavanna seemed to have more an idea of what *Hara Kiri* should *not* be than what it should. He wanted a tenacious humour magazine, comparable to the quality of *Mad* magazine in America, but nothing like *Haute Société* in France (which was launched in June 1960), because *Haute Société* was allegedly made by ‘conceited intellectuals’, offered a ‘chic’ humour, and was made by elitists for elitists.[[196]](#footnote-197) He argued that if he thought his magazine was good, then readers would also think it was good. He believed that a readership that would appreciate the material he intended to provide was one in the image of himself: ‘simply not stupid’.[[197]](#footnote-198) This imagined readership did not belong to any particular social or cultural group but was rather scattered equally amongst intellectuals and the poor.

Cavanna portrayed the new magazine as a project that belonged to him and his team, something that they had unlimited liberty to use however they liked, provided their work was ‘good’. To be precise, it was ‘good’ according to his own standards and taste: ‘We are the judges’, he declared.[[198]](#footnote-199) In a televised interview filmed in the offices of *Hara Kiri*, when Wolinski, one of the main cartoonists of the magazine, was asked about how the decision of what is publishable was made, he replied that their first audience was the editorial team; if they managed to make each other laugh, they would be able to make their readers laugh: ‘the first audience that we get to impress is us here, if we manage to provoke laughter at this table [pointing at workbench in the offices of *Hara Kiri*] we think we’ll be able to provoke laughter outside of here’.[[199]](#footnote-200)

This self-image of the humourist resonates with more recent theories of humour which have put forward the idea that ‘the joke acts as a boundary-marking exercise; it included and it excluded’.[[200]](#footnote-201) Caranna repeatedly and at different points in the history of *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo* asserted that he did not aim his humorous discourse at ‘le grand public’; instead he discerned one particular group which was going to be more receptive than the others. This attitude is a good example of the concept of ‘affectual geographies of humour’ which postulates that humour often uncovers certain beliefs about the social standards of certain people, and can thus be illustrative of who is designated ‘in place’ and who is ‘out of place’.[[201]](#footnote-202) Some theorists of humour, such as Noel Carroll, studied the complex nature of comic amusement and observed that it is essentially an emotion.[[202]](#footnote-203) Humour creates communities of laughter that are bonded by their appreciation of a certain type of humour. The bonds created help humour flourish. And this could explain why certain humour discourses are popular at certain times within certain groups. As a result, particular communities of laughter are constructed upon differences and sometimes upon antagonisms.[[203]](#footnote-204)

The challenge with such theories of humour is that the proposition that jokes are an in-group activity that can only work within the group can be taken by certain humourists to justify and lift the blame off their use of disparaging jokes, on the grounds that outsiders ‘simply don’t get it’. This idea is further consolidated by a notion that is embedded, though contested, in French society: the notion of exceptionalism, which has been revived recently when discussing the *Charlie Hebdo* controversial cartoons. This is the idea that France’s culture is unique, and that its uniqueness needs to be preserved, is used to protect a certain French self-image. For example, French historian Alain Vaillant studied laughter and humour from a French social and cultural perspective, arguing that ‘aggressive laughter’ is a typically French tradition, and part of French identity. He argues that the purpose of humour is to make people laugh, and that is how it should be assessed: ‘the essence of humour is to provoke laughter, it’s according to this function that it should be judged. It does not make sense to ask ‘is such or such cartoon in *Charlie Hebdo* good? If it provokes laughter then it served its function’.[[204]](#footnote-205) In fact, French literature on humour tends to use the word ‘rire’ [laughter] more often than humour or satire. *Le Rire* was the name of a satirical magazine (1894-1971), and Henri Bergson’s book on humour was also titled *Le Rire* (1900), as well as Alain Vaillant’s *La Civilisation du rire* (2016) and *Esthetique du rire* (2014).

Cavanna repeatedly claimed that *Hara Kiri* magazine upheld no editorial line. While embracing a position of subversion and iconoclasm against the socio-political status quo, he maintained that the humour adopted in the magazine had a set goal. Humour for Cavanna meant to say ‘nothing should be taboo. Nothing should be respected’.[[205]](#footnote-206) But, rather than being disrespectful for the sake of it, humour should stimulate a freethinking spirit: ‘not disrespect for the sake of it, not the corrosive at all costs, neither chronic protest, nor unrestrained anger. *Hara Kiri* wants to carry a systematic demolition as well as hit a few targets [...] there should be in our everyday life, a stimulant of freethinking spirit’, he argued.[[206]](#footnote-207)

Yet Cavanna did not talk about freethinking to subscribe to a specific philosophy of reason and rationality. He was instead attempting to distance himself from the tradition and heritage of the *Belle Epoque*, and, when describing what made *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo* stand out amongst other satirical publications past and contemporary, Cavanna defended an element of *derision* in the *bête et méchant* sense of humour that did not exist in other satirical publications.[[207]](#footnote-208) Derision is defined as an attitude of humour that harvests contempt: ‘There exists in derision a critical dimension which is not entirely that of humorous detachment, in the sense that in using derision we are trying to make someone or something insignificant’.[[208]](#footnote-209) From this particular standpoint, derision acts as a psychotic expression employed to neutralize the other through disdain and humiliation.[[209]](#footnote-210) Derision can become an instrument of social judgement, emotional release, and aggression.[[210]](#footnote-211) Regarding emotional release, the theory of superiority, which is rightfully called Theory of Disparagement and focuses mainly on mockery, sets out the argument that laughter results from derogation and demeaning others. Extending this idea, it could be contested that Cavanna’s own professional experience with previous satirical publications and as a freelance cartoonist influenced his stylistic and discursive choices and served as an outlet for his ideological frustrations. Having worked in *bandes* *dessinées* destined for children, he firmly criticized the purification of the medium in Gaullist France:

It was a time for virtue, purity, and regeneration. Above all, it was ‘vulgarity’ that was hunted down [...] Cartooning for very small children did not satisfy my profane appetites. I craved great, vengeful sneering laughter, I had no outlet for my ferocities [...] I wanted to be Rabelais, I wanted to be Ubu, and the only thing I was given to do was to keep young children smiling.[[211]](#footnote-212)

He therefore used *Hara Kiri* to channel his frustration with the repression of post-war moral austerity imposed on literary and journalistic production. Cavanna’s choice of disparaging humour did not ensure successful reception. *Hara Kiri* was thus afflicted by an antagonistic reception from some sections of its readership as well as state censorship. This lack of congruence between the attempt to be humorous and the result of laughter recalls Michael Billig’s notion of ‘unlaughter’.[[212]](#footnote-213) Billig stresses that it is not enough for a joke to be told; it also has to be received and appreciated. He writes of a ‘meta-discourse’ of humour, in the sense that laughter and humour are two parts of an integral process of communication. Jokes are told and commented on in at least two possible ways: laughter or unlaughter. The author rightfully suggests that ‘if laughter is rhetorical, then so is the refusal of audiences to respond with laughter’ to demonstrate that laughter is not a sufficient component of humour, but that there are other dimensions that are still there even if laughter is not achieved. In other terms there are political consequences to jokes, as well as moral and aesthetic ones.[[213]](#footnote-214) Clearly unlaughter requires, at the very least, an appreciation of the role of audiences. Comedy performance (textual as well as visual) requires a response, usually laughter, but at the very least a smile. Cavanna, for example, had a ‘tough crowd’; his audience in the main, were not receptive to his routine, and so the ‘acceptable’ boundaries of his humour were heavily circumscribed.

Furthermore, the idea that humour can be controversial is a reliable indicator that some jokes might provoke a combination of laughter and unlaughter, but this need not be in any way dependent on the quality of the joke itself. Indeed, unlaughter might even be provoked so that the joker can suggest their audience lacks a sense of humour.[[214]](#footnote-215) It is no surprise that when everything failed and the *Hara Kiri* adventure had to be interrupted in 1985, and that of *Charlie Hebdo* in 1981, the cover of *L’Hebdo Hara Kiri* turned against its own readership with ‘Allez vous faire enculer’, which is translated as ‘go fuck yourselves’. This line of enquiry will be of paramount importance once we explore *Charlie Hebdo*’s argument that Muslims do not have a sense of humour. Blaming the audience and, in particular, the victim for not finding something amusing is especially pointed when humour is directed against marginalized individuals.[[215]](#footnote-216)

To conclude, as a monthly publication, *Hara Kiri* was not particularly interested in current affairs and daily political news; the themes covered were remarkably idiosyncratic and characteristic of the *bête et* *méchant* spirit. In the following sections, the magazine’s themes of anti-consumerism, anticlericalism, nudity, violence, and disgust will be analysed in depth. Other themes such as anti-militarism, the wars in Kurdistan, Vietnam, and the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, torture in prisons, anti-nuclear protests, drugs, alcohol, racism, May 1968, and hunting (and animal rights) occupied a substantial space in the paper as well. More broadly, the dichotomy of left, right, and party politics did not interest the founders of *Hara Kiri*. The following analytical sections will look in depth into four recurrent themes that are picked from a large number of many others because they perfectly display the singularity of the editorial decisions and calculations made by Cavanna and his team, that achieved the establishment of the *bête et méchant* humour.

## Anti-Consumerism

From the first issue of *Hara Kiri* in September 1960, Cavanna’s editorials set out the publication’s philosophy concerning ‘ignorance, lies, futility, injustice and conformism’.[[216]](#footnote-217) The mass production of a consumerist post-war society and the press that allowed it were constant targets of ferocious attack. Cavanna stated:

Today, ignorance is no longer caused by lack of information. It is, on the contrary, the abundance of texts (newspapers and radio) which are inept, deceitful, and futile, and which are drowning twentieth-century man in a night darker than the middle ages. A night a thousand times more dangerous, because it is mistaken for light.[[217]](#footnote-218)

To make his point, the magazine featured a collage of newspaper headlines alongside a commentary lamenting the abundance of such material in one day across the five most representative daily and weekly newspapers in France. From then on, *Hara Kiri* set off attacking all sorts of products and brands. *‘La publicité nous prend pour des cons, la publicité nous rend cons’’*[[218]](#footnote-219)(‘Commercials treat us like idiots, commercials make us idiots’), declared Cavanna.

He insisted that debunking the advertising culture should be ‘a profession of faith of every newspaper, of every media, if it wants to be free’.[[219]](#footnote-220) *Hara Kiri* used to parody advertisement styles by running fictional ads for famous brands[[220]](#footnote-221) such as Lustucru (a pasta), Shell, Bic, Omo, Éclair, Signal, Nestle Crunch, Kiwi, Pierre Cardin,,[[221]](#footnote-222) Colgate,[[222]](#footnote-223) and La Vache qui Rit.[[223]](#footnote-224) Occasionally, *Hara Kiri* designed non-existent food products as parodies of either certain popular brands of French and international products, or of specific genuine advertising campaigns for recognisable brand-name products. According to Cavanna, *Hara Kiri* was cautious and shy[[224]](#footnote-225) in the beginning but when lawsuits started to ‘rain down’, this gave them a greater incentive.[[225]](#footnote-226) The editors were provoked into denigrating what they thought were the desperate manipulations of the marketing industry. ‘This exorbitant praise, this seduction that does not spare anything, these efforts towards humour and eroticism are all pathetic’, declared Cavanna. [[226]](#footnote-227)

The critique of a certain product or brand as envisaged by *Hara Kiri* was not based solely on the idea that consumerism ‘makes people idiots’. The message often extended beyond the marketing to the loaded language and persuasive techniques that, whether consciously or not, influenced consumers through appeal to stereotypes. Perhaps the highest profile case in French advertising is the chocolate-banana milk flavouring labelled *Banania*, which was believed to have reinforced the stereotypical representations of Africans:

For over sixty years, between 1915 and the early 1980s, the Bananiaad campaigns featured a tirailleur sénégalais (a member of the special unit of African infantrymen in the French army) on Banania posters and boxes. The image portrayed was one of a smiling African man wearing the special uniform and hat of the unit (baggy pants and red chechia or fez). It connoted the colonialist values expected of African people : ‘bon enfant, paisible, obéissant, vaillant et généreux dans la bataille.[[227]](#footnote-228)

Indeed, it was the image of the black African, the Senegalese soldier, the obedient and generous with his life, trapped in his negritude, that the *Hara Kiri* authors – and well before them Frantz Fanon in *Black Skins, White Masks* – notice in the face of ‘y a bon banania’. Fanon describes a process of essentialization by which the African man is reduced to his skin colour: ‘The black African, whether he likes it or not, is forced to endorse the uniform that white man made for him’, observed Fanon.[[228]](#footnote-229) *Hara Kiri*’s excoriation of *Banania*’s criticism took many forms. For example, the September 1972 issue featured a black and white photo of an African man wearing a fez, along with the headline: ‘He got old, they threw him on the street’, while the caption says:

After 60 years of good and loyal service, Mr Banania threw his old Negro Yabon out the door, under the pretext that he lost his teeth and that he is no longer able to gnaw on his pâté, so he has been secretly eating banania. Another victim of white capitalism.[[229]](#footnote-230)

The image used depicted the old toothless African man smiling, unaware of the abuse inflicted on him. The parody commented on the exploitation of Africans and colonial subjects by the white capitalist businesses, and this is a good example of how the publication used parody as a double-edged sword, aiming at the medium of advertising as a vehicle for stereotypes and racism.

Cavanna maintained that the contributors in *Hara Kiri* were united by some hatreds – for the army above all – but the most virulent was a loathing of advertising, which he called a ‘rapist bitch’.[[230]](#footnote-231) What is even more important, as his testimony below shows, the advertising parodies brought huge success to the publication:

The ads were very popular and contributed a lot to the success of the magazine. In the beginning, we altered the names of the brands, out of caution, but then, the audacity got us, and we let ourselves go. Many thought that we acted with the consent of the brands, that our jokes were merely tricks of the crooks. The crooks themselves [the brands], after they sued us a few times, ended up understanding that insulting their products could be a new and efficient way to draw attention to them; we started seeing ads, and posters, and films gradually blooming where the brands mocked themselves.[[231]](#footnote-232)

The brands, or ‘charlatans’ according to Cavanna, understood after a while – and after exhausting their legal options through suits – that insulting their products became a good way of drawing attention to them. In the quote above, Cavanna claims that his style helped to start a new fashion whereby brands started to mock themselves in their own posters by employing a self-deprecating humour as a way to increase their sales.

## The anticlerical material in *Hara Kiri*

In 1994, Cavanna published a book entitled *Lettre ouverte aux culs-bénits* addressed to his fellow atheists in which he argued that he could not speak *to* the culs-bénits (a colloquial and pejorative term to describe believers) directly because they were impregnable and blinded by their faith. Therefore, he wanted his letter to be a call to his fellow atheists, agnostics, sceptics, and freethinkers to reunite against a growing threat. He praised reason over faith and argued that religion posed a threat to democracy. He concluded that a climate of intolerance, fanaticism, and theocratic dictatorship was taking over society. This threat came from Muslim extremism, but would soon be followed by other religions, warned Cavanna:

A climate of intolerance, fanaticism, and theocratic dictatorship has been installed and is spreading. Muslim fundamentalism is the core, but other religious extremists are grappling and want to follow the same pattern. Tomorrow, Catholics, Orthodox, and other Christians will establish terror everywhere they dominate. The Jews will do the same in Israel.[[232]](#footnote-233)

Even though anticlericalism in print culture and specifically satirical print culture had been a tradition in France since the nineteenth century, *Hara Kiri*’s approach was innovative, both aesthetically with the use of photography, and thematically in the way it was entangled with a critique of society as a whole and mass culture in particular.[[233]](#footnote-234) *Hara Kiri*’s anticlerical taste was often disseminated through scattered short stories in the form of a single photomontage, or in the form of double-edged parodies targeting the culture of advertisement. One example is an ad for a ready-made soup powder − known as *Royco* in the French market − featuring a picture of the Pope holding a bouquet on the package with the label ‘*pape au cresson*’ (Pope à la water cress).

In addition to the advertisement parodies, *Hara Kiri* channelled its abhorrence for religious belief through parodies of the religious values of chastity and virtue, and by breaking religious taboos around homosexuality. Early in the fourth issue in January 1961, in a cruel satire, Cavanna (signed with his pen name of Sepia) attacked the proscription of homosexuality on the pretext of religious morality. He stated: ‘times have changed! The crime against nature no longer entails death. The prudish England of Queen Victoria, by putting Oscar Wilde in Reading Gaol, made popular both the poet and the prison. Homosexuality had its first martyr’.[[234]](#footnote-235) Sepia (Cavanna) borrowed transnational references as well as French ones such as the novelist André Gide’s homosexuality to raise him to the position of ‘messiah of vice’, adding: ‘The prestige of the immoralist Gide served to ridicule those who are skilled at shapeshifting between genders, sending them off to paddle in the swamps of heresy’.[[235]](#footnote-236) Along with a drawing by Jean Cocteau titled ‘Le mauvais lieu’ from the *Collection Romi* (1923), the article took on the Abrahamic religions wherein Sodom and Gomorrah were used as metaphors for vice, and homosexuality was perceived as deviation. The author rewrote the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, ridiculing the Book of Genesis and concluding: ‘this is how Vice entered history, through the big gate, that of sacred texts’.[[236]](#footnote-237) The article could be read as a grotesque triptych attacking Abrahamic religions, homophobia, and French society’s self-delusion.

The same issue featured a story titled ‘The creation of the world, a super biblical production of Pierre Chabran after the famous novel of Moses’. The story uses a photomontage of random pictures and absurd associations such as Brigitte Bardot as Eve and a bowl of Hygeia as the snake, along with shots from Hollywood movies and news stories. The issue concludes its anti-clerical critique with a story cut from *France-Soir*, brought by the latter’s correspondent in Rome.[[237]](#footnote-238) The story is about a Dominican friar who ‘is devoting his free time to a documented survey of modern dances, scrutinized through the lens of Catholic morality’, in order to attack the Catholic Church’s repression of what could be considered sexually suggestive forms of dancing. In the *France-Soir* piece, the priest classified dances according to their degree of moral danger. Virtuous dances were privileged over vicious ones, with the waltz − ‘a limited contact dance’ − at one end of the spectrum, and voluptuary rumba, samba, and swing at the other, ‘vicious’ end.[[238]](#footnote-239)

Cavanna’s writings reveal an accentuated pessimism, a committed atheism, and a high degree of existentialism. He distilled his loathing of the Catholic Church, and the Pope in particular, into many of his editorials in *Hara Kiri.* In one of his long editorials titled ‘The Pope, does he exist? Shedding light on the most fantastic myth of all time’,[[239]](#footnote-240) Cavanna presented a tongue-in-cheek account of the genesis of the papal myth:

The Santa Claus Trade Unions, eager to reduce their profession’s very long quiet season, invented the Pope. he should wear a uniform that is shimmering, popular, and easily distinguishable (just like Santa’s), but different enough so not to be confused with Santa’s. This is why you never hear of the Pope at Christmas, and you never hear of Santa in January […] another proof is that the Pope knows to do only one thing: stand in the famous papal balcony and wave to people; he is therefore a puppet. We should resist the suppression of the pope under the pretext that it is a puerile, abhorrent myth that distracts children. Children need dreams, and for the rest of us, the Pope is an excellent Santa for a second childhood.[[240]](#footnote-241)

The story closes with a sale of bizarre pontifical gadgets and toys. For the ‘outdated anticlerical’, the author proposes all sorts of eccentric and useless items, such as a special set of cutlery: a ‘mitre shovel’, ‘a clamp for the papal shoes’, ‘a blasphemous ladle’, ‘a fork for the papal bull’, ‘a spoon for vobiscum’, ‘a sieve for holy water that releases the water and keeps the holiness’. This collage collecting random and mundane objects, which are temporal and non-essential, looks surreal in the aesthetic sense. Beyond their surrealism, the collage conveys the idea that the church, its clothes, objects, and symbols are all inconsequential. This way, instead of attacking the church and religion in general because of how powerful it is, Cavanna instead highlights its absurdity. And this is a common technique that he uses both in his fictional or political writing.

Perhaps one of Cavanna’s most illustrative columns in this absurd style was his column *‘*L’Aurore de l’Humanite*’*.[[241]](#footnote-242) Using scientific references and religious parodies, Cavanna revisits the history of humanity and the major stages of the evolution of man, as well as philosophical and theological theories. He creates an elaborate and ludicrous parody of the inventions of all things important and futile: fire, wheel, plough, trousers, and slaves, exploring the consequences of these inventions on man as an absolute master of the world. He goes back to the dawn of humanity and recounts its genesis. For instance, when God created the hand, he was uncertain whom to give it to; man narrowly won out over the octopus! Cavanna describes how, once man invented everything, he needed to ward off everyday life, there came a time of thinking, reflection, and imagination. This is where man excelled himself, as he invented private property, money, cruelty, and war, but also love, poetry, art, and culture. In one of ‘L’Aurore de L’Humanité’ stories, Cavanna dwells on the invention of laughter, and lays down the laws of humour. He observed that humour requires the misery of others, which goes hand in hand with the security of the humourist. These two elements, taken together, trigger and maintain laughter. The type of humour that pretends to laugh out of one’s own misery is a ‘simulacrum’, according to Cavanna. He concludes: *‘the* sense of humour is not given to everyone’.[[242]](#footnote-243) Cavanna’s sources of inspiration and references are often well-known to the reader, but in other cases they are disguised, so that the defining features of the parody he sketches are simplified to the point of absurdity.

Cabu, Wolinski, Reiser, Belotsh, and Gébé attacked the Church in their own ways. Indeed, Cabu’s almost pathological loathing of the Church is one of the most interesting features of his drawings. His demonization of Mary develops along extraordinary but logical lines in his famous ‘Journal de Catherine’ stories. Similarly, Wolinski, whose cartoons were known for their obsession with female sexuality, also contributed to *Hara Kiri*’s anticlerical rhetoric. His large and complex fresco titled ‘I followed the Pope in India without being noticed’[[243]](#footnote-244) constitutes one of his most sustained complex and savage visual attacks on the Pope. Pictorially, it is one of Wolinski’s finest drawings, where every space in the two-page spread neurotically engages with the main scene of the Pope saluting admiring crowds. The fresco was followed by a photo of the Pope and his wife descending the stairs of an Air India plane, with an elaborate and ludicrous mocking caption saying ‘After a victorious trip to India, Mr and Mrs Paul VI returned to their home in Rome’ .[[244]](#footnote-245) Here presidential leaders, royal families, celebrity, and the media that report them are parodied alongside the Church. It is anticlericalism for a consumerist, celebrity-driven culture. This illustrates how far removed this kind of satire was from the *Assiette au Buerre* antecedents where the anticlerical caricature targeted the clergy under the pretext of his morality, his political positions, and his role which was considered socially repressive. *Hara Kiri*’s work was also far removed from the Republican caricature, which throughout the nineteenth century referred to Biblical scenes to attack political opponents, such as Travies’s gravure titled ‘Le Festin de Balthazar’ (1834) attacking King Louis Philippe whose *dossier de chaise* was transformed into a pear. Revisiting a legend from the book of Daniel, the artist presented an eventful feast during which a mysterious hand wrote ‘it won’t last forever’, relating the Republicans’ hope to change the regime.[[245]](#footnote-246)

Besides an attack on consumerism, anticlericalism in *Hara Kiri* was also a vehicle for sexually explicit images rendered even more shocking through the use of photography, channelling a questionable dose of misogyny. A graphic photo featuring a young woman dressed in nun’s clothes, wearing a cross on her chest, holding the bible in one hand and a papal cane in the other, who lifts her dress to show her genitals − which are male. The photo aims at a classic target of anticlerical erotica, the convent institution. The caption says, ‘she changed her sex on the day of her first communion’, next to a newspaper-clipping saying: ‘the scandal of the hormonal hosts’. [[246]](#footnote-247) Images of the Virgin Mary portrayed as hysterical, promiscuous, delinquent, villainous, and even mentally defective were concurrent with a much more extensive use of sexually explicit material that is almost exclusively targeted at women, and not men.

## 1.4 Nudity and violence

To examine the sexually explicit material presented in *Hara Kiri*’s photography requires a discussion of the problems and ambiguities involved in the representation of the female body in satire. That these images of the female body existed and were disseminated through the medium of the satirical press should be studied in relation to the period’s political frameworks and discourses of 1960s in France. Situated between feminism’s first and second waves, and these years were marked by a lack of a homogenous organized feminist movement or a feminist pressure group, or what Sylvie Chaperon called ‘le creux de la vague’.[[247]](#footnote-248)Also, it is worth situating the publication of *Hara Kiri* in a society where contraception was still not legal and women did not have full agency over their bodies.[[248]](#footnote-249) The Neuwirth law which authorized the use of contraceptives was adopted in 1967 and only came into force in 1972 thanks to the efforts of *Mouvement français pour le planning familial*. This movement was created in 1960 with the objective of promoting sexual education, and fighting for the right to contraception and abortion, and birth control in general, all through a feminist perspective.[[249]](#footnote-250) In other words, before 1968, the discourse adopted by a minority of people advocating for women’s control over their own bodies was strikingly limited.[[250]](#footnote-251) In fact, it is interesting to read that Cavanna’s last days in *Zéro* witnessed what he called *soirées-debats* run by the director of the publication Denise Novi and Cavanna himself. The guests who were invited to take part in these debates discussed, according to Cavanna: ‘abortion, birth control, feminism, healers, immigrants, and ecology which was not yet called that … there came prestigious people that I was stunned to see accept the invitation so easily’.[[251]](#footnote-252) Cavanna stated that female members of *Mouvement du planning familial* were present in the meetings as well, and he stressed that themes tackled were chosen by the director because she thought they were avant-garde. Cavanna interjects that they were rather a ‘very-well behaved avant-garde’ [‘avant-garde bien sage’], and that these ‘bourgeois, social elite’ interests were banal and benign.[[252]](#footnote-253) Very soon after, Cavanna left *Zéro* after a disagreement with Denise Novi and, joined by George Bernier, they launched an all-male magazine. To the best of my knowledge, there is no literature on *Zéro* journal except for the details mentioned by Cavanna in his memoirs. Therefore, there is no evidence as to whether Cavanna left *Zéro* because he could not work under the leadership of a woman who seemed determined about her feminist agenda or because he preferred another form of satirical and humorous press. He was certainly uninterested by the topics discussed in *Zéro*.

Throughout much of their history, the creators of comic books have assumed their audiences to be mostly male. Female characters’ and male superheroes’ portrayals revealed indicators as to how the content was targeted towards a predominately male demographic and did not engage with female readers.[[253]](#footnote-254) As early as 1907, Gustave Kahn carried a study of feminism and caricature in France where he described all caricaturists as ‘deep-seated misogynists’. [[254]](#footnote-255) *Hara Kiri* fits within the media backlash against mass consumer culture during the Trente Glorieuses. The editors wanted the magazine to be a critical reaction that exposed and denounced a perverse tendency in advertising culture which relied heavily on the objectification and commodification of women’s bodies, while still indulging in the lurid pleasure of the very culture that it denounced. It is safe to say that *Hara Kiri* used the female body to maximize its male audience, while trying to subvert *Playboy* magazine and its ilk. The challenge of analysing its imagery is the experimental and hybrid style. This hybridity manifests itself not only in the juxtaposition of text and image, but also in the mix of different types of images, combining classic artwork and modern comic art. My approach to analysing these images is a reader’s approach, that is, to identify what is seen and to determine whether it is abstract or representational.[[255]](#footnote-256)

When applying contemporary standards of good taste, it is not evident that the material presented in *Hara Kiri* taken as a whole appeals to prurient interests. It is hard to determine decisively whether this salacious content shows serious literary, artistic, political, or cultural value, or a lack thereof. One particularly troubling aspect of defining sexually explicit pictures concerns the application of community values for a publication that provides material of a sexual nature to the public and presents it as humour, which is by definition a non-serious speech act. In studying the sexually explicit material in *Hara Kiri*’s imagery, the ensuing examples will attempt to determine the type of political message that was being conveyed, and the sort of meaning this would generate for the reader.

Explicit language and images − which viewers may have found confrontational and for which *Hara Kiri* was censored − are strikingly abundant. Even though the analysis here is not quantitative, the frequency of full-frontal female nudity throughout the issues is overwhelming, and it is safe to say that the female body is the most prevalent theme in the publication in its monthly form. As we will see in the instances that follow, *Hara Kiri*’s use of the female body relies on violence and absurdity. *Hara Kiri* presents a reader’s guide to *Elle* magazine and *Marie Claire*,[[256]](#footnote-257) arguing that these publications are not made for women, but rather for men. If a woman wants to get her husband’s attention, *Hara Kiri* suggests, she should not read *Elle*, but only pretend to. In other words, women should just keep this type of female magazines lying around at home in order to intrigue their husbands, because the content promoted in them is ‘more titillating than erotic magazines’. The reader’s guide consists of a series of photo-ads cut directly from French women’s magazines, with *Hara Kiri* adding its own captions. The product is a user guide for every possible type of male personality including the voyeur, masochist, sadist, fetishist, exoticism-lover, and police-film or historical novel aficionados. *Elle* was known as a women’s magazine in the 1960s which represented ‘female modernity as maternal, nationalistic and institutionally approved’. [[257]](#footnote-258) Susan Weiner argued that *Elle* contributed massively in to ‘generating American domesticity as the new French fantasy’ mainly through spreading a certain ‘fantasy of glamorous domesticity’.[[258]](#footnote-259) Indeed, Andrée Michel and Geneviève Texier pointed to the impact of technology in redefining and validating female domesticity through the rise of home appliance such as dishwashers and washing machines in the post-war period, as production rose by 400 percent between 1950 and 1958.[[259]](#footnote-260) It is therefore impressive to see that *Hara Kiri* was aware of *Elle*’s dissemination of the ideal of the domesticated housewife, and is here imparting its share of satire as resistance.

Yet, at a time where men and women were still concealed in the public space of work and entertainment, *Hara Kiri*’s satire relied on images that recall ‘bathing belles’, pins-ups, and good girl art, to mock *Elle* which raises questions over motives and editorial calculations. The publication’s alibi for using such material and packaging it as ‘parodies’ does not quite justify the misogynist feeling behind it, and much less so when the alleged satire is in essence mere mockery. Also, the parody offered here is not targeted at the domesticity perpetuated by *Elle*, but rather motivated by a self-centred masculinity that sees any glamorization of women as being a product for men’s consumption. It is difficult to argue that these images offer alternative (progressive) representations of female identity. Nonetheless, another 4-page story by Fred entitled ‘girls, beware of dreams!’ depicts the life of a woman who spends all her day dreaming about the perfect husband.[[260]](#footnote-261) Fred draws a caricature of a wife whose husband is a drinker, and who dreams of finding a man who can play piano and dance the waltz. Fred blends his caricatures with images borrowed from classic artworks. The husband calls her ‘twisted’ and advises her to seek therapy: ‘she ends up following the wise advice of her husband’, says the sarcastic concluding caption. This story appears to aim at mockery of psychoanalytic dream interpretation, but it also satirizes the idea of the perfect husband, offering a relatively progressive message.

As mentioned in the introduction, around 1963, *Hara Kiri* started to rely on the photographic style more than any other medium including comics and cartoons. Susan Sontag observes that the power of photographic images resides in the way they interfere heavily with what we perceive as real, arguing that ‘notions of image and reality are complementary. When the notion of reality changes, so does that of the image, and vice versa’.[[261]](#footnote-262) Photography accentuated the explicitness of the sexual material displayed in the magazine, and elevated it to a pornographic status. Even though the message was not always straightforward, and the illustrations were compelling and ambiguous, one common motif was the dominant use of women and female nudity. Public displays of the female body in the satirical press, unlike in other forms of culture, could be subject to two possible interpretations. One says that the more public a woman’s body is, the more public − and available − is her sexuality. This is a legitimate interpretation in *Hara Kiri*’s case, because, even though the poses and the shots of the photos published are quite unflattering and sarcastic, the women selected for these poses are often borrowed from the burlesque scene. They have the rosy cheeks, the bouncy curls, and the hourglass figures usually associated with pin-up girls, and they are usually groomed and smiley; they, therefore represent idealized versions of what is considered an attractive and beautiful woman. The other possible interpretation is that these photos are artwork – graphic performing art − and so do not yield to social norms and moral judgement. For instance, let’s look at one specific 7-page feature, titled ‘Learn sadism in three lessons’, and signed by Cavanna.[[262]](#footnote-263) The feature provides an illustrated S&M manual and quiz that uses fetish photography, à la Irving Klaw. In other words, its images are of bondage and flagellation where the man is in the dominant position, as expected, and where the woman is subjugated to torturous positions.

There are numerous instances where parts of the female body were contorted and dominated for the sake of amusement. One particular photo grid shows a woman jumping with joy at the idea that her breasts excrete toothpaste, but when she starts to run out of this product, she squashes her breast mercilessly. As with a toothpaste tube, her male partner jumps on her back to squeeze out every last drop.[[263]](#footnote-264)

Over numerous issues, *Hara Kiri* published a permanent section which consisted of a series of photographs of naked women with a common message which always started with ‘I am no longer ashamed of my breasts since…’. For the rest of the sentence, the second half of the condition was different every time, but in all cases, it was inconclusive, and it often put the breasts in a visibly uncomfortable or painful position. One of them features a woman putting her breasts into two bowls and saying ‘I’m no longer ashamed of my breasts since I started putting them in bowls’.[[264]](#footnote-265) Another image shows a woman holding crutches under her bare breasts – instead of under the arms – and the headline says ‘I’m no longer ashamed of my breasts, since I have had a wooden bra’.[[265]](#footnote-266) A photo of a woman sucking her breast in a plunger says ‘I’m no longer ashamed of my breasts since I have used them to earn a living in *Hara Kiri*’.[[266]](#footnote-267) Yet another features a naked woman with a painting brush in her hand and her exposed breasts painted in red, while the caption says ‘I’m no longer ashamed of my breasts since I painted them red’.[[267]](#footnote-268) Probably the most violent one is of a woman using her bare breast to level a crooked table, smiling at the camera and saying ‘I’m no longer ashamed of my breasts since I have used them to level the table’.[[268]](#footnote-269) The series also deploys a photo of a naked woman whose breasts are covered with dead flies alongside the message ‘I’m no longer ashamed of my breasts since I started using them as fly swats’. [[269]](#footnote-270) Another one features a naked woman smiling while her breasts are used on both sides of an old-fashioned balance scale to weigh potatoes along the caption ‘I’m no longer ashamed of my breasts since I started using them as a scale’.[[270]](#footnote-271)

As with much of the material published in *Hara Kiri*, the message of these satirical photographs is problematic, open-ended, and resistant to formal closure. The images’ political and social effect is uncertain; it invites and appears more inclined to ask questions than to provide some sort of moral lesson. The phrase ‘I’m no longer ashamed’ assumes that these women were ashamed of their breasts before, or at least embarrassed to exhibit them, which apparently makes these photos liberating and desexualizing. Whether this exhibitionism is for the sake of sexual amusement or to provoke the reader, the ambivalence in this motif offers important analytical potential. The reader is looking at what on a different platform might have been considered erotic. However, here s/he is expected to accommodate the values of satirical humour to his/her understanding. This is particularly difficult in the case of a publication that does not lend itself to a formal structure and typology. By emphasizing the lewd and the grotesque, and by casting its satirical net wide enough to encompass a wide range of meanings, *Hara Kiri* demonstrated its capacity of producing humour that could both involve and alienate the reader. The constant recurrence of sexualized images in humour involves a risk of presenting oneself as either politically informed (breaking taboos), or plainly distasteful (sexist and misogynist).

Many times, the magazine conflated sexually explicit material with attacks on the consumerist culture prevalent in the 1960s, mocking cosmetic products advertised for women, while using the female body to personify the message. A fake advertisement for depilatory creams features a photograph of a woman covering her nipples and revealing a bare armpit out of which flowers bloom, along with the inscription: ‘no more superfluous hair thanks to Raz Bonbon, the depilatory cream that smells nice’.[[271]](#footnote-272) The parody thus works on a number of levels, first making a bold statement against the new fashion products for hair removal, namely depilatory creams. In contemporary French society, there was no tradition of women using razors to shave legs and underarms, or tweezers to groom and shape eyebrows. The assumption that visible body hair on women disrupts traditional gender roles historically did not have a prominent place in French perceptions of the female body at the time. The mockery here is therefore of a new vogue alien to French society. By using the aesthetics of pornography next to products that promote a hairless female body, the target is the cosmetic industry as well as advertising culture. *Hara Kiri* also ridiculed household products such as the famous brand of washing powder OMO. In a six-panel photo grid parody of the cleaning product, a woman is shown stripping off while enumerating the good deeds of the washing powder on her clothes and hands, while the husband shows up in the last panel thanking OMO for a clean and smooth-skinned wife.[[272]](#footnote-273)

It is as if these 1964 and 1965 images are telling us that *Hara Kiri* is looking at all these sudden developments, these new products, habits, and consumer goods, and does not know what to make of them. In *Fast Cars Clean Bodies, Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture,* Kristin Ross surveyed the modernization of French society in the 1960s, and eloquently depicted it as follows:

French people, peasants and intellectuals alike, tended to describe the changes in their lives in terms of the abrupt transformations in home and transport: the coming of objects – large-scale consumer durables, cars and refrigerators – into their streets and homes, into their workplaces and their emplois du temps. In the space of just ten years a rural woman might live [through] the acquisition of electricity, running water, a stove, a refrigerator, a washing machine, a sense of interior space as distinct from exterior space, a car, a television, and the various liberations and oppressions associated with each.[[273]](#footnote-274)

Ross’s analysis reveals that the modernization of society also brought with it a homogenizing effect. The gap between the everyday lives of a rural family and an urban one reduced massively, creating the sense of a common experience centring around consumerism.[[274]](#footnote-275) Taken by surprise, and completely unprepared, *Hara Kiri* laughed at this change, but it was not the socially conscious witty and cerebral laugh; rather, it was the fun, crude, teasing, sneering, and aggressive laugh. It was a reactionary laugh that did not think deeply about the sort of message it was sending out about women. Later, this reaction will be translated into a radical environmentalism against fast cars, as we will see in the next chapter.

In a ‘special issue to lick’, the cover features a man with a moustache sticking out his tongue and holding an ice-cream cone, only the cream is actually a naked woman sitting on the cone.[[275]](#footnote-276) Another quite disturbing and bizarre cover is a photograph of a naked black woman, laughing at a mouse sitting on her chest.[[276]](#footnote-277) An ‘anti-erotic’ cover featuring a photo of a smiling woman biting the nail of what looks like a man’s hairy hand in a quite un-erotic way, could be interpreted as a way of laughing at the censorship inflicted on the publication by the authorities for its pornographic material. In a story titled ‘Men and Women’ [[277]](#footnote-278) accompanied by drawings by Gébé, women are depicted as mere objects that one can do anything with: hang them, feed them, eat them, wear them as garments, pet them like dogs, and use them for housework.

In an 11-panel photo grid, Cavanna sits in an office reading news of wars, wearing a military uniform, inattentive to his secretary who gradually strips off all her clothes as we move from one panel to the next. The last panel shows the woman lying naked on his desk while he uses her back as a map of the world.[[278]](#footnote-279) Not only did the design team publish a photo of a naked woman being pushed as a wheelbarrow by a male farmer,[[279]](#footnote-280) but also a photo featuring a man riding a naked woman as a go-kart. The woman’s face is bruised, and bleeding and the caption says ‘my little brother likes sports cars and pretty dolls’.[[280]](#footnote-281)

One photograph presents ‘Professeur Choron’ standing next to two naked women crouching on the floor while two suitcase-handles are drawn on their backs, making them look as though they are being used as Choron’s luggage.[[281]](#footnote-282) Also included are a two-page poster featuring a naked woman swimming in a huge saucepan of spaghetti,[[282]](#footnote-283) and a manual on ‘how to build a bar with a beautiful useless girl’, in which her underwear is filled with cement and her bottom used as a bar’s counter.[[283]](#footnote-284)

The exaggeration in the photography of explicit female nudity, where women are literally used as objects as they smile in a docile manner while enduring painful positions, could be read in two ways. The first reading bears in mind the editors’ ethos behind launching such a publication, to break taboos, advocate for a free society, and provide journalism that aimed at transcending mediocracy: in other words, this reading interprets the magazine as a satire. In such an interpretation, the message concerns speaking out freely, seeking to laugh men out of their phallocentric attitudes. Indeed, one of the publication’s longest-lasting contributors, Wolinski, showed a lot of interest in the issue of female sexual freedom, and repeatedly satirized virginity. In one of his cartoon strips, ‘*Hit Parade*’, he commented on an article which appeared in another magazine at the time called *Le nouveau candide*. The article on *Le Nouveau CANDIDE*[[284]](#footnote-285) dwelt on the issue of chastity and women, and on the parent-child relationship, whether strict parents are actually sadistic, ‘parents sévéres ou parents sadiques’. Wolinski uses the article to look at the question of sexual freedom,[[285]](#footnote-286) and as in many of his cartoons to advocate for an emancipated and sexually active woman. Alternatively, the second reading assumes that satire is not required to display thematic unity, formal clarity, and a moral function; and that the message here is simply reiterating and reflecting prevalent misogynistic behaviours of the contemporaneous French society. The second reading is more compelling particularly in the presence of evidence that Wolinski himself acknowledged a certain shift in his approach to the feminist question from a misogynist attitude to a more socially and politically conscious one affected by social change in May 68 and its aftermath. As this happens later in the life of the magazine, Wolinski and his colleagues’ treatment of the feminist question will be discussed in chapter 2.

## Disgust

The classic definition of disgust encompasses all sorts of ‘revulsion at oral incorporation’.[[286]](#footnote-287) Disgust, the emotion provoked by slimy, soggy, and smutty objects, is not monolithic according to Jonathan Haidt, who posited seven kinds of disgust elicitors, which are ‘food, animals, body products, sex, body envelope violations, death, and hygiene’.[[287]](#footnote-288) *Hara Kiri* managed to cover all of them in its photographic collections, and also created a comic character that embodies the idea of disgust, which they named the Fat Putrid One.

*Gros D*é*gueulasse* (the Fat Putrid One)was a *bande dessin*ée character created by Reiser in 1972, and was adapted in to a film in 1985. *Monsieur Gros Dégueulasse*, as Reiser called him, always appears in oversized dirty and rancid underpants, wandering through town making vile comments to the people passing by. *Gros Dégueulasse* is extremely repugnant, and yet was one of Reiser’s most successful *bande dessin*ée characters. The editors’ decision to keep him for years in *Hara Kiri* and later in *Charlie Hebdo* testifies to the publication’s devotion to bad taste and all that is grotesque. The exit of *Gros Dégueulasse* from the French comic scene was as monstrous as his entrance. Reiser decided to finish his character off, and *Monsieur Gros Dégueulasse* takes his own life by cutting his veins using the aluminium cover of a can of cassoulet.

*Hara Kiri* went to greater lengths to transmogrify unpleasant faecal matter into a far-fetched object of satire. In issue 110 published on 1 November 1970, the cover, which features Cavanna’s face smothered in what looks like excrement, lures the unwary reader into total immersion in private lives. The issue was entitled ‘special scato’ (scatological special issue), and the usual ‘*bête et méchant*’ subtitle was enriched with a dash of bad taste to become ‘journal *bête et méchant* et de mauvais goût’ (‘newspaper stupid and mean and of bad taste’). What is openly grotesque about the scatological subject in satire is that it ridicules and debunks the ‘etiquette’ of polite society and particularly its centre: the self-delusional man, who proudly elevates himself above questionable smells and unpleasant excreta.[[288]](#footnote-289) Man is being reminded of, and reduced to, his origins as a defecating animal. Another cover features a photo of a tarte à la crème, except that the chocolate icing says ‘caca’ (‘crap’).[[289]](#footnote-290) This hint at coprophagy through the incongruous humour where two extremes, food and faeces, are pitted against each other is a highly effective medium through which to exercise bad taste and perversion. The picture is not disgusting *per se*, as one can clearly identify that what on the plate is still a cake, and does anything feel more special than being presented a cake with a special message written in icing on the top? However, since this decoration says caca, the invitation is to coprophagy, or to eat excrement, and therefore to be a pervert. There are numerous instances where this type of incongruous humour serves to stigmatize the subjective sense of taste and its association with a bodily need (whether this relates to hunger or waste). Another cover features a woman, her mouth wide open, biting into a sandwich except that the filling is a dead rat.[[290]](#footnote-291) One of the most disgusting covers features a photograph of a chef stirring a big pot of soup, and a long thick stream of his nasal mucus drips into the pot, while the caption says ‘*non la grippe n’est pas contagieuse*’ (‘no, the flu is not contagious’).[[291]](#footnote-292) Here, an attempt at provoking disgust is not the primary end; rather, the aim is to make fun of the bizarre claim that flu is not contagious.

There are several pieces in *Hara Kiri* where vomit and disgusting things occupy a central space in the rhetoric. In a 1964 issue, the cover was simply a photo of vomit with the caption ‘This page of vomit is offered to you by the wines of Portillon’, Portillon being a vineyard in the Swiss Côte vaudoise.[[292]](#footnote-293) Images of indecorum also included matters of putrefaction, when the newspaper in its quest to pervert advertisements, published a photograph of a woman blowing her nose into a slice of *jambon* (ham). In another image the famous brand of tissues Kleenex is caricatured as manufacturing ‘the tissue that is edible’.[[293]](#footnote-294) All three examples sought to misrepresent the sophistry of advertising luxurious items in the media. A certain lifestyle has become vulnerable to the satirist here. By slandering certain brands of disposable fripperies, the satirist achieves several purposes: to amuse, to shock, and to repulse the audience out of a certain irresponsible behaviour; and this is especially true given that *Hara Kiri* took a very fierce stand not only against consumerism but also against its noxious impact on the environment. To wish its readers a Happy New Year 1966, *Hara Kiri* seized the opportunity to strike on the society’s gluttonous behaviour during the holidays. The cover features a woman gobbling a big bowl of stew, spilling it all over her mouth and chest.[[294]](#footnote-295) Her bestial behaviour and loss of control testify to her impotence, and that of her society more broadly, to control one’s own taste, and instincts. Within modern society, suppressing bestial acts and cultivating acts of civility became a crucial part of the civilizing process.[[295]](#footnote-296) *Hara Kiri*’s satirists enjoyed destroying people’s delusional capability to domesticate his internal drives. Now and again, images that highlight the ridiculous proximity of humans and animals were used to slander refined social activity. One of *Hara Kiri*’s most iconic covers features a photograph of a woman all wrapped in *boudin noir* (black pudding) from the waist up, laughing while stuffing her face, and saying ‘I’m not rich but I’m well nourished’.[[296]](#footnote-297)

The recurring cultural references of greed, intemperance, and disgust also include covers that, in addition to being grotesque, are also bizarre. One story features a blonde beautiful woman sitting in an armchair surrounded by a group of men (mostly *Hara Kiri*’s own contributors) who fantasize about her to the point of imagining her posing for them ‘naked, in a bath with lots of mousse, looking sexy, but not vulgar’.[[297]](#footnote-298) The next page shows the woman in the imagined bath, naked, but surrounded by lots of dirty dishes and pans, and instead of a mousse there are all kinds of food leftovers and scraps floating on the dirty and greasy water. She is left alone swimming in dirt, and the caption says: ‘we’ll give you back your books when all the dishes are washed and dried’. That was not the only time food was presented in a nauseating way, as another cover features Fred (*Hara Kiri*’s own cartoonist) sitting on a dining table ready to eat his soup, while a woman is hugging him, nonchalant about her long hair floating in the soup.[[298]](#footnote-299) It is through ideas around proximity and the cross-contamination of two objects that should not be in contact by any means, such as hair and food, that the satirist deliberately aims at arousing our disgust. William Ian Miller argues that hair is more repugnant than excrement: ‘Long before the smell of faeces, the feel of a hair in the mouth elicits an expression of disgust’.[[299]](#footnote-300) One cover in particular taps into sex, hygiene, and food all at once, when it featured a photograph of a woman’s naked behind covered with mushrooms stemming from her anus.[[300]](#footnote-301)

The best example to finish this theme of ‘disgusting’ covers is a March 1974 cover that predicts the year 2000 with a photograph featuring a naked woman and man who recall our ancestors from the Stone Age: they are filthy, hungry, and surrounded by animal bones and ribs. The cover portrays future society in an inevitable condition of degradation and bestiality. From its position of self-proclaimed intellectual and cultural superiority, *Hara Kiri*’s imagery has been rife with grotesque portraits of a French – perhaps human – society in which individuals are consumed by greed.

## Conclusion

*Hara Kiri* concurred (and exceeded) with what Arthur Marwick called the ‘long sixties’ (1958 to 1974) ‘a period of distinctive, and long-lasting change’.[[301]](#footnote-302) Marwick, who highlights the formation of numerous subcultures and who rejects the assumption of ‘there having been one unified, cohesive, “counter-culture” in the sixties’, maintains that the 1960s cultural transformations in Europe were met with ‘tolerant and liberal responses’ by those in power.[[302]](#footnote-303) It is true that *Hara Kiri* did suffer censorship on two occasions, but from 1967 onward, the magazine enjoyed significant freedom to pursue alternative themes. The analysis that this chapter offered of the magazine’s most representative stories concludes that *Hara Kiri* certainly brought novelty in the 1960s French cultural scene through its crass brutal humour, its use of new technology: photography and different art forms, and in its radicalism. When Cavanna stated in a quote presented earlier in this chapter (p. 62) that he wanted to be Rabelais and he wanted to be Ubu, it was to express the tendency in his *bête et méchant* humour to challenge the standards of good taste and decorum. Through scatological and obscene material that is interwoven with a rebuke of Christian morality, *Hara Kiri* displayed an exceptional practice of humour in which authors combined multiple targets of satire, often in a single image or one story. In its criticism of the consumerist society of the *Trente Glorieuses*, *Hara Kiri* mocked consumers and the products they consumed, as well as the advertising techniques used and the ethics of society including religious morality and social standards. Put differently, *Hara Kiri* wanted to attack everything mainstream by adopting a position that could be described as elitist and alternative without this clearly being stated. Cavanna theorized a certain *Hara Kiri* doctrine:

A *Hara Kiri* doctrine was shaping up, not quite formulated but perfectly functioning. Essentially, we can summarize it as such: Applauding to the most beautiful achievements of stupidity and malice by adding more, and going farther, the farthest possible in their twisted logic, to the point of absurdity, to the point of odiousness, to the point of grandiloquence. It is the principle of judo, don’t go against, go with.[[303]](#footnote-304)

This quotation is significant in the way it defines and to some extent explains what has been outlined previously in the analysis, and will help our understanding in the next chapter. Cavanna tried to establish here a doctrine that intentionally singles out and exposes idiocy, imbecility, and malice in people. However, this doctrine of humour is premeditatedly brutal. It therefore deliberately celebrates existing idiocy and nastiness by adding more of its own; indeed, going to ‘the point of absurdity, to the point of odiousness, to the point of grandiloquence’.[[304]](#footnote-305) What is fascinating about *Hara Kiri* is that it was a magazine which belonged and is now considered as having been part of the popular culture in France, when in reality it practised a highly elitist discourse, it looked down at the mainstream readership, and it targeted a sophisticated intellectual. Cavanna did maintain a non-advertisement policy and an anti-consumerist rhetoric, but the medium itself brought together elements of popular culture. In other words, the cultural artefact was a magazine that practises vulgar humour and uses cartoons, comic strips, caricatures, collage, photography, philosophical texts, and *dessins* (including from a person who is now considered one of France’s finest illustrators, Topor).[[305]](#footnote-306) Borrowing Marwick’s description of Andy Warhol (‘an important figure in New York high society’), *Hara Kiri* illustrated the lack of any ‘sharp, dialectical divide between a commercialized, mainstream culture and a socialistic, non-profit-making alternative culture’.[[306]](#footnote-307) *Hara Kiri* illustrates this conciliation between a popular (sometimes vulgar) medium and a self-proclaimed refined and transcendental message which looks down at consumerist culture and speaks to an intelligent reader. Through deliberate choices of inflation and misrepresentation, *Hara Kiri* did not intend to deny the readers their right to feel hatred towards its subject/object of caricature. This will be further discussed in the next chapter, which will look at *Hara Kiri* in its weekly form, where photography will be abandoned to leave more room for cartooning, where new members will join, and where new themes such as the environment will get more attention.

# Chapter 2: From *L’Hebdo Hara Kiri* to *Charlie Hebdo* (1968-1982)

## Introduction

In the mid-1960s, an international counterculture emerged to defy the prevailing culture of the Cold War, which culminated in the May 1968 global protests.[[307]](#footnote-308) Historians of May 1968, including Daniel Singer, Kristin Ross, Julian Jackson, Gerd‐Rainer Horn, and Richard Horton, posit that ‘the revolutionary psychodrama’ of May 68 (as Raymond Aron put in), in fact started circa 1961 and ended in 1976; hence a more accurate term would be ‘the 1968 years’ as Jean-Philippe Martin maintained.[[308]](#footnote-309) May 1968 was a major historical event in part because it allowed, in its long-term aftermath, for an expansion of liberties: the deregulation of the radio waves, an alleviation of state control over the media, and the creation of the *Mouvement de Libération des Femmes* — with all of these outcomes having significant and direct impact on the press, and on *Hara Kiri*.[[309]](#footnote-310)

Understandably, as a monthly magazine that did not offer contemporaneous media coverage that could shape or reflect public perceptions, *Hara Kiri* evinced ambiguity in its journalistic approach, in the sense that the extent of its contributors’ engagement with the events varied greatly at the start. *Hara Kiri* contributors’ participation in the events was mainly expressed in the short-lived May 1968 satirical paper *L’Enragé* (May to November 1968). *Hara Kiri* contributors Gébé, Reiser, Willem, Cabu, and Wolinski participated in the creation and production of *L’Enragé* for its entire (though admittedly short) existence. While the younger members, mainly Cabu, Wolinski, and Gébé were active participants in the mediatization of the events and still defined themselves as *soixante-huitards* decades later, Cavanna, Choron, and Reiser approached the revolt with much more apprehension. Their beloging to different socio-cultural milieus informed their engagement. Reiser, who came from a working-class single-parent family, believed the events were led by bourgeois students whom he could not understand.[[310]](#footnote-311)

Cavanna, who also came from a working-class family, had previously widened the scope of *Hara Kiri* to extensively cover and comment on global news. *Hara Kiri* was thus already heavily involved in the global 1968 through its in-depth coverage of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. on 4 April 1968 and the ensuing civil rights movement in the United States, the Vietnam War protests in London on 17 March 1968, and the Warsaw protests in March 1968. Torn between a fear of not living up to his own liberal convictions and a desire to disassociate himself from a revolt that for him was manifestly bourgeois, Cavanna cautiously approached the protests of May 1968 from a generational point of view. Despite the fact that *Hara Kiri* magazine repeatedly attacked Charles de Gaulle, and continued to do so in both *Hara-Kiri Hebdo* and *Charlie Hebdo*, the editor both criticized the violence of the police and tried to impress upon the revolutionaries of May 1968 that violence would not lead anywhere. In an editorial in *Hara Kiri* published in June 1968, he argued that ‘non-repressive sublimation should be the outcome of our current efforts’.[[311]](#footnote-312) Cavanna’s words should be interpreted as a call to embrace uninhibited attitudes without really acting upon them. In a sense, he did not approve of a revolutionary attitude and sought to distance himself and his publication from a youth-driven movement, not least as he was 45 years old at the time. Choron and Delfeil de Ton watched the May 1968 events unfold as an amusing drama.[[312]](#footnote-313) Choron stated:

I lived 68 more like a spectator. In the evening, we would go and walk around in the 5th arrondissement, the violent brawl … it was chaos. You would never want it to stop, it was grand!’[[313]](#footnote-314)

Delfeil de Ton recalled ‘I have never laughed so much in my life’.[[314]](#footnote-315) Wolinski, on the other hand, was involved in the leftist newspapers’ mouthpiece for the student protests, *Action*,fromits first issue on 7 May. *[[315]](#footnote-316)* Wolinski also adapted his sketches published in *L’Enragé* into a theatre play titled *je ne veux pas mourir idiot.* On the other hand, in a brilliant series of *bandes* *dessinées* published in *Hara Kiri* in July 1968, he followed the thoughts of a middle-aged journalist who wanders the streets of Paris looking for an inspiration for his next article. In the background, students are beaten up by the CRS (riot control police) and taken away in police vans. The journalist is completely oblivious to the scene of police violence surrounding him and is absorbed in his own thoughts, until he is alerted to what is happening by a cry of a young student shouting, ‘No concessions!’. Finally paying attention to his surroundings, the journalist contemplates that the students do not have the real problems he does. The real problem, according to Wolinski’s character, is the urgent obligation to think of topics for journalistic articles that will interest the largest number of ‘imbeciles’ — and *that* is what making concessions really means. Wolinski at once aimed his critique at the press, which out of misconception ignored the students’ protests, and at the police, which used excessive violence. This feature could also be interpreted as auto-derision directed at his own colleagues. *Charlie Hebdo*’s contributors did not hold back when they attacked each other publicly on their own pages over each other’s political affiliations, specifically when it came to their participation or refusal to participate in communist newspapers such as *L’Humanité.*

The amount of media coverage and the ensuing literature following the May 1968 protests led many to believe that the revolutionary spirit was praised either out of enthusiasm or out of conformity; ‘revolutions were the trend’ and May 1968 was quite a fashionable theme for both the media and French elites, and continued to be so.[[316]](#footnote-317) Radio became an important source of communication and information during the protests, mainly due to state repression and monopoly over the public media. The direct consequence of the revolutionary events on the satirical press was a proliferation of photography alongside caricatures, which gained popularity during the days of conflict in 1968.[[317]](#footnote-318) The political and social effervescence of the events offered fertile ground for the form of *dessin* known as *dessin contestataire* which expresses ideological rejection of received ideas, and contesting all of society’s institutions and authorities. Michel Melot states that ‘caricature and revolution are two words which go together. Revolution is an exaggerated text and portrait, and caricature is a revolt’.[[318]](#footnote-319) Caricatures as a means of visual propaganda tend to become more popular during times of social change. *Dessins contestataires* served to engage public opinion in a debate through images, or what Bertrand Tillier called the ‘war of images’.[[319]](#footnote-320) In fact, May 1968 has been remembered more through its photographs of graffiti than almost any other art form. Also, the period after May 1968 witnessed the increased autonomy of the *dessin de presse* to editorial comment in its own right, a development caused by the proliferation of satirical newspapers and magazines with a heavy reliance on political cartoons, comics, and *bandes* *dessinées*. *L’Echo des Savanes* was launched in 1972, followed by *Fluide Glacial* in 1975. Like *Hara Kiri* and its supplements, these publications relied on their covers for publicity, and they copied the style of *Hara Kiri* in using one imageas an autonomous centerpiece story for their covers.[[320]](#footnote-321) Christian Delporte did classify Cabu as an editorialist *dessinateur* because of the central position his covers occupied, making them prominent but separate entities capable of conveying the magazine’s editorial line.[[321]](#footnote-322)

May 1968 also created a need in the magazine to comment, examine, and expand on the news on a more regular basis: ‘This *Enragé* magazine which came under their noses to make them realize that their dream was possible’ declared Odile Vaudelle.[[322]](#footnote-323) French historians of May 1968 acknowledged the role the *bête et méchant* press played in events and the impact it had on their generation. Pierre Nora and Marcel Gauchet gave a laudatory tribute to the team of *Hara Kiri/Charlie Hebdo* arguing that it was time to ‘realize that the pioneers of disrespect further contributed to the gestation of the 68 spirit, than all the epistemological breakers of rue Ulm [Ecole Normale Superieure] together’.[[323]](#footnote-324) Jean-Claude Olmi stressed in 1972 that:

We remember the opening, by the monthly *Hara Kiri*, way before May 68, of a new type of repair site of moral values of a society that was precisely dying with immorality. The work done by *Hara Kiri* consisted of nothing more nor less than translating clearly, away from the psychoanalytic language, what persists in the natural, the puerile, the virgin in the collectivized individual.[[324]](#footnote-325)

Olmi argues here that *Hara Kiri* helped only uncover a certain existing immorality in society that had already been concealed from the public eye. This line of argument showcases a certain tendency amongst many media critics to class *Charlie Hebdo* as a continuation of *Hara Kiri* and as a realization of May 1968, and validates Choron’s own claim that without *Hara Kiri* there would not have been a May 1968.[[325]](#footnote-326) This judgement is of course exaggerated. Choron’s and Cavanna’s efforts to reassert their individualism is not unique. The international counter-culture of the 1960s and 1970s had many forms. Jeremy Suri observed that many of the criticisms made by international counterculture against racism and imperialism, amongst other causes, was deep-rooted in the past and:

Many of the strategies that they [the international counterculture] employed – community organizing, nonviolent demonstrations, public spectacle and humor, and selective terror – also had strong antecedents. The aims and techniques of the counterculture were radical, but also traditional. They deployed a very usable past.[[326]](#footnote-327)

In the years leading up to May 1968, *Hara Kiri* magazine had established itself as a new form of anti-capitalist, anti-consumerist, alternative, avant-garde, and countercultural journalism relying on parody and surrealist content, with a broad iconoclastic philosophy; it was a magazine that was run on rather individualist principles. Cavanna and Bernier kept expanding with the hope that more titles would bring in more exposure to their enterprise, Éditions du Square, which was founded in 1962. Even though their initial engagement with the events of May 1968 was inconsistent and slow, they quickly realized that they shared the same sense of alienation and the same desire to fight back the rising conformity culture that was destroying individualism. They soon launched *Charlie Mensuel* on 1 February 1969 (to 1986), and *L’Hebdo Hara Kiri* on 3 February 1969 (to 1981), *La Gueule Ouverte* in November 1972 (to 1980).[[327]](#footnote-328) These were the only three titles to last for over a year.[[328]](#footnote-329)

## 2.1 *Bal tragique à Colombey*

It was under pressure from contributors, as well as Choron’s great desire to manage some kind of press group, that Cavanna agreed to launch a weekly supplement to the monthly magazine *Hara Kiri*.[[329]](#footnote-330) Cavanna saw it as a challenge for the team to further prove themselves as a capable publication despite their lack of academic practice: ‘without any journalistic training but all driven by ambition to make something very beautiful, very intelligent, very durable, to show them, all those idiots’.[[330]](#footnote-331) Cavanna’s spirit of revenge was articulated in the creation of *L’Hebdo Hara Kiri* which later became *Charlie Hebdo*. The first issue of the weekly supplement to *Hara Kiri* appeared on 3 February 1969 under the name *Hara-Kiri Hebdo*.[[331]](#footnote-332) It kept the motto *bête et méchant* and the *Hara Kiri* logo. In his first editorial Cavanna explained that the aim behind launching the weekly supplement was ‘to give readers the daily *bête and méchant* perspective on events whose fast-moving nature is ill-accommodated in monthly periodicals’.[[332]](#footnote-333)

Chapter 1 explored how Cavanna expressed in a manifesto published in the first issue of *Hara Kiri* in September 1960 his objectives in launching the satirical magazine. Here, he deliberately abandoned the task with *Hara-Kiri Hebdo* stating that readers will either love it or hate it, and if it is the latter then that’s too bad. One interesting detail that was inserted carefully in this first editorial was his choice of a few excerpts from letters sent in by angry readers, and one satisfied reader who, according to Cavanna, did understand the true meaning of *bête et méchant* as nothing but a certain ‘objectivity’ in the face of reality, and:

a generous revolt against the Kafkaesque absurd that governs the actions of man, a revolt euphemistically hidden behind the outraged mask of the *bête et méchant* laughter. It seems that the youth of May 68 were not mistaken.[[333]](#footnote-334)

Clearly, when Cavanna chose one letter to show off, it was one that reminded readers of the publication’s engagement with the revolt of May 1968 and which hoped to be the voice of those who believed in the spirit of May 1968.[[334]](#footnote-335) Additionally, Cavanna promised readers that *Hara-Kiri Hebdo* would live up to the ideals of May 1968 and would be a quality humorous journal: ‘if we thought we were not up to the task, we would not have done a humorous magazine. If we now take you for an imbecile, we would not make this paper’.[[335]](#footnote-336) Cavanna did not have the tools or the human resources to run a weekly publication on top of the monthly one. Therefore, he created a system by which every one of the 12 journalists he was employing at the time was responsible for a page that they could fill with their own work. Bernier called it ‘the Cavanna method’.[[336]](#footnote-337) Cavanna confirmed that having worked with his team of journalists for over nine years at *Hara Kiri*, he had become acutely aware of their style and what they were capable of:

The basic principle which presided over the conception of the paper and which I arrived at after many trials was that: everyone, whether a writer or a *dessinateur*, was a full-on journalist, and had at his disposition a defined surface on the paper, which he fills as he likes. Everyone was, in sum, his own editor-in-chief. No prior collaboration, not even editorial meetings, only, at the last minute, to find together the subject of the cover, an essential task. When you give full liberty to people of this quality, you have this miracle: *Charlie Hebdo*! and without ever consulting with each other, they had a unified shared thought, I would even say a unique shared thought. I am very proud for having worked next to these giants.[[337]](#footnote-338)

According to Cavanna, the custom was that the journalists did not have to go to the offices of *Hara Kiri* to discuss their contributions, while the front page was commissioned to all members, drawn, and chosen by unanimous vote the day of the editorial meeting.[[338]](#footnote-339) Cavanna called his methods ‘anarchist and improvisatory’.[[339]](#footnote-340) In fact, between April 1974 and June 1977, the masthead stated: ‘Editor-in-chief: the whole gang’.

The beginnings were not very promising, for *Hara-Kiri Hebdo* was selling fewer than 50,000 copies weekly according to one of its contributors, Delfeil de Ton, and 15,000 copies according to its manager Choron. The latter also mentioned complaints from contributors related to payments, especially when they were producing for three publications altogether.[[340]](#footnote-341) In a desperate attempt to improve the low circulation numbers, the editors rebranded the magazine on 19 May 1969 as *L’HEBDO Hara Kiri* (the publication’s capitals). Their efforts might have not worked at all since Cavanna informed the readers of the financial difficulties, stating: ‘[W]e will probably just die’.[[341]](#footnote-342)

Despite this unenthusiastic reception, the famous cover ‘Bal tragique à Colombey, un mort’ / ‘Tragic Ball in Colombey [home residency of Charles de Gaulle], one dead’, published on 17 November 1970, five days after de Gaulle’s funeral, reintroduced the publication to wider public attention. The cover was cartoonless and consisted of a black frame with the sentence ‘Bal tragique à Colombey, 1 mort’ in bold at the centre. Delfeil de Ton argued that the cover was not trying to be provocative against De Gaulle himself:

‘Bal Tragique à Colombey’ was neither gaulliste, nor anti-gaulliste, it was simply circumstantial. We wanted to mock the big headlines on the fire that killed 140 people a few weeks earlier in Saint-Laurent-du-Pont. The death of de Gaulle did not have any interest for us; he was not in power anymore. We looked for this cover until 2am; it was one of the hardest ones to find. Choron ended up saying something that made us all laugh. I personally did not think it was violent enough. Actually, it was not violent at all. I had no idea what I wanted exactly, but that cover seemed anodyne to me. I was obviously wrong, since it was censored. We did not want to attack de Gaulle, there was no reason for it. He did bother us, but we could not despise him like we despised certain members of his entourage.[[342]](#footnote-343)

It seems hard to believe that the choice was made based on the desire not to be conspicuous. It is also questionable that it was difficult for Wolinski, Cabu, Reiser, and Gébé to find a caricature to illustrate the death of de Gaulle. This could not result from lack of imagination or inspiration. Instead, it might have been a case of trying to keep some good taste, or maybe a fear of a backlash. Choosing a strikingly cartoonless cover and leaving the responsibility for Choron to comment on the event is also open to question. Raymond Marcellin, the Minister of Interior Affairs in France, then claimed that his decision to censor *L’Hebdo Hara-Kiri* was due to its pornographic content. ‘[I]t’s the character of *L’Hebdo Hara-Kiri* that has become increasingly licentious and outrageous’, he explained, claiming this had triggered general indignation during a ministerial meeting that was held on 4 November [that is, just a few days before the controversial cover was published] and that took the decision to ban the publication from being sold to minors, from display in kiosks, and from being promoted.[[343]](#footnote-344) Marcellin’s explanation for the ban is misleading. *L’Hebdo Hara-Kiri* was different in style and spirit to *Hara Kiri* magazine. The *Hebdo* was heavily focused on politics and current affairs in the aftermath of the 1968 protests, and most of the covers commented on three main themes: the oppression of the police, the government, and the economy. There was significantly less sexually explicit material than in the magazine, and the general tone was more political. There was very little use of photography, and the stories of 1969 commented on the launch of the Concorde plane on 2 March, the constitutional referendum in April and the subsequent resignation of the president Charles de Gaulle, devaluation of the French franc, the election of a conservative new president Georges Pompidou in June, and other local news.

Besides the cover, the *Bal tragique* issue devoted one and a half pages to the death of de Gaulle, signed by Reiser, mocking the press cover of the funeral and the international dimension it took. Delfeil de Ton’s column regretted the loss of a fertile subject of satire, while Wolinki’s weekly illustrated political dialogue alluded to de Gaulle’s role during the resistance and the Algerian War. Cavanna chose not to talk about the death of de Gaulle and decided to discuss other unrelated issues in his editorial. Compared to the usual material published in *L’Hebdo Hara Kiri*, nothing in this specific issue was particularly provocative. In fact, the preceding issue published the week before was particularly virulent. A sombre cover by Wolinski commented on the fire that killed 146 people in a discotheque in Saint-Laurent-du-Pont (a village in the south east of France) on 1 November 1970. The fire was horrendous, as the victims (aged between 14 and 27) died asphyxiated or burned alive; they could not escape the building because the fire exit was locked. Nine of them could not be identified, and the national press commented ‘la mort a fermé le bal’ (*Paris Match*), ‘le bal maudit’ (*Detective*, 05/11/1970), ‘Ceux-là n’iront plus jamais au bal’ (*Ici Paris*, 11/1970).[[344]](#footnote-345) Delfeil de Ton wrote a full-page editorial homage to the victims. ‘Bal tragique à Colombey’ was minimalist but efficient, the message was simple: one very important person’s death must not eclipse the tragedy of the 146 who died a few days before.

Unlike the two previous bans on the magazine *Hara Kiri*, this ban on ‘Bal tragique’ was noticed and criticized by the press, and newspapers such as *Le Monde*, *L’Express*, and *Nouvel Observateur* displayed their support for Cavanna and his team. Jacques Fauvet director of *Le Monde* devoted his editorial to the ban of *L’Hebdo Hara-Kiri*. Titled ‘Intolérance’, his article condemned ‘a political censorship under the cover of staunching violence and eroticism’. In the *L’Express*, Françoise Giroud also condemned the institutional censorship:

Pronounced under the pretext of a commission said to be about ‘surveillance and control of publications destined to children and teenagers’ is a strong artifice like the finger M. Marcellin tries to put right in our eyes so that he could push through the decimation of an organ he deems subversive.[[345]](#footnote-346)

In his editorial, Jean Daniel, the founder and editor of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, was revolted: ‘who are they [Marcellin] trying to fool by counting on the public’s emotions stirred by a blasphemy proffered by *Hara Kiri* against the memory of de Gaulle to impose a measure that scandalously impairs free speech’.[[346]](#footnote-347) *Le Nouvel Observateur* also decided to devote two pages to *L’Hebdo Hara-Kiri*, including an article by Cavanna entitled ‘A law aimed at honoring the good papers and punishing the bad ones’, as well as *dessins* by Reiser, Cabu, Gébé and Wolinski. Cavanna and his team went on to hold a well-attended press conference on 23 November in the Café de la Gare.

Odile Vaudelle (Choron’s wife) offered her interpretation of these events:

Marcellin’s error was to have confused the hebdo (weekly issue) with the monthly. The press agrees that the monthly magazine is a vulgar publication full of pornography and scatology, selling crap to people who love crap, while the hebdo was known by all colleagues as a paper of opinion, simply because it deals with news, because it prints the names of political personalities. The press reaction was not done for the hebdo, but to defend a principle, to defend freedom of the press, their own freedom, for those who manifested, the ban on the hebdo was a proof that they were all in danger as long as the rogue law exists.[[347]](#footnote-348)

If the pornographic material is what drove Marcellin to ban *L’Hebdo Hara Kiri*, then he would have banned the monthly magazine instead. It is more plausible to suggest that authorities were rather critical and unaccepting of the whole *bête et méchant* humour which punctured the solemnity around de Gaulle’s death in addition to the use of photography in the magazine, as well as the overall anti-establishment tone of *L’Hebdo.*

A posteriori, Wolinski spoke out about the support the press had expressed for *Hara Kiri Hebdo* after the banning of the *Bal tragique* issue, expressing bitter regret that such support had not come years earlier, particularly during the first ban on *Hara Kiri* magazine. He argued that the magazine was much more deserving of recognition:

Ah, those idiots, now they discovered us, with this crappy hebdo that we despise, that we launched mainly to make some profit… The true paper is the one where we have not made any concessions, the one where we talked neither of sports nor politics, where we despised all debates: *Hara Kiri*. I sometimes find it hard to understand what we were exactly at the time, seeing how different we became. In the beginning, we really despised the press. Then we became whores like them.[[348]](#footnote-349)

In evoking what he thought was the exceptional style and content displayed in *Hara Kiri* in comparison to the weekly *Charlie Hebdo*, Wolinski’s statement provided further evidence of many factors that explain the short life of the hebdo. This quotation was recorded by Parisis in 1995, so Wolinski’s nostalgic and romanticised tribute of the magazine is a product of his own memories.

## 2.2 From *L’Hebdo Hara Kiri* to *Charlie Hebdo*

When *Charlie Hebdo* was launched on 23 November1970, it was presented as a new publication to avoid breaking the law imposed by the ban: a weekly supplement to the monthly magazine *Charlie Mensuel* (launched in February 1969). In a communiqué to AFP [Agence France-Presse] which was published in *Le Monde*, the editorial team spelled out that ‘*Charlie Hebdo* does not by any means replace *L’Hebdo Hara-Kiri*’ and that this title is ‘a desperate solution, temporary and precarious’.[[349]](#footnote-350) The first two issues of *Charlie Hebdo* did indeed use the same typography that was used in *Charlie Mensuel*, particularly the formatting of the title. The masthead indicated that Wolinski was the editor-in-chief of *Charlie Hebdo*, which was a continuation of his role in *Charlie Mensuel*. Cavanna’s first editorial was ironically titled ‘there is no censorship in France’ and explained that under the makeup of ‘the protection of youth morality’ the law can end any magazine:

There is no censorship in France. France is a great country, civilized, democratic. Everyone could publish whatever they want without having to submit to the prior approval of a state official. If the text violates the law, the author, and his well-accomplished crime, will be pursued, that’s it.[[350]](#footnote-351)

Issue 2 gave Raymond Marcellin the ‘*Bête et Méchant* prize’ in a parodic gesture to ‘honour his latest achievement consisting of the assassination via surreptitious and cruel strangulation of the magazine titled *L’Hebdo Hara Kiri’*.[[351]](#footnote-352) *Charlie Hebdo* attracted huge media attention and support, and the publicity helped to increase the circulation number of all the publications produced by the *bête et méchant* enterprise. During the first four years of its life, *Charlie Hebdo* sold 120,000 copies per week. Its success helped *Charlie Mensuel* to sell 50,000 copies a month, and *Hara Kiri* magazine to sell 80,000 a month.[[352]](#footnote-353) Issue 177 of *Charlie Hebdo* which mocked the death of Pompidou in April 1974 was the highest-selling issue in the publication’s history under Cavanna’s editorship, with 160,000 copies sold.[[353]](#footnote-354) In comparison, *Le Monde*, a ‘quality newspaper’, witnessed a significant increase in its circulation numbers during the 1960s and 1970s with 300,000 per day and 400,000 on average. The right-wing newspaper *Le Figaro* was also selling 400,000 copies daily during the same period.[[354]](#footnote-355) *Minute*, a far right yet anti-Gaullist weekly newspaper with a satirical tone, launched in 1964, was selling 250,000 copies weekly between 1964 and 1981.[[355]](#footnote-356)

*Charlie Hebdo* persistently criticized the contemporary press. The *bête et méchant* humour was never accepted in the press scene of the 1960s and the 1970s. This was a mutual dislike that was expressed time and again on the pages of *Charlie Hebdo*, through Cavanna’s editorials:

They never accepted us. Our rejection of all etiquette, of all nepotism, of all relationships, even, within the journalistic field, cost us the universal disdain of the whole profession, which only sees us when it thinks we are sick. They can go to hell. Nobody can brag of having given a dime of charity to *Charlie Hebdo* or *Hara Kiri*. And that annoys them. They don’t understand how we managed not to die out a long time ago.[[356]](#footnote-357)

This antipathy was a shared feeling between almost all members of the publication including Gébé, Delfeil de Ton, Choron, and Reiser, who did not hesitate to attack other newspapers by name:

France does not have a press anymore. France has a few newspapers. The rest is only printed material. *Le Parisien*: daily hallucination of paranoid recationary. *France-Soir*: is *Le Parisien* before it became uniquely daily hallucination of a paranoid reactionary. *Le Figaro*: graciously offered with soap and toothpaste samples in posh hotels.[[357]](#footnote-358)

Wolinski repeatedly attacked Pierre Lazareff, proprietor of *France-Soir*, *Paris-Presse*, and *France-Dimanche*, and named him ‘the pope of the rotten press’.[[358]](#footnote-359) Another target of attack was Emilien Amaury, director of the tabloid *Le Parisien* (called *Parisien libéré* at the time). *Le Parisien* was, according to *Charlie*, a reactionary, racist, populist, tacky, and establishment paper.[[359]](#footnote-360) When Amaury died in an accident in January 1977, Gébé’s cover was an insult to the man: ‘A bastard is dead’, and on page 4, Reiser said ‘We would have preferred cancer … in the anus’, while Wolinski added ‘1977 starts well: the scoundrels are dying’.[[360]](#footnote-361) Starting from May 1978, the middle double page of *Charlie Hebdo* made by Choron was a parody of the layout of *Le Parisien* as well as other popular newspapers such as *Ici-Paris* and *France Dimanche*. When *Le Point* was launched in 1972 by ex-members of *L’Express* (Olivier Chevrillon and Claude Imbert), it was met with contempt from Choron who mocked:

Between all these pages of publicity it is very hard for a cow to find its calf or the articles [...] readers will be perfectly informed about the important events happening in Lesieur and Lustucru [brands of condiments]. No, there is more to life than Viet Nam![[361]](#footnote-362)

For Choron, *Le Point* is the illustration of a capitalist monopoly over the press, especially given that the 1970s witnessed a significant surge of media privatization and concentration, with, for example, Robert Hersant, being named a ‘papivore’ [meaning someone who feeds on paper] by Wolinski, amassing major titles such as *Le Figaro* in 1975, *France-Soir* in 1976, and *L’Aurore* in 1978, in what became Hersant Media group. Cavanna warned against a rising populist editorial line disseminated by press groups such as Hersant:

I don’t know if you have noticed but, a few months ago, there happened to be certain operations of concentration of the French press which resulted in this: the French popular press is, not only of the extreme right, but also of fascist nostalgias. ‘Popular’ means what the people really read: Amaury’s *Le Parisien*, Hersant’s *France-Soir* plus all the regionals papers. Add *Le Figaro* for the rich, and *L’Aurore* for conservative shopkeepers.[[362]](#footnote-363)

*Charlie Hebdo* was not a left-wing newspaper with a clear agenda in the same sense *L’Enragé* was. Self-proclaimed *Soixante-huitard*, alternative, and countercultural, *Charlie Hebdo* could be qualified as a newspaper with left-wing politics simply in terms of its aversion to right-wing politics, its mocking of authority and the powerful. A voice of the opposition during most of its existence (meaning 1970 to 1981), *Charlie Hebdo* was published under conservative presidents: Georges Pompidou for five years, and Valery Giscard d’Estaing for seven years. When political change happened in 1981, with the election of the first socialist president, François Mitterrand, in May of that year, it did not have any significant impact on the publication’s history since the magazine disappeared eight months later. *Charlie Hebdo*’s circulation fluctuated, with the first half on the 1970s as the highest point. This led Cavanna to demand that his journalists work exclusively on *Charlie*, and leave other publications such as *Pilote*. Cabu stated that the choice was straightforward for him; he preferred to go ‘where there is the most freedom, i.e. *Charlie Hebdo*’; a decision motivated by Choron’s fulfilled promise to ‘comfortably pay’ his employees.[[363]](#footnote-364)

The golden age of *Charlie Hebdo* was its first three years. The conditions that made the *bête et méchant* discourse engaging and popular changed with the departure of Marcellin from Ministry of Interior Affairs in February 1974, the death of Pompidou in April 1974, and the election of Valery Giscard d’Estaing in May 1974, which were followed by a relaxation of state control over the press. During his electoral campaign, Giscard promised that he would accept being insulted, mocked, and ridiculed by the press, and that he would not retaliate.[[364]](#footnote-365) Curious to test the extent of this licence to ridicule, Gébé’s cover a few days after the election of Giscard was particularly crass, featuring the head of the president in the shape of a pink male sex organ alongside the caption ‘Tête de noeud président’ [‘dickhead (literally) for president’].[[365]](#footnote-366) Provocations by Cabu and Choron followed the same pattern. The Elysée did not retaliate with censorship. It seemed as if Giscardian liberalism made *bête et méchant* humour irrelevant. Under Pompidou, *Charlie Hebdo* appeared to be an audacious defender of the free press, but under Giscard, even though the magazine published the most insulting text and the most excessive caricature against the state, the latter remained acquiescent. Choron confirmed that *Charlie Hebdo* stopped being worried about state censorship: ‘the politicians left us alone’.[[366]](#footnote-367) But, even if the president showed resilience in the face of the *bête et méchant* humour, the first lady was not quite so appreciative. She requested and obtained the seizure of *Hara Kiri* magazine in reaction to the February 1980 cover. Choron relayed the facts as he lived them:

It was during the oil crisis. We did a photomontage on the cover of *Hara Kiri*. We seated a collage of Mme Giscard, naked, on the lap of an emir, and we added the title: ‘France will not go short of oil, Giscard offered his wife to the emirs’. While the emir replied: ‘she is too thin, half a baril’. The following day, a revolt in the rue des Trois-Portes [the magazine’s address]. Evidently seized. The first lady of France! In front of a judge, I had very little chance of being found right. The seizure was executed. Mme Giscard mobilized all the police of France. The publisher did not even need to withdraw the issue.[[367]](#footnote-368)

*Le Monde* did not appreciate the joke either and reported that it had ‘profoundly hurt’ the first lady.[[368]](#footnote-369) The tribunal reached an agreement whereby if the February issue was withdrawn and the cover replaced, the publication would not be banned. In retaliation, Cavanna and Choron decided to publish a blank alarming cover with the phrase ‘Blanchi’ [‘Whitewashed’].[[369]](#footnote-370) Gébé took to the pages of the hebdo to lash out:

*Hara Kiri*: a historical issue! 1st print: seized! 2nd print: censored! Whitewashed cover. But there remain 63 pages full to the gills with saying ‘merde’ to the mother Giscard (who whitewashed the cover with the complicity of her henchmen of justice). You too should say merde to the mother Giscard and to justice. Buy *Hara Kiri*.[[370]](#footnote-371)

The controversy did not end there. Cabu and Choron both took to the covers of *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo* to further practise their provocative resistance. First with a cover picturing Giscard passionately kissing an emir, furthering the image of France whoring for petrol, the caption reads ‘Thanks Giscard. France will not lack petrol’. [[371]](#footnote-372) Second was a cover for *Hara Kiri*’s March issue which parodied the February censored one and replaced the naked woman with an inflatable doll, reiterating the same idea: the president of France pimping out hiw own wife for a few barils of oil.[[372]](#footnote-373)

Overall, *Charlie Hebdo* strongly embraced an iconoclastic spirit. As the 1970s dawned, there emerged a growing sense of disillusionment, discontent, and the end of the 1968 dream. It helped *Charlie Hebdo* flourish that a section of society rejected consumerism and conformism and embraced individual and personal freedom, as articulated in a heightened sense of sexual freedom and pursuit of pleasures. But it did not help the paper that French society started to feel self-doubt as a nation concerning its diminishing intellectual and cultural superiority, emphasized by the encroachment of an American lifestyle.[[373]](#footnote-374) Through an analysis of *Charlie*’s most influential contributors, Cabu, Reiser, Fournier, and Wolinski, we will see that the *dessinateurs de presse* created characters and develop styles and techniques that become their signature over the years. Through the regular, often compulsive, use of polemical subjects that are of personal interest to him, the *dessinateur* transforms his drawings into a battleground for his ideas. Many *dessinateurs* devote their attention to one specific cause which they appropriate, and so become legitimate representatives of a certain discourse in the eyes of the public. Wolinski’s notably preferred topic throughout the history of *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo* was sexuality, while Fournier’s short-lived contribution was centred around the environment and disarmament in the context of the protest against nuclear energy. Before devoting the rest of this chapter to *Charlie Hebdo*’s most important (in terms of the space they occupied in the publication whether in covers or in content) *dessinateurs*, gender politics in the *bête et méchant* press needs to be mentioned. Over the course of its history under Cavanna, *Charlie Hebdo* had very few women contributors. The absence of female journalists allowed for the domination of the male voice over the editorial agenda. Only four female names could be detected on the pages of both *Charlie Hebdo* (and none in *Hara Kiri*): Isabelle Cabut, Paule Drouault, Victoria Therame, and Sylvie Caster.

## 2.3 Gender politics

Isabelle Cabut was Cabu’s wife. She was born in 1937 into a middle-class educated family and is the only journalist in *Charlie Hebdo* to have pursued postgraduate education as well as journalistic training. Cabu introduced her to the *Hara Kiri* family in the early 1960s but her first contribution appeared in 1970. She said:

I wrote a text. Cabu, who always encouraged me to write, took it to Cavanna rather timidly. The latter accepted, making a few pertinent remarks on punctuation, in a paternal manner. Two weeks later, another subject inspired me. Same process. The adventure was renewed from fortnight to fortnight, to an implicitly regular collaboration. ‘Implicitly’, because Cavanna never engaged me in the editorial team.[[374]](#footnote-375)

She signed her articles as Isabelle, and for four years she was the only female contributor in *Charlie Hebdo*. Her collaboration ended when she took over the direction of *La Gueule Ouverte* after Fournier died in 15 February 1973. Isabelle Cabut was attracted to *Charlie Hebdo* for its alternative interests:

We were an organ of information. Everything that was new, marginal, in politics, art or spectacle passed through us. And only us in the beginning: *Liberation* did not exist yet. We were the organ of everything that could have been an alternative French Movement.[[375]](#footnote-376)

While acknowledging, like most of the cohort, that Cavanna was a much-respected figure, Isabelle admitted that there was a sense of competition between her and Cavanna, she argued:

Cavanna never really appreciated my collaboration… because there was a culture rivalry between us. He knows that I read his work, listened to him as equals, in the same level of culture as him, and even, maybe, that I knew things that he did not know. The other writers who worked in *Charlie* at the time were generally very young, very respectful of the master. Only Delfeil de Ton, and me in less extent, presented a risk of overshining him.[[376]](#footnote-377)

Nevertheless, there is evidence that Cavanna offered his page 3 editorial to Isabelle and other contributors. Isabelle was very invested in the environmental cause, and feminism as a journalistic theme was not a priority for her. Paule Drouault took over Isabelle’s place, again as the only woman in *Charlie*, and signed a column titled ‘Le billet d’une emmerdeuse’. She remained until the end of the adventure in 1981. Her topics, like Isabelle, focused on the environment and animal rights.

In fact, *Charlie Hebdo*’s support for the women’s movement was manifested in the magazine’s fight for the right to abortion. When in April 1971, *Le Nouvel Observateur* published the famous ‘the 343’s manifesto’ signed by 343 women who underwent clandestine abortions, *Charlie Hebdo* joined the initiative and Cabu signed the cover of a special issue entitled ‘special salopes [sluts]’.[[377]](#footnote-378) The cover featured Michel Debré – the Minister of Defence and supporter of the anti-abortion movement – answering a question: ‘who impregnated the 343 sluts of the abortion manifesto? with ‘It was for France’. Inside, Cavanna supported the manifesto unconditionally, from a Malthusian point of view and for the sake of women’s agency over their bodies. He stated:

Women no longer want to be laying eggs anyway as it is. They want to be pregnant if they want to, when they want to. In the name of freedom, in the name of the right to organize one’s life as desired: this should not piss anyone off. It appears that the pursuit of individual happiness converges with the necessity to stop the already packed demographic machine.[[378]](#footnote-379)

*Charlie* has drawn a rather retrograde portrait of France for most of its history, and one of its *dessinateurs*, Willem, took to the pages of the magazine to deplore the state of individual freedoms in France as opposed to other countries:

Tourists no longer want to come to France...they go to Denmark to buy porn. They go to London to get an abortion legally. Homosexuals go to Amsterdam instead. People go to Morocco to smoke hashish.[[379]](#footnote-380)

Despite the self-proclaimed progressive attitude, ‘I was a dirty male chauvinist’ admitted Wolinski in the title of his cartoons album published in 1979, while excusing his machismo for being a spontaneous and subconscious attitude rather than an ideological one. A male-dominated enterprise, in text and in images, *Charlie Hebdo* –like *Hara Kiri* –was replete with sexist material. During the 1978 legislative elections, the last page of *Charlie Hebdo* titled ‘Elections: the women are running’ contained posters by Gébé, Cabu, Wolinski, Reiser and Carali presenting profiles of the women candidates. The caricatures of the women candidates were exaggerated by the use of sexist and misogynistic slogans: ‘Sex-mads: vote stupid!’, ‘Chauvinists! Vote stinking gash! Vote queefing gash!’, ‘Vote granny!’.[[380]](#footnote-381) 1970 also was the year *Mouvement de libération des femmes* published their manifesto in the revue *Partisans*. The association *Choisir* for the depenalization of abortion was founded in 1972 with Gisèle Halimi, Franco-Tunisian feminist and MP (1981-1981) from a Jewish background, among its leaders. *Charlie Hebdo* had a complex and tense relationship with the feminists. One of the magazine’s journalists, Xexes, angered *Choisir* by deploring ‘the ferocity of the feminist movement’. The leader of *Choisir* had a right of reply sent to *Charlie Hebdo*, which categorized Xexes as a ‘vulgar sexist’, finishing her paper with the words: ‘Xeses, you’re confused, stupid, but not impotent, I hope?’.[[381]](#footnote-382) The quarrel between *Charlie Hebdo* and the feminists continued until the very last issue of the magazine. In 16 July *Charlie Hebdo* published a cover titled ‘the Republic of the bearded’ exhibiting 18 photographs of women’s pubis supposed to belong to women elected to the parliament.[[382]](#footnote-383) The counter-evolution of *Charlie Hebdo*’s attitude from full support of abortion in 1970 to a radical ridicule of women’s ambition at equal opportunities in the political sphere was discordant with the evolution of French society at the time. It was as if the more progressive and permissive society become, the more *Charlie* treated women’s sexuality as available.[[383]](#footnote-384)

## 2.4 Cabu

Isabelle Cabut’s husband, Jean Cabut (Paris 1938), was 23 years old when he joined *Hara Kiri* in 1962. His father was a teacher in an art school and an amateur painter. He declared: ‘we can say, with a great deal of caution, that with my social origins I was an exception in the group. I come from the *petite bourgeoisie*, I am the son of teachers, while Cavanna, Gébé, Reiser come from the proletariat’.[[384]](#footnote-385) Cabu started drawing in 1954 for *L’Union de Reims*, a local paper, under the nickname of K-But. He moved to Paris for training in an advertising company’s printing house while taking classes at the Arts school of Estienne. As few *dessinateurs de presse* received an academic training/education, Cabu was an exception, along with Siné who joined *Charlie Hebdo* in 1974, Fournier who joined in 1966, and Catherine Meurisse who joined the magazine in 2001.

In 1958, Cabu joined the army and was sent to Algeria for 27 months, an experience he had in common with other contributors to *Charlie Hebdo* – Choron was a sergeant in Vietnam before he started selling newspapers, Wolinski was based in Tunis when he first started reading *MAD* magazine and made his initial *dessins*, and Reiser was also based in Germany before joining. Cabu expressed a visceral hatred for the military through many of his drawings, to the point that it cost *Charlie Hebdo* a lawsuit and a big fine (15,200 francs) in 1978;[[385]](#footnote-386) ‘I was lost in there, in the middle of general stupidity’, he stated upon returning to France.[[386]](#footnote-387)

In an interview for *France 3*, commenting on André Halimi’s book *Ce qui a fait rire les français sous l'occupation*, Cabu argued that there were two types of *dessins*: the one that makes people uncomfortable, and the one that provokes laughter. He added that the latter was not what he was seeking to achieve because, amusing as it might be, laughter is usually quickly forgotten. Cabu wanted his *dessins* to be remembered.[[387]](#footnote-388) In *Le petit monde des humoristes*, a documentary by the national French TV ORTF about Cabu, the latter reiterated Cavanna’s definition of humour as ‘a punch to the face, but wrapped in silk paper or in candy’.[[388]](#footnote-389)

In the 1970s, Cabu’s contributions to *L’hebdo Hara Kiri, Hara Kiri* magazine, and *Charlie Hebdo* were reportages from the provinces (outside of *la region Parisienne*), and as such he introduced and popularized the profession of the BD-reporter [short for bande dessinée reporter]. He travelled to different regions of France and talked to readers and non-readers, often drawing some sketches at the site. His stories gathered from *Charlie*’s own readership were grouped together under the title ‘Ecrivez-moi, j’irai chez vous’ [‘Write to me, I will come to you’]. Out of these encounters, he created portraits that detailed his subjects’ faces and accentuated their most unflattering features. His boards (*planche*s) were extremely detailed and rich in a way that not only embodied the comic but also accentuated individual identities and guaranteed the identification of his targets. Cabu merged fact and fiction by creating an imaginative world where the characters were fictional but lived in a very recognizable 1960s and 1970s France. They embodied the mores of Cabu’s own society. Their interactions and experiences with reality would seem corporeal to the audience, making Cabu’s role in framing the socio-political reality for the audience as verisimilitudinous and relatable. This framing was enabled by the creation of two cartoon characters that became iconic: le Grand Duduche and le Beauf, created by Cabu in 1974.[[389]](#footnote-390) Cavanna describes le Beauf in the following terms:

He is the living symbol of the ordinary asshole who thinks he is a brave guy. He is thick and swallows predigested information and holds peremptory judgements which he thinks are original but in reality are the stereotypical echo of all things backward conformist and tamed in society. [[390]](#footnote-391)

Le Beauf is capable of crystallizing and reproducing shared characteristics. He is racist, sexist, chauvinistic, a coward, a cheat, a football fanatic, and a hunter. He is ordinary and down to earth. The word ‘beauf’ short for beau-frère, brother in law was coined by Cabu and entered the French dictionary (Le Robert) to mean: ‘Beauf. Brother in law (after a comic strip by Cabu). The average Frenchman with narrow ideas, conservative, vulgar, and sexist’.[[391]](#footnote-392) The character allows readers to recognize their friends or neighbours in him, sometimes even seeing themselves in him. Yet readers would not want to be him.

Cabu believed that as a *dessinateur* he played a significant role in society, which he implemented through his cartoon characters. When asked to define the neologism ‘beauf’, Cabu replied:

The beauf is the type who throws truths, his own truths, he never thinks, he is taken by the truism, by the ‘common sense’, by certainties that he never questions. He does not read newspapers. It is the death of the paper.[[392]](#footnote-393)

Visualizing a certain cliché of the working-class man, *le beauf* was not only defined by his lack of social skills but also by his cultural failures, as someone who does not read newspapers and fails to use his intellect. Cavanna confirmed the beauf as someone from ‘a working-class milieu, who symbolizes pastis, petanque, and dismal stupidity’.[[393]](#footnote-394)

At the other end of the spectrum was Cabu’s character le Grand Duduche which he created for *Pilote* magazine in 1963 and brought to *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo*.[[394]](#footnote-395) Like many of Cabu’s cartoon characters, his artefacts were transposed onto different publications, and were thus a trademark of their author rather than the paper. Le Grand Duduche is a high school student who is a naive idealist. He is anti-military, a jazz lover, an environmentalist, and a hippie out of sync with society. Cabu stated that he recognized himself in his character’s opinions, and that le Grand Duduche was somehow a self-portrait: ‘I perfectly recognize myself in le Grand Duduche. He is very soppy and sentimental, like I was at the time. He is always alien to his own era. I still am.’[[395]](#footnote-396) Le Grand Duduche marched the streets in protest in May 1968, voted no in the 1969 constitutional referendum, and for the socialist party subsequently. He briefly experimented with communism. He rejected consumerism and advertising. He discovered and mirrored the sexual mores of the 1960s. He hated Johnny Halliday and everything too American. Therefore, whereas caricature usually served to ridicule the people and the ideas that Cabu did not like or agree with, le Grand Duduche served as a vehicle for those ideas that Cabu embraced. Both the cartoon character and the cartoonist believed that May 1968 could bring about change, and were bitterly disappointed:

In May 1968, I was at the Sorbonne every day. It was the only time I thought intelligence will arrive to power. The following elections disappointed me. It was too late, consumer society had already peaked. They sometimes talk about me as a former soixante-huitard. It’s true, I acknowledge that.[[396]](#footnote-397)

Throughout his career, Cabu became increasingly interested in celebrities from music, theatre, cinema and television, and identified television and radio as his sources of inspiration. He argued that he liked to draw celebrities because they can become vectors that articulate his fantasies and preferences, but also his dislikes and antipathies.[[397]](#footnote-398) In a way, Cabu, like *Charlie Hebdo*, could not break the loop of consumption characteristic of the society they criticized. In other words, in their attempt to offer an alternative ‘honest’ product (their magazine), they failed to disaffiliate from and disengage with the system because they were still dealing with the same product. They (Cabu individually and *Charlie Hebdo* as an enterprise) both professed an anti-consumerist, anti-advertising ideology while indulging in the very goods they seemingly hated. This is quite an apt example of how fashionable the counterculture was at that time, to the point that it became itself mainstream.

The most important part of the caricature or the cartoon according to Cabu is its message, more than its style or aesthetics. He reported that the *dessinateurs* do not seek each other’s feedback on a specific drawing, but they discuss ideas: ‘a *dessin* is first an idea. There are *dessinateurs* who do not draw very well but they have very good ideas. That is what attracts the reader’.[[398]](#footnote-399) As such, caricature in its most traditional sense did not appeal to Cabu, despite his impressive artistic competence, as he believed that it should be ‘staged’.[[399]](#footnote-400) In other words, the sense of storytelling that comes with the *bande dessin*ée is what attracted him most and gave him more space to express his ideas. He added: ‘the reader of *Le Canard Enchainé* or *Charlie* does not judge us on the aesthetic qualities of a certain *dessin*, but rather on its efficacy’.[[400]](#footnote-401) Cabu worked for two different publications besides *Charlie Hebdo*: *Pilote* and *Le Canard Enchainé*. So finding the right tone for each was a work of ‘instinct’ for him. He reported that he addressed a well-defined public in each collaboration, again not in the technique or the method, but in the message: ‘I know that in *Charlie*, I can go too far, I can be of bad faith’.[[401]](#footnote-402) In other words, he was capable of saying anything in *Charlie* without having to justify himself or explain his intentions. Cabu was essentially a political cartoonist. He was always interested in politics, constantly following the news, despite its repetitiveness, he declared, he was always waiting for the unpredictable to happen, and there he would find his source of inspiration. A phrase that was recurrent in Cabu’s self-representation in many of his televised interviews was the verb ‘se défouler’ which is best translated in this context as *catharsis*. He observed: ‘People always ask me, “Why do you seem normal in real life while in your *dessins*, you are so mean?’ It is exactly because I unwind’.[[402]](#footnote-403) Drawing served essentially as a way for Cabu to articulate the things he disliked. It was not so much about expressing anger, though it did contribute; instead it was mainly about ‘bear[ing] witness to something’.[[403]](#footnote-404)

Cabu was often introduced as France’s finest and greatest *dessinateur* especially in the second half of the twentieth century, he was also remembered as a man who was quite tender on a personal level. He did indeed look docile, shy and harmless. But his political cartoons were very harsh and well-executed. Even though he did not sexualize women in the same way as Wolinski and Reiser, he did use sexuality to portray the relationship between de Gaulle and Pompidou, between D’Estaing and Mitterand, and between the military and the Unknown Soldier. In all these representations, a shocking and graphic act of sodomization framed the politicians’ power relations.

The second term essential to Cabu’s personality was humour. He adopted Cavanna’s definition that ‘a good *dessin* is a punch to the face’ and added that it must be funny, no matter how dramatic the subject matter is. In fact, when, *Charlie* closed in 1981, and Cabu became a full time *dessinateur* for *Le Canard Enchiné*, he confessed that was when he learned how to be a journalist. Nevertheless, Cabu seemed to value his experience in *Charlie* above all other projects, because of the element of humour that was always a requirement in the magazine’s register. When trying to explain the role of humour, Cabu argued:

That is where the difference resides: in *Charlie*, we will not cry over the death of Mother Teresa or Lady Diana, while Plantu [in *Le Monde*] feels obligated to make a touching *dessin*. We do the opposite and sneer, because Lady Diana, it is not a big deal. There is an element of insolence [in *Charlie Hebdo*] that you cannot practise in *Le Monde*.[[404]](#footnote-405)

Cabu’s cathartic *dessins* changed their targets over the years, and it could be argued that the author’s personal experience and his personal convictions played a large role in this. Upon returning from military service in Algeria in the early 1960s and for many years afterwards, the army and the men in power were his bête noire or anathema. Consumer society, the Church, and the environment were part of his venomous repertoire as well. But Cabu admitted that he was never a militant artist:

Journalist: Do you have a feeling that you are engagé when you caricature? Is your work an engagement?

Cabu: No. I never think about it when I draw. I was never a militant. If you want to define me, I was always a sympathizer of the greens.[[405]](#footnote-406)

Nevertheless, Cabu was part of the Union Pacifiste in the 1960s protesting the war in Algeria, and contributing drawings to the pacifist anti-military movement. So, when Cabu declared he was neither an activist nor a militant artist/journalist, it was because he perceived himself as primarily a political commentator who was heavily influenced by current affairs, political debates, and what preoccupied society at the time. In addition to TV and radio as sources of information, Cabu talked about ‘l’air du temps’ as his medium. This is a poetic way of saying that the trends, the now, and the tendencies of people at the particular time of the present are what inspires him. He used his talent as a cartoonist to practice journalism. In an interview with *Le Figaro* in 1973, Cabu explained:

I try to make people laugh first and foremost, but I am a political journalist. I carry out my trade as a cartoonist. I don’t attack individuals, but what they represent. At *Charlie Hebdo*, we try to push back the limits of good taste, which is a bourgeois notion we couldn’t care less about. You have to shake people up, you have to say things.[[406]](#footnote-407)

Such positioning at the intersection of journalism and art in the form of cartooning and caricaturing reflected a sense of hybridity, which meant that the publication would have to appeal to a specific readership that was open to receive news content and political commentary in the form of *bandes* *dessinées* as well as the more traditional single-panelled editorial cartooning. Indeed, this hybrid style of *Charlie Hebdo,* which is a continuation of *Hara Kiri*, allowed for the blooming of an intricate single-panel large cartoon that articulated a complex narrative. This style was mostly recurrent with Cabu and Reiser, and to a less extent with Wolinski. Cabu traced this back to *Hara Kiri* and argued:

Reiser referred to our styles as sequenced cartoons. It was a much freer way to play with space and, above all, definitively a break from the canons of humorous cartooning or even *bande dessin*ée. It started with *Hara Kiri*, where we wanted to express ourselves with a kind of writing, a sort of counterpoint to our black, cutting humour.[[407]](#footnote-408)

## 2.5 Reiser

Reiser grew up in a single-mother working-class household. [[408]](#footnote-409) He was 17 when he sent his first drawings to *Hara Kiri*. While Cabu and Wolinski joined the magazine in its third and seventh issues respectively, Reiser was there from issue one, with four drawings in three pages, signed ‘Giem’. He then used the pseudonym Jiem until March 1963. When he first met Cavanna, he said that it was the most important encounter of his life.[[409]](#footnote-410) Cavanna recalled that Reiser’s first sketches were crude but had style and potential:

I did not need to find people to work for me. They came in big numbers. I had to eliminate the tacky ones. Out of one hundred contributions, one was valid. I saw Reiser come along twice. It was clumsy, not in focus, but he had the skills and the spirit. [[410]](#footnote-411)

In 1961, Reiser joined the French army and was deployed in Germany. He returned to France in 1963, and rejoined *Hara Kiri,* where he workeduntil he died of cancer in 1983. Reiser and Cavanna’s relationship was that of a mentorship that was almost familial. Cavanna was not a great illustrator himself, but he had the expertise to show Reiser the quality of drawings needed to establish the magazine’s tone. On this avuncular relationship between Cavanna and his mentee, Reiser’s biographer Parisis argued: ‘Cavanna could never replace Reiser’s father, but he was to him a big brother who was altruistic and motivating. Without an excessive testimony of affection.[[411]](#footnote-412) Parisis talked about the different ways in which Cavanna influenced Reiser’s style, and perspective, not by teaching him to practise a specific type of humour but by providing both stylistic and thematic references and sources of inspiration:

For a long time, Cavanna gave Reiser lessons. He did not hold him by the hand or teach him how to be funny – that would be impossible – but he oriented his vision towards the tragic, the derisive, and the sharp, with rebellious discourse. The references he used were Bosc, Chaval, Sempe. For their freedom, spirit, inquietude. Not to copy them.[[412]](#footnote-413)

Similarly, Reiser tried to impress Cavanna, because he offered him the job he always wanted and because at the time they all struggled financially and wanted the magazine project to work so that they could make a living. Being the youngest member of the team, Reiser sought guidance through other contributors such as Delfeil de Ton who, through his cultural columns on cinema, theatre, and music was a sort of teacher for Reiser at the time, which further testified to the strong work dynamics between the contributors. Reiser confessed that *Charlie Hebdo* was not just a group of colleagues or friends for him, but rather a family that shared similar values: ‘the people of *Charlie Hebdo* were more than friendship, it was a family, people with whom I have a shared identity’.[[413]](#footnote-414)

Reiser was described as a *dessinateur* who was heavily influenced by his own history and his poor socio-economic background. His *dessins* lacked humorous meaning, containing just a hint of cynicism and a lot of bitter sarcasm. He also self-identified as a journalist and a *dessinateur*, refusing to be labelled or referred to as an author of *bande dessin*ée or comic strips.[[414]](#footnote-415) He preferred the company of the ‘vulgar humourists’ to the one of ‘*bande dessinée* authors’.[[415]](#footnote-416) His style was quite unique; it was minimal but poignant. It displayed strong anger and successfully captured the importance of that specific moment in history it was commenting on. Also, it may be that the teachings of Cavanna affected his outlook. For instance, Reiser’s first ‘great’ illustration according to Cavanna and his colleagues was ‘Le Pont des enfants perdus’ (‘Bridge of the lost children’), published in September 1963.

Gébé reported:

One day, one unforgettable day, Reiser came to the office, put a folder of drawings on the table. We were not in a rush to see them. Fred and I decided to open the folder…it was great, his *dessins* changed the register. He exploded! The calm ferocity of the ‘Pont des enfants perdus’![[416]](#footnote-417)

The ‘Bridge of the lost children’ *dessin* is best described as a critique of fatherhood and the idea that paternity is an essential part of one’s social existence. Reiser thus captured his own anxiety over the unknown identity of his father and channelled his abandonment issues. Cavanna read the drawing as a harsh critique of the father figure in both the family and the state, and praised Reiser for his audacity in attacking authority:

He invented a drunken father for himself. At the time, it was extremely brave to attack paternal authority. His rage joined ours against everything that appeared aberrant, absurd, and illogical. For him like for us, injustice was only a consequence of illogic. It was not a sentimental position.[[417]](#footnote-418)

Reiser started his professional career at a very young age and was moulded within a close team of senior journalists in *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo*, where; he stood out very quickly, and became a well-known *dessinateur*. He signed the second cover of *Hara-Kiri Hebdo*,[[418]](#footnote-419) commenting on police interventions against student protests. From then on, Reiser signed one of every four covers of *Hara Kiri Hebdo* and *Charlie Hebdo* between 1969 and 1981. He became a regular guest on French media, enjoying a privileged place that no one else in *Charlie Hebdo* experienced at the time, collaborating with Antenne 2, Europe 1, *le Nouvel Observateur*, and France Inter.[[419]](#footnote-420) Choron testified to the popularity of Reiser amongst the readers:

He was the person who worked very fast, who had the most beautiful ideas, who made the best covers. When we put Reiser’s on the cover, it sells big. He was the most efficient. Always very simple but grandiose. If someone else draws the same idea, we would not like it as much.[[420]](#footnote-421)

Delfeil de Ton argued that Reiser’s albums prolonged the life of *Charlie Hebdo* by two to three years.[[421]](#footnote-422) Reiser took the style of *caricatures de moeurs* to capture the manners and morals of the changing French society. In addition to the protest movements, the presidential elections, and world politics, Reiser practised his caricature in a subtler way that followed French society’s cultural evolution, which was demonstrated, for instance, in his chronicles of French families during their summer holidays travels. This was an exotic new lifestyle that started to become part of middle-class life in the 1960s.[[422]](#footnote-423) Reiser was commissioned by *Le Monde* to create a BD series, so in 1978 he produced *La Famille Oboulot en vacances*, a series which was soon interrupted for its ‘bad taste’. In 1982, *Le Nouvel Observateur* relaunched *La Famille Oboulot en vacances*, which was also published as an album that same year.[[423]](#footnote-424) Reiser was fired from *Le Monde* only a couple of months after joining. Cabu reported that the decision did not personally offend Reiser; rather, he found it amusing: ‘It seemed normal to him that other newspapers would not appreciate what he does. We invested everything in *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie* *Hebdo*. Elsewhere, we were only commissioned’.[[424]](#footnote-425) This shows that Reiser’s style was more accepted in the *bête et méchant* press than in the mainstream press, including quality mainstream newspapers such as *Le Monde.* Reiser perceived his work in *Charlie Hebdo* as an investment, while outside of that as simply a service provider, something that resembles the difference between pitched and commissioned pieces.

Reiser’s political affiliations were not specific, but broadly to the left. He contributed to a communist paper entitled *Rouge*, and to the extreme left paper *Libération*. He campaigned for donations to the socialist party in January 1973. Commenting on Reiser’s contributions to the communist journal *la Nouvelle Critique* during the 1974 presidential elections, Wolinski argued that Reiser preferred well-organized communists to what he called bourgeois leftists: ‘he preferred communists as they are very structured, compared to leftists whose spoilt child side annoyed him’.[[425]](#footnote-426) Despite his contributions to leftist and communist publications, he maintained that he did not belong to any political party, and that a *dessinateur* has to remain free of dogma: ‘I’m very careful with political engagement, especially for an artist: I think that an artist’s greatest dignity is to be free in all circumstances.’[[426]](#footnote-427) Reiser explained his non-affiliation in terms of his disenchantment with the idea of political activism in general, specifically through parties and unions, which he compared to religious fanaticism. Something he had in common with Cabu and Wolinki was a rejection of militant attitudes and behaviours, which was articulated in their flirting but never fully committing to well defined political parties. He believed that militantism has a ‘Cureton’ side to it, a pejorative term to describe faith in a clerical setting.[[427]](#footnote-428)

Like Cabu, Reiser crafted cartoon characters which encapsulated his vision and reflected what Cabu called *l’air du temps*, in the aftermath of May 1968. In June 1976, Reiser created a cartoon character that he named Jeanine. She is pretty, free, and adventurous. She in her thirties and does not abide by the rules of piety and purity. She does not emulate the ideals of domesticity, and she rejects submissiveness. She is modern, and free from motherhood responsibilities. However, in her modernity Jeanine does not abide by the rules of society, or by what women’s magazines define as modern. She is quite similar to Gros Degueulasse, another of Reiser’s characters, whom I discussed in the first chapter. We see her lazing around the house and even in her sexual encounters, wherein she seems almost narcissistic. She is polyamorous and independent. She is ambivalent in the way she cares about her outer beauty; she does not care about the dirty dishes as she would rather do her nails. Similarly, she does not care about leaving her bed sheets stained with menstrual blood. She picks her nose in public and she is crude. In effect, she sets her own rules of femininity. She personified her epoch and her author’s outspoken belief in gender equality in style and in content:

I draw women as they are: equal to men, even in terms of graphic proportions. The women I show are capable of judgement, of sneer, of thinking independently. It is a new attitude in front of a masculine character who can be ridiculous or meskin. I always make them of the same size, this itself is very important. It is the ABC of political cartooning. As such, it is always wrong to place a big boss next to a small worker. Nevertheless, women and workers could be as big arseholes like anyone else.[[428]](#footnote-429)

His interviews with *Le Nouvel Observateur* a few years later suggested there were exchange visits between women from the *Mouvement de Libération des Femmes* and members of *Charlie Hebdo*, most notably Reiser and Wolinski. Reiser admitted that these visits and conversations that took place in the offices of the magazine challenged his perceptions on gender roles and eventually altered his behaviour towards women:

Girls from the MLF [*Mouvement de Libération des Femmes*] came to *Hara Kiri*, and I admit that they made realize some things. There were situations that had escaped me, in the relationships between women and men. And they showed me.[[429]](#footnote-430)

Reiser’s singularity in the aftermath of 1968 in his work for both *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo* can be found in his devotion to social critique, which transcended the political urgency of the revolutionary spirit. Reiser’s female characters germinated out of his own intellectual growth, and addressed the social impact of 1968. It is worth noting that Reiser’s interest in sexuality only started later in his career, as he used his daily life encounters with women at work and in private as the primary source of inspiration for his stories. In 1981, his work was adapted to theatre in a successful play titled *Vive les femmes*![[430]](#footnote-431)

Reiser’s distance from political forms of activism was, however, betrayed by his relentless environmental campaigns for alternative energies. He progressively abandoned ad hominem attacks on political figures as he lost interest in their personalities and focused more on political ideas especially those relating to social justice and the environment. He believed drawing for newspapers gave him a voice as important and similar to those of the intellectuals: ‘I can say what I want and I am heard […] I benefited from the evolution of the *bande dessinée* to be part of a magazine, have a voice, while in a different era, I would have remained an unknown *dessinateur*’.[[431]](#footnote-432) It was indeed this environmentalist position that characterized the editorial line of *Charlie Hebdo* and continues to do so to the present day.

**A note on Pierre Fournier and *La Gueule Ouverte***

*La Gueule Ouverte* was launched in November 1972 by Choron and Cavanna as a monthly ecological magazine, ‘the magazine that announces the end of the world’, and Pierre Fournier was made editor-in-chief. Reiser was also an important contributor since he found in *La Gueule Ouverte* a haven to talk about his favourite subject: solar energy. Fournier died three months after the launch of *La Gueule Ouverte* and Isabelle Cabut took over the magazine’s direction. In 1974 *La Gueule Ouverte* became a weekly paper. Fournier was one of the pillars of *Charlie Hebdo* despite his short association with the magazine. He was born in 1937 in Savoie; his parents were teachers, to whom he owed his vegetarianism and his love for biking.[[432]](#footnote-433) He moved to Paris to study arts and design in the prestigious Ecole Normale Superieure, and in 1959 he won the contest to become the illustrator of *City of Paris*, but he resigned a few weeks later. He started a job in the financial public sector and began drawing for *Hara Kiri*. He only became a full-time contributor to *Hara Kiri* in 1966. Cavanna described Fournier as follows:

This bearded sinister who, for two years, has stubbornly tried to make humorous drawings, and could not manage to, but seems to finally find his tracks: a written-drawn vituperation, all mixed up, against the collective stupidity in general and the pillage of nature in particular. He forgets to be funny; he strikes with first degree like a misery prophet […] and what a style, my God, what a stamina![[433]](#footnote-434)

Fournier was not a humourist despite a certain degree of cynicism in his tone, which primarily comes from his pessimistic worldview. He was a perfect example of the capacity of Cavanna and Choron to embrace new ideas, and to value message over style and technique. Fournier’s militant environmentalism resonated with Cabu’s and Reiser’s, as well as of the social movement at the time.

## 2.6 Wolinski

Georges Wolinski was born in 1934 in Tunis. His father was Jewish Polish and his mother was from an Italian background. He came from a lower middle-class family, moved back to France when he was 13, and went to Paris to study Fine Arts in 1954. In 1960, he was drafted to the French army and was based in Algeria where he sent Cavanna his first illustrated parody of Victor Hugo’s poem ‘Après la bataille.’ Cavanna recalled that he was very impressed upon receiving Wolinski’s first remarkable drawing and described how they stood out from the rest: ‘Drawings, we started to really receive many. Mostly bad ones, hopeless. But these ones radiated with something I could call grace’.[[434]](#footnote-435)

Wolinski was very close to Reiser. They started at the same time, were both very young, and were still trying to find their identities. They eventually had one thing in common which was their obsession with sexuality from both personal and societal perspectives. Wolinski also testified on their relationship to Cavanna:

I was still looking for my style. My drawings were confused, very complicated. We were fragile, ill-assured. Cavanna, our guru, was slagging us off a lot. We admired him, we drank his words. It created links. We later became friends.[[435]](#footnote-436)

Wolinksi was the *dessinateur* *de presse* par excellence. The *bande dessinée* did not really interest him; he preferred to work for the press over all other platforms, ‘the *bande dessinée* is entertaining, it is not grand. I think it’s better to read a good book instead’, he commented in a documentary on the thriving Angouleme festival, France’s annual comics and *bande dessinée* festival.[[436]](#footnote-437)

Wolinski’s style evolved throughout the years according to how politically engaged he was. After May 1968, when he found himself immersed in political debate, his engagement started to show itself more through his stories. He argued that not only were the events in France a sort of awakening for him, but also what was happening in Europe and in the USA: ‘Like many, I felt confined in a society that could not get rid of the aftermath of the Vichy and I considered myself vaguely on the left’.[[437]](#footnote-438) Wolinki identified that May 1968 was a turning point in his life. Before the events, he did not really know he had a talent: ‘I was just trying to make a living’ he declared.[[438]](#footnote-439) *Charlie Hebdo* practiced a style of ‘*dessins* *d’actualité*’ [daily news commentary *dessins*] which responded to the pressure of covering daily news on a synchronic level while also commenting on social questions. Wolinski testified: ‘we adapted the *bande dessinée* genre to the *dessin* de presse’.[[439]](#footnote-440)

In 1977, Wolinski joined the communist newspaper *L’Humanite*. He was not the only *Charlie Hebdo* contributor to join the communist publication; Cabu also contributed many drawings. Wolinski was not openly communist, and he did not carry a party membership card. However, his socialist ideas resonated with *L’Humanite*, which became increasingly popular during and after May 1968. Wolinski was in fact solicited by *L’Huma*,an experience that deeply affected his career.[[440]](#footnote-441)  The editor René Andrieu explained:

I was not sure he was going to accept – since he was not a communist – and I was aware of the difficulties that could hurt an artist if he operated inside a central organ of a specific political party [...] It seemed to me, however, that there was at the time a common denominator between us that was big enough for him to proceed with us in all liberty. [[441]](#footnote-442)

Andrieu argued that Wolinski’s *dessins* proved that freedom could be linked to a sense of responsibility and that was what attracted the *dessinateur* to the newspaper.[[442]](#footnote-443) However, it was exactly this sense of responsibility in being a voice of the communist party that brought a hostile reaction and a strong backlash from Wolinski’s colleagues at *Charlie Hebdo*. The whole dispute was published in *Charlie Hebdo*. Wolinski wrote a short article titled ‘Why I work for *L’Humanite*’ which got published at the end of the editorial of *Charlie Hebdo* in September 1977 in which he explained why he accepted an invitation to be the honourable guest of la fête de *l’Huma*. Wolinski described his relations with the communists throughout his journalistic career as containing very little criticism of the party:

In my career of professional humorist, I rarely attacked the Communist Party, and in the contrary, I often defended the communists. They must have noticed since Andrieu wanted me. They are not crazy, they won’t recruit someone who will insult them. Elections are soon, I made a choice to take part in a battle by the side of the communists, without illusions nor exaggerated expectations.[[443]](#footnote-444)

The reaction of Wolinski’s colleagues in *Charlie Hebdo* was not one of mockery or derision in accordance with their *bête et méchant* style but was instead one of hostile prosecution. Cavanna devoted a whole editorial to this question and used one of the rare occasions where the cover is a non-illustrated headline ‘It was a joke! The whole truth on the formidable trickery of all time: Wolinski says damn you to Marchais and leaves *L’Huma* shutting the door with a big laugh’.[[444]](#footnote-445) In his editorial, Cavanna argued that he was shocked and disconcerted that Wolinski digressed from the ‘only one shared principle’ in the *Hara Kiri* membership, that is: ‘scepticism as the principal condition for objectivity’, a scepticism that should be manifest by the willingness to stay ‘on the outside’. It appeared that, for Cavanna, satire was completely incompatible with political engagement. Nevertheless, Wolinski continued to work for Charlie Hebdo until 7 January 2015.

## 2.7 Conclusion: The fall of the *Bête et Méchant* enterprise

*Charlie Hebdo* was a product of May 1968; it followed the trajectory of the spirit of May 1968 and died with it.[[445]](#footnote-446) Cavanna and his team admitted that *Charlie Hebdo*’s golden years were the first four years (up until 1974). It seemed that the publication suffered the backlash that followed 1968, articulated in the election of conservative presidents: Georges Pompidou in 1970, and Valery Giscard d’Estaing in 1974. Singer did remark that ‘between the mid-seventies and the mid-nineties, in France and throughout Western Europe, you had a reactionary retreat, a very important ideological shift to the Right’.[[446]](#footnote-447) Harold James argued that even the election of Mitterand in 1981 did not bring a change to the left since he abandoned his original socialist programme soon after 1983.[[447]](#footnote-448)

Suri observed that the behaviour of the counterculture embraced strong forms of resistance, and ‘centered more directly on cultural rebellion and experimentation’, and so did *Charlie Hebdo*.[[448]](#footnote-449) The counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s was not about full-scale revolution; it was more about social change, which is why the closer the counterculture got to the mainstream, the more popular it became. Cabu, Wolinki and Reiser all stressed that they were not and did not want to be part of any form of militancy. Another overlap between counterculture, May 1968, and the *bête et méchant* project was the way many of Herbert Marcuse’s influential ideas resonated with the *bête et méchant* spirit despite the lack of any evidence of a direct influence in the magazine’s rhetoric and image.[[449]](#footnote-450) The rejection of both communism and Western liberal capitalism was central to Marcuse’s argument, and Cavanna and Wolinski’s feud over the latter’s collaboration with the commuunist l’*Humanité* was in a similar vein. Fournier and Reiser’s enviromentalism also chimed with Marcuse’s ‘parks and gardens rather than highways and parking lots, to the creation of areas of withdrawal’.[[450]](#footnote-451) Fournier even chose to leave Paris and settle in the Alps where he could use solar energy and write his pieces for *La Gueule Ouverte*. Suri observed a strong connection between violence and artistic and sexual liberation in Marcuse’s thought, stating: ‘The hypermasculine revolutionary raising his weapon against the ghost-faced great powers was a culturally emotive image of rebellion, now given powerful intellectual legitimacy by the philosophical language of the Frankfurt school’.[[451]](#footnote-452) Hypermasculinity was also one trait of *Hara Kiri* displayed in the abundance of sexually explicit material, and the gender politics, showing Choron and his team’s heteronormativity.

In quite a paradoxical and ironic way, it was thanks to the censorship that *Charlie Hebdo* was born, and survived for over ten years. Even though it was only a successor of *L’Hebdo Hara Kiri*, it is very unlikely that *Charlie Hebdo* would have existed and survived without the publicity caused by the ban, and which re-introduced the public to the talents of Reiser and his colleagues. Christian Delporte observed that:

In democracy, the limits of caricature expression are fixed by the law. Its content, its application, its evolution depends on the degree of society’s tolerance to it. The margin of freedom for the *dessinateur* gives way to editorial regulations, to the public’s consideration, and to self-censorship that he imposes on himself or impose on him the pressure of his readers.[[452]](#footnote-453)

Many factors led to the discontinuation of *Charlie Hebdo* in 1981. It was due to a loss of readership, aggravated by the decision made by Cavanna and Choron not to take any advertisements, which limited their income and jeopardized their functioning in times of readership instability. Their continuation in the line of bad taste and uncompromising humour induced lawsuits which added to the financial difficulties of the publication. For instance, *Charlie Hebdo*’s first high-profile trial was in 1978 and opposed the already struggling magazine to the army. Quite expectedly, *Charlie Hebdo* lost, and had to pay a large fine of 15 200 francs.[[453]](#footnote-454) Editions Square, which was created by Choron and expanded ten times in 1972, closed down in 1985 because of financial losses.[[454]](#footnote-455) Most of the people who were involved in the magazine at the time agreed that Choron was a bad manager who took too many financial risks by wanting to go too big too fast. Mazurier talked about some 10 million francs in debts at the closure of *Hara Kiri* in 1985.[[455]](#footnote-456) Cavanna reported that the circulation numbers in the last few years of Charlie *Hebdo* was 30,000 copies sold on average weekly.[[456]](#footnote-457) The publication was therefore costing more to make than its revenues. In 1981, *Hara Kiri* magazine was still selling 70,000 copies to a faithful readership, which Parisis believed to be due to its ‘crypto-porngraphic’ material.[[457]](#footnote-458)

About the disappearance of ‘a very bold and talented paper [*Charlie Hebdo*]’, Cavanna argued for two possible hypotheses: the publication did not withstand the test of time, that is either it did not date well and could not keep up with society’s pace of change or the audience aged badly. But since the customer is always right, then the first option is the right one, according to Cavanna, who regretted that his magazine could not adapt to the changing post-1968 society.[[458]](#footnote-459) Indeed, Laurence Danguy argued that ‘caricature subscribes to a very limited universe, it has “its public”, a public who in the domain of the press decides, amongst other matters, the economic sustainability of a publication’.[[459]](#footnote-460)Cavanna concluded that launching *Charlie Hebdo* was a bet and a risk in the first place, and stated that he was not hoping to achieve financial gain from it, but was rather aiming at keeping the circle of readership he cultivated. This readership became flimsier over the years:

What appeals to the great majority of people irk us. We are certainly not the only ones. There are others like us, not many. These few ones, this marginal fringe which wants quality [...] representl a very small number: enough to support, modestly, the life of a magazine. It was a bet that we took and won. Not straight away. It was a long, hard, depressing, and stimulating. This was 20 years ago.[[460]](#footnote-461)

In his last editorial of 23 December 1981, Cavanna blamed the reduced readership on the education system and reforms of the 1950s and 1960s which created a lack of genuine critical thinking among students, who were *Charlie Hebdo*’s target audience.[[461]](#footnote-462) In fact, some members of the magazine, including Choron and Siné, cultivated a certain hostility and a feeling of contempt towards the younger generation. A representative example of their attitude was documented on national TV when, on 2 January 1982, Cavanna, Choron and other members were invited to the TV show *Droit de reponse* on TF1 hosted by Michel Polac. The aim of the show was to give *Charlie Hebdo* the right to explain why it stopped publishing and to ask the audience what they thought of the publication itself and of its discontinuation. There were other journalists present as well, from *Minute*, *Quotidien de Paris*, and people from the cultural scene in general. Choron and Siné caused a scene and insulted everyone who dared to criticize the magazine. Choron targetted the high school students amongst the audience whom he thought were not worthy of debate and whose opinions were worthless. Cavanna looked very uncomfortable, and Michel Polac had to intervene many times to quieten Choron and at a certain point he had to be escorted outside. The next day the press gave a very harsh review of the show: *Liberation* published an article titled ‘Die Charlie!’, and *Le Quotidien de Paris* headlined ‘Bunch of dirty swine’ in reference to Choron and his mates. As a response, *Charlie Hebdo* issued again another issue titled ‘Special droit de reponse’, Gébé signed the cover ‘all the press shat on the coffin of *Charlie Hebdo*’, which was made up of newspapers headlines superimposed on a gigantic a lump of excrement, while two police officers at the back blocked their noses from the smell.[[462]](#footnote-463)

The now iconic scene of Choron insulting the youth in the audience not only illustrates the *bête et méchant* mindset which tended to always blame the audience for being not clever enough to appreciate its humour, but also documents a generational clash that reached its apogee by the late 1970s. Jean-Pierre Rioux and Jean-François Sirinelli argued that 1960s youth were the first generation to be given its own social class of ‘adolescents’ in what he termed ‘le coup de jeune des sixties’. Many historical factors explain the emergence of a youth culture not only in France but on a global level. Inspired by American culture at the start – something that *Charlie Hebdo* despised – then influenced by Brtitish culture, the French youth described by Rioux and Sirinelli was mobilized by the the use of radio and thanks to the industrial production of the transistor, which was a strong competitor to newspapers.[[463]](#footnote-464)

Cavanna finally argued that the greatest challenge that faced his publication was ‘ambiguity’. He could not understand why people stopped buying the magazine but still rushed to buy the albums of its cartoonists. In other words, the readers liked the contributors, but they did not like the publication as a whole. Cavanna described this ambiguity by the fact that the people who bought *Hara Kiri* for its pornographic material completely misunderstood the subversive use of it. He nevertheless regretted the incompatibility between serious texts and the frivolous images in *Hara Kiri*. On the other hand, *Charlie Hebdo* was bought and read by a very sophisticated readership, who, increasingly offended by the offensive tone of the magazine, ended up not buying it. This was a valid explanation when seen in the frame of internal disagreements between the contributors and the editorship. For instance, Siné believed that *Charlie Hebdo* aimed its attack at the wrong targets, and went too far: ‘Some images in *Charlie Hebdo* shocked me. We did not have the same definition of the intolerable, it annoyed me that they dragged everyone through the shit’.[[464]](#footnote-465)

Gerard J. DeGroot remarked that to come to grasps with counterculture we should abandon the desire to assign meaning and structure to 1968 and its aftermath; there were no ‘grand narratives’ of 1968.[[465]](#footnote-466) Indeed, the *Charlie Hebdo* team was a patchwork of different people with different social backgrounds who shared certain values but were from different political backgrounds, and this is quite normal in a newspaper. However, the lack of any formal structure such as a clear editorial line, and a strong leading editorship with a clear vision might have confused the readers. The Cavanna method worked well so far as it gave great freedom to each contributor to express themselves, but having multiple voices failed to bring a coherent story to the readers.

# Chapter 3: TheNouveau *Charlie Hebdo*

## Introduction

The closure of *Charlie Hebdo* in 1981 was not the end. The relaunch of *Charlie Hebdo* in 1992 is a story that should be told in two stages: the reunion of former *Charlie Hebdo* contributors in January 1991 in a new satirical anti-war paper *La Grosse Bertha*, and a mutiny and a coup inside *La Grosse Bertha* orchestrated by Philippe Val, who managed to convince half the team to join him in a new project where he established himself as the leader of what became known as the ‘nouveau *Charlie Hebdo*’.

By 1982, Cavanna returned to his passion for writing fiction as well as autobiographical novels. The rest of the former *Charlie* contributors turned to work in newspapers like *Le Canard enchaîné*, *L’Humanité* and *Libération*, only to gather again around *La Grosse Bertha*. Running from January 1991 to December 1992, *La Grosse Bertha* was created by the *dessinateur* François Forcadell and the editor Jean-Cyrille Godefroy, who were joined by Gébé (ex-member of *Charlie Hebdo* between 1970 and 1981). The new project was intended to address the lack of satirical publications in the spirit of *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo* that had been evident since the 1980s. Only two national publications with satirical content were then active: *Le Canard enchaîné* and *L’Idiot internationale*.[[466]](#footnote-467) The first issue of *La Grosse Bertha*, published on 17 January 1991, was entirely dedicated to a satirical anti-Gulf War campaign and was extremely critical of François Mittérrand and France’s involvement in the war. From the outset, a conflict arose between Philippe Val and the editor-in-chief François Forcadell, when Val submitted an article that he thought would make a good editorial in the first issue. Focadell thought that the tone of the text was insipid, preferring to publish a text that was signed by another contributor, Francis Kuntz, known as Kafka.[[467]](#footnote-468) Journalist Denis Robert argued that this incident was the origin of a fracture between two clans inside the editorial team: former *Charlie Hebdo* contributors who wanted to bring back the *bête et méchant* humour of the 1970s, versus Philippe Val who preferred a political and cultural newspaper with illustrated humour on the side. Indeed, the French media paid some attention to the first issue of *La Grosse Bertha*, with it being stated that the output ‘advocates for the spirit of *Charlie Hebdo’*. This statement was reiterated by Forcadell who declared: ‘*La Grosse Bertha* is meant to be the successor of, or at least with the same spirit of *Charlie Hebdo*’.[[468]](#footnote-469)

Through interviews conducted in July 2011, Denis Robert revealed that Forcadell’s decision to resign from *La Grosse Bertha in* 1992was instigated by the fact that Cabu, long considered a crucial member of the magazine by its readers, finally leaned towards Val’s politics. Indeed, a Val−Cabu axis was starting to form as early as *La Grosse Bertha*’s inception, and it would continue to shape *Charlie Hebdo*’s editorial line for decades to come. Forcadell also claimed that Val was neither forthcoming nor straightforward about his intentions. He would not express his political opinions clearly during editorial meetings, but would call his colleagues privately afterwards ‘to lure and flatter’ them.[[469]](#footnote-470) In his response to Val’s autobiography *C’était Charlie* (an autobiographical essay Val published after the *Charlie Hebdo* attack in 2015), François Forcadell rebuffed Val’s claim that he took over as editor-in-chief from issue number two onwards, stating that he (Forcadell) remained editor-in-chief until issue 12.[[470]](#footnote-471) Forcadell claimed that he resigned because he wanted to avoid a clash with Cabu who hoped to impose Val as the editor-in-chief of the written material in the publication. Forcadell estimated that the circulation numbers under his own editorship were between 18,000 and 21,000 copies a week.[[471]](#footnote-472)

Reportedly, after pushing Forcadell out, Val became the editor-in-chief in April 1991, and appointed Cabu, Charb, Gébé, Peroni, and Tignous as his editorial team. Bernard Maris, Xavier Pasquini, Albert Algoud, Olivier Cyran, Luz, and Riss joined afterwards; they would later become permanent members of *Charlie Hebdo*. Cavanna was also asked to contribute a few articles.[[472]](#footnote-473) Under Val, *La Grosse Bertha* gathered together a battalion of *dessinateurs* *de presse* and journalists from different generations, but offered a diluted editorial line. Sales numbers dropped to a catastrophic 15,000 copies a week between April 1991 and June 1992.[[473]](#footnote-474) Godefroy decided to remove Val, and instead of having one editor-in-chief, he proposed a decentralized committee of editors, writing on 24 June 1992:

A conflict has risen between me and Philippe Val in the past few months. I consider that *La Grosse Bertha*, which is supposed to be a newspaper that tarnishes everything [le journal qui salit tout] had become very respectful of a certain establishment.[[474]](#footnote-475)

Godefroy invited Val to become one member of the new committee, but the latter declined and announced on the radio that same day that he intended to launch a new magazine with Cabu.[[475]](#footnote-476) Four days later, *Charlie Hebdo* was again available in kiosks.

The internal conflict at *La Grosse Bertha* led Val to quit and to take a group of the cartoonists with him, including Cabu, Gébé, Willem, Wolinski, and several other former *Charlie Hebdo* contributors. This left Val with a few enemies, but also formed a clan around him. In *C’était Charlie*, Val argued that his editorial decisions at *La Grosse Bertha* made many of his contributors resign in protest, citing censorship. He said:

With the departure of Artur, Kafka, Kink, and Forcadell, there formed a first small cell of opposition which for many years did not cease to try and ruin us [referring to *Charlie Hebdo*]. I’m afraid that my status as an outsider in the journalistic seraglio was the origin of many people’s hard feelings.[[476]](#footnote-477)

Nevertheless, Val, through this limited but intense experience as the head of *La Grosse Bertha,* succeeded in establishing himself as an editor-in-chief who was capable of taking editorial decisions and demonstrating a strong sense of authority. What ensued next was critical in shaping the future of *Charlie Hebdo*. Philippe Val left *La Grosse Bertha* determined to start his own newspaper that would voice his interests; he convinced Cabu and the rest of the team to join him. Soon the idea of resurrecting *Charlie Hebdo* was adopted with great enthusiasm, only for the team to discover that the intellectual property rights for the title had never been legally submitted.

Tensions surfaced when Val met Choron circa 1992. According to Denis Robert, Val was accompanied by Cabu to this meeting, as they thought Choron was the owner of the original *Charlie Hebdo* and therefore the copyright-holder, so their mission was to get him on board for the new venture.[[477]](#footnote-478) Choron refused to participate in a magazine where he was not the boss, and sued Val for breach of copyright, demanding the banning of the publication and two million francs in damages. Speaking of his rejection of participating in the resurrected *Charlie Hebdo*, Choron argued that a team which sold only 15,000 copies a week in *La Grosse Bertha* would not be able to make a successful *Charlie Hebdo*.[[478]](#footnote-479) In fact, Choron was asked twice to join the new *Charlie*, the first time by Val in 1992, and the second time by Cavanna in 2005. Sylvie Lebegue, Choron’s partner for 20 years, revealed in her autobiography that Choron dismissed Cavanna’s offer.[[479]](#footnote-480) She eloquently encapsulated his character: ‘what he [Choron] wanted was to be the shipmaster again, the boss, the chef, the king, just like before, period’.[[480]](#footnote-481) That was a turning point in the history of *Charlie Hebdo*. Choron’s refusal to work under Val’s leadership, Cavanna and the ex-members’ strong desire to relaunch the good old paper regardless of who was leader, and Val’s ambition to start a publication that expressed his own politics, led to an irreparable rupture between the original partners Choron and Cavanna, and the rise of Philippe Val as the legitimate leader of *Charlie Hebdo*.[[481]](#footnote-482)

The first issue of the new *Charlie Hebdo* was quickly published on 1 July 1992 by Editions Kalachnikov (which would later become Editions Rotatives), a publishing company created and funded by Cabu, Gébé, Val, and his friend, the singer Renaud. Editions Kalachnikov had a capital of 2,000 francs financed by five shareholders: Cabu and Val with six shares each (a total of 12 parts out of 20) held the majority of the shares. The three other shareholders were Gébé, Bernard Maris, and Renaud.[[482]](#footnote-483) Gébé was named director of publication while Val established himself as editor-in-chief. The first issue of *Charlie Hebdo* sold 120,000 copies and then sales stabilized at around 60,000.[[483]](#footnote-484) Clearly the circulation numbers demonstrated that the *Charlie Hebdo* name had more appeal than *La Grosse Bertha* was ever able to achieve.

The ownership of the *Charlie Hebdo* copyright was not determined until 20 January 1993 when Choron lost the lawsuit, a decision confirmed at appeal two years later, on 25 October 1995. The trial took place between 1992 and 1995 and Wolinski, Cabu, Delfeil de Ton, Siné, and Gébé testified in support of Cavanna and against Choron as to *Charlie Hebdo*’s provenance. Cabu insisted that ‘*Charli*e owes everything to Cavanna: he is the one who formed the team, found the tone of *Charlie*, and did everything’.[[484]](#footnote-485) Delfeil de Ton declared: ‘Cavanna was our inventor, our venerated master, our inspiration. Without him, we would not be here. Nobody would be here’.[[485]](#footnote-486) Sylvie Caster added: ‘It was his baby, *Charlie Hebdo*, and he really had this immense desire that the baby should not be thrown out with the bath water. And then he had a unique opportunity for *Charlie* to be reborn’.[[486]](#footnote-487) Siné on the other hand had doubts about the authorship, but still voted for Cavanna:

We could not swear that Cavanna was the unique author, but we insinuated that, probably, he was the one who founded the title… It was rather twisted, but finally I signed the papers without too much hesitation. For our generation, Cavanna was the father. He definitely was the one who forced the press to open up, to be less stupid.[[487]](#footnote-488)

Delfeil de Ton concluded that ‘we all made a gesture in favour of Cavanna, a gesture that transmuted into a favour for Val and Cabu’.[[488]](#footnote-489) By the end of three years of legal issues Cavanna won the lawsuit, his legal defence having been undertaken by Richard Malka, a lawyer who later became Val’s close friend.Cavanna was established as the owner of the intellectual property of *Charlie Hebdo*, which he was stated to have created in 1970 and curated up to 1982. However, he had to concede the use of the title *Charlie Hebdo* to the new editors against a 0.44 percent royalty from the monthly gross. It was not clear why Cavanna conceded his rights for a very thin profit. However, he did confess that the trial against his long-time partner Choron left him vulnreable:

Weakness, yes weakness… I am not strong enough for lawsuits, not because I don’t want to fight; quite the opposite… But not this type of conflict, you see, the battles of bureaucracy… I get scammed all the time. [[489]](#footnote-490)

Cavanna conceded the copyrights of the title ‘*Charlie Hebdo*’ to Editions Kalashnikov under the irrevocable condition that the spirit of *Charlie Hebdo* would continue to be fully protected. This was the first time that the ideals of *Charlie Hebdo* were outlined in an official document: [[490]](#footnote-491)

* The struggle for democracy and against every form of absolutism including racism, xenophobia, sexism, exclusion, religious fanaticism, chauvinism, war, militarism, incitement to hatred, leadership cults, and invasion of privacy.
* Defence and illustration of rationalism and denunciation of all forms of obscurantism, misinformation, and idolatry.
* The defence of ecology.
* The defence of animal rights and the fight against hunting, fishing, bullfighting, and vivisection.[[491]](#footnote-492)

While *Hara Kiri*’s manifesto in 1960 focused on advertising culture and consumerism while vowing to offer quality journalism that would distinguish the magazine from the mainstream press, *Charlie Hebdo*’s ideals in 1992 were more political. Cultural conformity was no longer the enemy. The defence of ecology and animal rights had always been one of *Charlie Hebdo*’s most stable values, showcased in the work of Reiser, Fournier, and Cavanna himself, as seen in the previous chapter. It is the ‘struggle for democracy’ that has been the most problematic and most challenging to any historical analysis. As we have seen in the previous chapter, *Charlie Hebdo* was a strong defender of abortion, the contraceptive pill, and sexual freedom rights. However, there was a degree of hypernormativity and hypermasculinity that the magazine’s contributors could not overcome despite their numerous attempts at appearing progressive. The fight against racism was not one of *Hara Kiri*’s most conspicuous themes and very few covers of *Charlie Hebdo* in the 1970s treated the question of race.[[492]](#footnote-493) The fight against religious fanaticism was frequently expressed in *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo*’s anticlericalism in the 1960s and 1970s. However, one major addition to Val’s *Charlie* was an anti-Islamism that developed alongside a continued anticlericalism. In reality, the humour that was tediously directed at the consumerist society of the 1960s and 1970s utilized women as a tool of satire that relied heavily on the image of a woman who is thin and graceful, sexually available, a perfect housewife who cannot run for MP. In the continuous lack of women contributors under both Cavanna and Val’s leaderships, humour directed at women in the new *Charlie Hebdo* is almost exclusively targeted at veiled Muslim women, and at women in politics. Chapter 4 will explore the veil question in *Charlie Hebdo* in much more detail.

When signing off the intellectual property handover, Val, as new editor-in-chief, promised to remain faithful to the spirit of *Charlie Hebdo* and to fight for its causes.[[493]](#footnote-494) Cavanna continued to write his famous weekly editorial ‘je l’ai pas lu, je l’ai pas vu…mais j’en ai entendu causer’ [‘I did not read it, I did not see it, but I heard it talked about’] for the first 24 issues, then Val took over the editorial and Cavanna was given a column near the end of the paper.

## 3.1 Philippe Val in, François Cavanna out

When Val took over the leadership of *Charlie Hebdo*, not only was Cavanna put to one side but also the overall *bête et méchant* legacy was retired. Jane Weston Vauclair observes that:

Over the past 15 years, the ongoing importance of *bête et méchant* humour in relation to *Charlie hebdo* has been illustrated by the growing sense of betrayal expressed by a significant portion of its readership over its turn to an increasingly serious, and less juvenile, satire, under the strong and autocratic editorship of Philippe Val.[[494]](#footnote-495)

The sense of betrayal mentioned by Weston was not just amongst the readership; many of the old cohort spoke out about what they saw as Cavanna’s loss of control over his own magazine and the growing autocratic attitude of Val as outlined by Weston. The trial was a complex and drawn-out process that shaped *Charlie Hebdo*’s parlous financial status and turbulent internal governance, an issue that surfaced again after the January 2015 attack.[[495]](#footnote-496) According to Denis Robert, on 30 November 1992 *Charlie Hebdo*’s lawyers Dartevelle and Malka pleaded with Editions Kalachnikov for the creation of a ‘société de rédacteurs’ [‘editors company’] which would include Cabu, Val, Gébé, Cavanna, Wolinksi, Willem, and Delfeil de Ton, who would control and share *Charlie Hebdo*’s capital between them. Cavanna did not have a pension scheme, for which he blamed Choron’s mismanagement, and so thought he would eventually become a co-owner of, or at least an investor in, the nouveau *Charlie*.

In the first years of the ‘nouveau *Charlie*’, when the new project was still slowly shaping up, Val used Choron’s appeal and the uncertainty of the situation in the absence of a final verdict to postpone the discussion as to who could or should invest in and own the paper.[[496]](#footnote-497) Meanwhile, Delfeil de Ton quit, while both Willem and Wolinski lost interest in the idea of becoming financially involved.[[497]](#footnote-498) Cavanna, who had to earn his living, accepted whatever deal was being offered to him. He opened up in his most recent published work, *Lune de Miel* (2011), about feeling betrayed and manipulated by Val and Malka. Delfeil de Ton had already expressed similar feelings towards Val and Malka, confirmed that the two made promises which they would then stall on, and publicly accused Val and Malka of having schemed to keep the publication in their exclusive possession.[[498]](#footnote-499) Outraged by this accusation, Val and Cabu wrote a *droit de réponse* to *Le Nouvel Observateur* accusing de Ton of defamation and lies.[[499]](#footnote-500) In a letter he sent to *Éditions Les Échappées* (previously known as Editions Rotatives owner of *Charlie Hebdo*) in 2009, Cavanna later revealed:

Without me knowing, a management company was being organized, stocks were being distributed… They might have suggested it to me. I have no memory of it. By all means, if they did, they didn’t insist at all or shouted it in my deaf ears. I was then, paradoxically, the exclusive holder of the copyright but I owned nothing. My insouciance about money issues and my lack of business sense meant that, stupidly, I was not aware of profound ongoing changes.[[500]](#footnote-501)

Cavanna clearly had wanted to own *Charlie* not just spiritually or in terms of its intellectual property, but also in the economic sense. He probably realized that he would have had more power if he owned as many shares in *Charlie* as Val or Cabu.

In 1992, Philippe Val was 40 years old, while Cavanna was 69 and struggling with Parkinson’s disease.[[501]](#footnote-502) The trial over the authorship of *Charlie Hebdo* broke up Cavanna and Choron’s friendship. Cavanna was left ‘miserable’ at losing his partner and longtime friend. Virginie Vernay, Cavanna’s assistant, testified: ‘They loved each other. At the end, they did not speak any more. Cavanna was miserable because of it’.[[502]](#footnote-503) In the documentary, *Choron dernière* (2007), which retells the life of Choron, Cavanna gave a very emotional testimony where he stressed how much they loved each other, evoking their 30-year friendship from 1960 through to the 1980s and their very strong, almost familial, bond. Cavanna, who was in tears, expressed sincere regret over their broken relationship.

Sylvie Caster, Delfeil de Ton, Virginie Vernay, and Siné all testified as to the status of Cavanna in Val’s *Charlie* and how much emotional pain his loss of control over the publication caused him. Sylvie Caster tried to explain the reasons Cavanna ended up in a powerless situation and argued that Cavanna was not a victim: ‘he was very proud, rightly. He was perfectly lucid about his status in *Charlie Hebdo*. He told me “now they use me like the old figurehead that people put on top of the fireplace”’.[[503]](#footnote-504) Siné reported that his colleagues had no sympathy for Cavanna and no longer sought his opinion or advice on their articles or cartoons.[[504]](#footnote-505) Delfeil de Ton concluded: ‘so basically there was a newspaper, *Charlie Hebdo,* where Cavanna was nothing. He was not the director. He was not the editor. He was not a shareholder. He was nothing’.[[505]](#footnote-506) Cavanna admitted it himself:

When, in 1992, after ten years of silence, it was a question of raising *Charlie Hebdo* out of its ruins, I saw this as a joyful extension of the past, and I waved in jubilation the flag of ‘*Bête et méchant*’ which would get rid of the dead wood of stupidity, as was stated on the front cover. What a huge mistake I made, and Choron was actually right in telling me to piss off when I asked him to join us! [[506]](#footnote-507)

Cavanna confessed that ‘under the direction of Philippe Val […] the paper lost some of its essentially humorous character and evolved towards a ‘serious’ style of writing. And the drawings, though numerous, were there just to illuminate the crammed pages’.[[507]](#footnote-508) Cavanna was himself an aspiring dessinateur, and his conception of *Charlie Hebdo* had constantlyleaned towards the use of images more than texts, while Val did not have the same experience with dessin and could not realistically favour it over text. Cavanna concluded bitterly:

I realized very soon that *Charlie Hebdo* was in reality the echo of Philippe Val’s opinions, who was full of character, ambitious, and ready for anything… a very skillful manoeuvrer, the reader will soon notice that.[[508]](#footnote-509)

Cavanna was not the only one to notice the change in *Charlie Hebdo*’s editorial structure. Between 1992 and 2009, many voices from within the paper criticized censorship and self-censorship, which led to contributors quitting and others being discharged. The most prominent cases were those of Mona Chollet, Lefred-Thouron, Olivier Cyran, and Siné. The latter’s departure cost the magazine a substantial part of its readers (which will be discussed at the end of this chapter). The dismissal of Mona Chollet, Olivier Cyran, and Lefred Thouron affected people’s perception of the paper and raised questions of censorship drawing attention to Val’s authoritarian editorship.

The factionalism that started to surface and define the nouveau *Charlie* was driven by professional factors, and differences in political opinions and ideologies. Most contributors who joined the nouveau *Charlie*, whether from the old cohort or new members, came with the hope and conviction that *Charlie* was a place that would tolerate their ideas no matter how different or eccentric they were. Cavanna’s *Charlie* had been such a place. For its writers and cartoonists, for the press, and for society, *Charlie* had been a place where all ideas were welcome as long as they were progressive on social questions such as gay rights, racism, and environmentalism. It was these expectations that made the acceptance of Philippe Val inadmissible for *Charlie*’s contributors, readership, and sympathizers. The conflict between Val and Cavanna was public, and even those who did not read *Charlie Hebdo* in the 1970s knew of some of the magazine’s famous contributors especially Cabu, Wolinski, Gébé, and Siné. They had heard of the iconoclastic *Hara Kiri*, andChoron’s reputation survived the test of time. Those interested in *Charlie*’s resurrection were hoping for the continuation of the *bête et méchant* bad taste humour, and most importantly they were expecting an utterly uncensored extreme-left paper. Many readers seemed to adapt to Val’s version but some were bitterly disappointed. Siné’s episode which is explained at the end of this chapter is a very good illustration of a fraction of the reader’s loyalty to the *bête et méchant* legacy.

Val’s editorial line deviated from and discarded the pursuit of subversion for the sake of subversion and the cultivation of an anti-establishment position for its own sake. Val’s agenda for *Charlie Hebdo* was stimulated by three convictions: his philo-Semitism, his anti-sociologism, and his aversion to Islam based on the assumption that anti-Semitism is intrinsic to Islam and to the Arab identity.[[509]](#footnote-510) In 2017, Val published a pamphlet – which encapsulated the politics he had been cultivating for decades – entitled ‘Against identitarianism’ and what he called ‘une identité bâtarde’ titled *Cachez cette identité que je ne saurais voir.* He argued that one of the major problems with European history, and French history in particular, is that it celebrates Greek civilization but ignores the influence of the ‘pensée juive’ on European culture. The ‘bastards’, according to Val were those great thinkers (such as Spinoza and Montaigne) who over the centuries relinquished their Jewishness (out of fear of Christian anti-Semitism) for the sake of a universalist identity. Val called for a reappropriation of the Jewish memory through a revisiting of history, not through the Judeo-Christian prism but rather through a Judeo-Greek one. He stated:

There is a Greek in everyone of us, who, for the past 2500 years surveyed the agora for what is just and what is unjust, and a Jew who did not stop interrogating language to create a universal law.[[510]](#footnote-511)

Through the use of the Judeo-Greek formula, Val sought to secularize Judaism while stressing its superiority as a civilization, remove the Christian component in an anti-clerical move (particularly in the light of the anti-Semitic Christian past).

As to his religious convictions, Val declared: ‘even though I am not Jewish, I feel that I am a citizen of Israel, in the same way that I feel I am a citizen of all the great democracies which respect the laws and individual freedom’.[[511]](#footnote-512) Val’s admiration of the *pensée juive*, his affinity with the state of Israel, and his devotion to fight anti-Semitism is in fact intertwined with his convictions regarding what is perceived as the threat of Islam in France. From the beginning of the 2000s, and with the Second Palestinian Intifada, an opinion held by media intellectuals (such as Val) started to crystallize: the anti-Israeli left is responsible for the rise of anti-Semitism in France.[[512]](#footnote-513)

This anticolonialism – henceforth without colonies – which is the strange ideology of the anti-nationalist left was historically and ideologically constituted during the Algerian War, and remains a reference far more powerful than the Second World War. It is their little adventure. Many of them [the left] missed the opportunity to be alive during the war… Their intellectual and sometimes physical engagement on the side of Arabs profoundly marked them. The result is an unconditional attachement to the Arab cause. This Left loves ‘the Arabs’ to such a proportion that it hates ‘the Americans’. Jew = colonizer, colonizer = Nazi, so Jew = Nazi, that is the syllogism, that runs through the public opinion in the Muslim world without any obstacles, and (discreetly for moral and legal reasons) travels through the alter-sovereignist France.[[513]](#footnote-514)

The Nouveau *Charlie*’s anti-Islam stance is thus neither irrational nor haphazard. It is part of a worldview that has a consistent logic, positioned against the anti-colonial tradition of the Left.

The critique of what Val calls ‘sociologism’ was detailed in his book *Malaise dans l’inculture* (2015). Val rejected political correctness, and his conception of ‘sociologism’ or ‘explications sociologisantes’. According to Val, sociologism is a derivative of sociology and consists of exonerating individuals from personal failures while blaming the ‘system’ for them. Val’s anti-sociologism consists thus of refusing to explain an individual’s or a minority’s failure to fit into society through accounts of the deficiency of social structures.[[514]](#footnote-515) Rousseau, who believed that man is good by nature but corrupted by social institutions, is, for Val, the founding father of sociologism.[[515]](#footnote-516) Val believed that the French Republican system was working well just as it was. In fact, it is against the primacy of the community that Val was trying to argue; according to him, it is through the ideal of individualism that individuals emancipate themselves and prosper.

Val’s politics were reflected in his management of *Charlie Hebdo.* He allowed space for other opinions but within limits, just enough to display a certain respect of free speech, but not too much, lest it redefine the paper. For instance, Charb’s pro-Palestinian convictions were allowed because *Charlie* was committed to free speech, but pro-Palestinianism was not allowed to redefine *Charlie*. This question was particularly important because it created internal conflicts and because pro-Palestinianism in France was associated with a certain idea of islamo-gauchisme or ‘Islamo-leftism’. Charb himself was accused of being an islamo-guachiste. The term is used to designate a link between a fraction of the left/extreme left, and certain Islamic or Islamist milieux or ideas. The term is much publicized in media and therefore often used in a stigmatizing manner to disqualify the left and trivialize their support for the Palestinian case.[[516]](#footnote-517) The islamo-gauchisme in the left is usually positioned against the secular left, which is not at all accurate since in Charb’s case, he was a strong believer in and defender of *laïcité.* Val’s favourable opinions of Israel occupied the central space in *Charlie* in terms of covers and editorials, and while Charb’s ideas echoed those of Siné (and vice versa), Val’s stance was reproduced by other contributors, such as Caroline Fourest and Oncle Bernard, who regularly focused on the topic.

## 3.2 The Nouveau *Charlie*

In the first issue of *Charlie Hebdo* in its new edition published on 1 July 1992 the cover, drawn by Cabu, featured a worried François Mitterrand enumerating the problems facing his government, including *Charlie* making a comeback. Alongside this caricature, Philippe Val included a paragraph he titled ‘Adieu “La Grosse”’ explaining the reasons he and several others left *La Grosse Bertha* when they were accused of being, according to Val, a ‘journal favourable to the establishment’, and ‘a tiers-mondiste [Third-Worldist] paper’.[[517]](#footnote-518) Val outlined the motto of the nouveau *Charlie* using a metaphor: ‘we launched a survey made of a panel of 1,000 idiots to ask for their opinion… and we did the opposite’.[[518]](#footnote-519) Above the masthead were listed the names of the contributors: Bernar, Biard, Cabu, Cavanna, Charb, Cyran, Patrick Font, Gébé, Honore, Kamagurka, Libowzki, Luz, Oncle Bernard, Pasquini, Plantu, Renaud, Riss, Siné, Strelkoff, Tignous, Philippe Val, Willem, Wolinski. Strikingly, and characteristically, this was an all-male cast.[[519]](#footnote-520) The first woman to join the contributors to the new *Charlie* was Mona Chollet in 1999 followed by Emanuelle Veil in 2001, and Caroline Fourest, Fiammetta Venner, and Agathe Andre in 2003. Overall, from the time of its relaunch to the present, *Charlie* hosted around 20 women journalists, though not all at the same time, with the paper employing very few *dessinateurs* aside from Coco (2008 to present) and Catherine Meurisse (2005-2016).[[520]](#footnote-521)

Unlike Cavanna’s *Charlie*, an abstract of Val’s editorial shared the front cover with the single-panel cartoon that traditionally characterized *Charlie Hebdo*’s dramatic covers. The themes of the covers and the editorials were predominantly French political, social, and cultural affairs, but they also covered major international news such as the Maastricht treaty and its related referendum, the Somalia famine, the US elections, the Palestinian−Israeli conflict, the Sarajevo siege, the Durban conference, 9/11, and many other topics of international and national news. Between July 1992 and 12 May 2009, under Val’s editorship, out of the 880 covers published, only 48 were directly critical of religious figures, including the Pope, the Prophet Muhammad, Mother Theresa, imams (the Ayatollah Khomeini early on in the relaunch, and a more generic caricature of an imam afterwards), and priests (such as Abbé Pierre). Val’s editorials mirrored an ideology that was socially progressive and economically liberal, advocating free trade, open borders, and anti-nationalism. He was very critical of the anti-globalization movement, supported the Maastricht treaty in 1992, was strongly in favour of a military intervention in Kosovo, and voted Yes in the European Constitution Referendum in 2005, unlike most of the left which remained predominantly on the No side, as did the majority of his editorial team.[[521]](#footnote-522) A free speech warrior, he also held a libertarian stance towards media regulation and denounced any control over the press or media through his recurrent attacks against the Observatoire Français des Medias (OFM),[[522]](#footnote-523) and Acrimed (Action Critique Médias).[[523]](#footnote-524) In his attacks on the OFM and Acrimed, Val accused the two organizations of giving in to conspiracy theories, anti-Americanism,[[524]](#footnote-525) and anti-Semitism.[[525]](#footnote-526) He repeatedly attacked the far left for not being firm on questions of anti-Semitism, for not being able to admit to or get rid of its anti-Dreyfusard past,[[526]](#footnote-527) and for being too cosy with Islamists.[[527]](#footnote-528)

To be clear, the anticlerical position was not abandoned within the new *Charlie*. There was an abundance of anticlerical material from the very start, exemplified in Cabu’s anticlerical cover ridiculing the famous Catholic priest Abbé Pierre, who was known for his charity work. The priest was depicted wearing military boots and carrying a Kalashnikov, ready to go and fight in Sarajevo.[[528]](#footnote-529) In its coverage of the Waco suicide cult in Texas, Olivier Cyran’s column invited all sects of the world to make the generous gesture of committing suicide, specifically criticizing Jehovah’s Witnesses, and the cartoons and texts spread over four pages targeted all religions and depicted John Paul II as the head of a criminal organization.[[529]](#footnote-530)

In addition to recurrent caricatures of the Pope, a new theme started to make its way into both text and images: Islamic fundamentalists in Iran and in Afghanistan. On 2 June 1993, the headline on the front cover stated ‘23 *dessinateurs* against fundamentalism’, in red, bold font. The story spreading across three pages included 23 cartoons made by *Charlie Hebdo*’s regular contributors and other commissioned contributions alongside Olivier Cyran’s column ‘Let’s laugh with Salman Rushdie’ in reference to the Salman Rushdie affair.[[530]](#footnote-531) Cyran’s story centred around an international competition to be launched in Tehran where cartoonists from all over the world would be invited to ‘draw the true conspiracy that is concealed in the blasphemous novel of Salman Rushdie’.[[531]](#footnote-532) It is unclear whether the competition itself was made-up, but Cyran mentioned a certain jury president, Mohammed Parvin, who specified to an agency named Irna that cartoonists should submit their contributions by 4 June, and whoever represented Rushdie in the most hilarious way would win 160 gold coins. This resulted in three pages which featured 23 cartoons caricaturing the mullahs and combining attacks on Khomeini with the Pope. Riss drew a crude caricature of two female kangaroos seated on a public bench knitting while their genitals were exposed, and their faces were covered with burqas. One is telling the other: ‘Without my scarf I feel completely naked’. The exhibition of the female body here recalls the depictions of nuns in *Hara Kiri.* Cabu’s cartoon was set in a boxing ring with a match where the executioner of Tehran squared up to the executioner of Algiers, the Pope as a referee and closely watched by an angry Buddhist and an angry Jew ready ‘to take the winner down’. Martin created two cartoons of mugshots of a Muslim man modelling the winter collection in his heavy beard and the summer collection in a shaved Hitler moustache. Jy drew a Muslim woman’s naked behind as she was kneeling in prayer. The woman’s exposed genitals resembled a veiled woman’s face. Luz borrowed the famous Brezhnev and Honecker socialist fraternal kiss to parody the Pope and Khomeini kissing while their tongues intertwined to form a swastika.[[532]](#footnote-533)

On 12 October 1993, *Charlie* attacked the Pope’s encyclical letter on the moral authority of the Church with a large column from Val disparaging not only the Catholic Church but Christianity altogether.[[533]](#footnote-534) The same issue commented on the evangelization of the banlieues and the inauguration of the first institute for the formation of imams of France. Both actions were blamed on Pasqua, the Minister of Interior Affairs known for his anti-immigration policies.[[534]](#footnote-535) In the 10 November 1993 issue, the question of proselytism in the banlieues of Paris, where Muslim minorities loomed the largest, was discussed in a report titled ‘A Mosque is the Spirit of the Church without the Church’ (‘Une mosquée, c’est l’esprit de clocher sans les cloches’) by Olivier Cyran in collaboration with Latif Djeddi and featuring drawings by Luz. The reportage on the place of Islam in France drew an analogy between the Muslim Friday prayers and the Christian Sunday prayers, but Cyran remarked that while Christians enjoy the luxury of an edifice like the church, Muslims of France have to pray in a cellar or a garage.[[535]](#footnote-536) As a result, once the prayer is finished, Muslims have ‘to scatter into the gutters’. Cyran argued: ‘France’s second religion, Islam, seems to be extremely secondary. Therefore, it is hard to put one’s finger on the exemplars of the supposed “Islamist menace” that we came here to explore, in Saint-Denis, in the Parisian banlieues’.[[536]](#footnote-537) Cyran and Luz travelled to Saint-Denis to talk to French Muslims about their problems with extremism. Cyran’s approach was to try to be unprejudiced as he interviewed both practising and secular Muslims. He questioned whether French people’s fear of a growing Islam was justifiable, and concluded that the diverse forms of religious proselytizing did not represent an existential threat to France as the media was trying to portray, but were rather symptoms of the Republic’s failure towards its citizens.[[537]](#footnote-538) Quoting one of the interviewees, Cyran concluded that the primary problem was unemployment and injustice.[[538]](#footnote-539) Cyran took a position that would be unrecognizable to today’s readers of *Charlie*. Not only had he questioned the whole concept of ‘Islam de France’ through his use of inverted commas when using this expression, but he also clearly explained the exaggerated extremism that was reported in the French media by France’s own policies that lacked social justice and equality. Cyran’s position could be described as tolerant and progressive, and his atypical approach vis-à-vis Islam and Muslims in France illustrated Val’s vision of *Charlie*’s editorial line. Val did not deny Cyran and Luz the chance to express their opinion this time. However, there was a limit on how much space was given to personal politics since Cyran decided to leave *Charlie* in late 1999. He confessed that by the end of the 1990s, his relationship with Val had started to deteriorate, and it had nothing to do with Islamophobia, which only became pronounced after 9/11.[[539]](#footnote-540) It was rather Cyran’s opinions which were critical of the government at the time that became less and less tolerated by Val. Cyran confessed that his interests in social journalism including problems of illegal immigrants (colloquially referred the sans-papiers, in France) , the immigrants, and the struggle of the working-class districts were increasingly resisted by Val’s dominant editorial line.[[540]](#footnote-541)

Though *Charlie Hebdo* did not exist in 1988, and so could not have a positon on Salman Rushdie during the *Satanic Verses* controversy and the fatwa against him, Taslima Nasrin subsequently offered a significant opportunity for the publication to reaffirm its unconditional defence of freedom of speech, especially if the speech was anti-religious, and, particularly, anti-Islam.[[541]](#footnote-542) Taslima Nasrin, who received death threats following the publication of her novel, *Lajja*, was featured in a half-page interview with Olivier Cyran, who labelled her ‘the Salman Rushdie of Bangladesh’.[[542]](#footnote-543) On the Taslima Nasrin controversy, Val testified:

We followed the Taslima Nasrin affair closely, this young woman poet, physician, and heroic feminist. Like Salman Rushdie, she found herself a victim in 1994 of a fatwa and a bounty for whoever kills her. We evidently supported her. She came to visit us in *Charlie*, one winter evening, accompanied by Fiammetta Venner and Caroline Fourest.[[543]](#footnote-544)

The interview started with a biography of Nasrin and a critique of French intellectuals who, according to Cyran, had not shown enough support for the Bengali writer. *Charlie* seemed to have wished there was more French public and media interest in the Taslima Nasrin case, and continued to provide a cartoon here and there by Charb and Cabu to remind the reader that the ‘blasphemous’ writer was still in hiding, fearing for her life.[[544]](#footnote-545) Once again, on 10 August 1994, Val devoted his editorial ‘Ah, if only Taslima Nasrin was Europe Champion of 400m!’ to Nasrin, and used it mainly to attack an article, which appeared in July 23 in *Le Monde*.[[545]](#footnote-546) Val equated *Le Monde* with the right-wing newspaper *Le Figaro*, and accused both, but especially *Le Monde*, of making important issues such as the question of free speech seem unimportant and banal. Val stated: ‘*Le Monde* reflects our world sick with media’, and observed:

When such matters as extremists’ crimes, or the assassination of a black man in Paris or a Turkish man in Germany get repeated a lot, such news make for a pile of unreadable facts that we cannot do anything about.[[546]](#footnote-547)

Val blamed *Le Monde* for treating serious news such as women’s oppression in Muslim countries, or systematic identity checks for Arabs and black people, or ‘the criminal propaganda of religions’ (here he might be referring to the Catholic church as much as the Iranian Islamist government), as if they were natural phenomena against which it is completely useless to act or to speak. Val’s style of writing is lucid, eloquent, and convincing. For example, it is difficult and almost impossible to disagree with him when he says:

Racist crimes, and our terrifying similarities with all the people of all nations, our common ability to feel pain, the strictly equal value of life in all latitudes, the oppression of women in the world: all this is just sorcery, intellectual urges on their way to healing.[[547]](#footnote-548)

‘Sorcery’ and mere ‘intellectual urges’ were used here to criticize *Le Monde*’s framing of certain news stories by marginalizing what Val perceived to be urgent and important issues. By criticizing what he sees as a lack of meaning in *Le Monde*’s reporting of Taslima Nasrin’s story, Val implicitly reframes the story as one of a universal value. In other words, according to him the question is no longer of a single person whose writings proved controversial for certain Muslim communities. The case here is for women, all oppressed women in the world, of human rights, and of the religion at the root of this universal cause: Islam. Furthermore, Val accuses *Le Monde* of making a dangerous statement in asking whether free speech is applicable in the same way everywhere in all societies. For, according to Val, such question contradicts universal human rights. Taken at face value, Val’s discourse is consistent with the extreme left’s political discourse.[[548]](#footnote-549)

But, based on Val’s editorials during his 15-year reign over *Charlie*, it can be argued that he attacked the left more frequently than he attacked the right, and more ferociously than he attacked *le Front National*. In building a newspaper based on opinions more than on facts, Val found a target in *Le Monde*, a well-established newspaper of record that is famous for its opinion pieces and in-depth analysis of current affairs. *Le Monde* was a representative of an establishment left that Val’s *Charlie* was ideologically divorced from. Val was motivated by adversity, rivalry, discord, and competition. Val testified as follows:

The small world of the *Monde diplomatique* and Serge Halimi railed with a certain perversity at *Charlie*. They even presented the editorial team as a victim which I took hostage. They tried to popularize the idea that *Charlie* would be an amazing magazine if it were not for ‘the Val gang’.[[549]](#footnote-550)

Most of Val’s ideas are born out of rejection of other ideas. In other words, he preferred dichotomous and categorical thinking. He compartmentalized people according to criteria he created. On 19 November 1997, under the title ‘Les perroquets du pouvoir’, Philippe Val devoted the totality of his editorial to a meticulous and zealous critique of Serge Halimi’s book *Les* *Nouveaux chiens de garde*. He described certain parts of the book as ‘*à hurler de rire*’ [‘extremely hilarious’], especially the chapter ‘*Les amis de Bernard-Henri*’ and recommended that readers read it‘*à haute voix entre copains*’ [‘aloud amongst pals’], as if it were a joke. The book itself did not mention *Charlie Hebdo* in any negative way, or indeed at all. Serge Halimi’s book was written as a sequel to Paul Nizan’s 1932’s essay *Les Chiens de Garde*.[[550]](#footnote-551)Having worked as a journalist for *Le Monde* since 1992, Halimi provided over four chapters an exhaustive analysis of what he considered collusion between mainstream media and the establishment. Arguing that ‘the media loves to relay grand causes while involving everyone and everything without trying to disturb anyone or anything’, Halimi refused to promote his book in the media. The book achieved huge success despite the very limited publicity and the criticism from almost all media and press outlets. The book offers an important insight into the state of media production in France since the 1960s. Halimi concluded that there is:

An increasingly concentrated media, increasingly docile journalists, and increasingly mediocre news reporting. For a long time, the desire for social change continues to stumble on this obstacle.[[551]](#footnote-552)

Val’s attack on Halimi was meant to show support for Bernard-Henri Lévy specifically, since Halimi devoted the last chapter of his book to what he called the BHL network. In this chapter Halimi seeks to illustrate that the French media works in a spirit of a clan or a pack and the ‘press barons function as its hard core’. Since 1995 BHL has written a column in *Le Point* titled Le Bloc-Notes which, according to Halimi, ‘he personalized to reward those who flatter him and chide those who overshadow him’.[[552]](#footnote-553) In the (2005) edited version Halimi added to an already existing list of ways BHL worked with what he called ‘his friends’ to nurture their respective projects. Halimi also outlined the large space BHL occupied in the media during the publication of his book *Qui a tué Daniel Pearl*, and showcased a certain ‘courtoisies croisés’ (crossed/mutual courtesies) whereby ‘mercenary complicities were established by some journalists with publishing houses’. Halimi cited practices where editors signed contracts that were unusually generous in exchange for manuscripts that were exceptionally mediocre, filling pages with publicity brought out by editors to flatter the vanity of authors even when their books did not achieve any success... ‘Because, we have to admit it, this profession is mafioso’.[[553]](#footnote-554) Most importantly, Val’s reaction belies a latent new identity of *Charlie Hebdo* as a publication that no longer aligns with traditionally anti-establishment positions. This contradicts Val’s own proclaimed identity of *Charlie* being a ‘resistance’ paper.

The French press’s interest in *Charlie Hebdo*’s editorial line, and Val’s editorials specifically, preceded the more recent controversies of the Muhammad cartoons. From the outset, the French media followed *Charlie*’s resurgence closely. There was a dialogue between *Charlie* and newspapers like *Le Nouvel Observateur*, which for much of the time served as a platform for attacking Val and welcomed exiting journalists who had issues with Val’s leadership or political choices. *Libération*, *Le Monde*,and *Acrimed* published several articles discussing Val’s editorial choices. *Charlie*’s loyalty to the principles of the (mostly extreme) left were closely observed, and the least deviation was detected and commented on.[[554]](#footnote-555) The rest of this chapter will explore prominent stories in *Charlie* which help understand its editorial line, in addition to stories that were written by Val and other contributors in direct response to articles which appeared in other newspapers such as *Le Monde* or *Le Nouvel Observateur.*

1994 was a year full of news that provided material for *Charlie Hebdo*. The ‘satanic breasts’ controversy (about which, more shortly), the million people protesting for universal free education in 16 January 1994, and the Hebron massacre: all these news events served to shape the publication’s ferocious defense of *laïcité* in state schools, and its denunciation of religion, now identified more with Islam than with Catholicism. The French fashion house Chanel’s spring/summer collection of 1994 featured Claudia Schiffer wearing an evening gown with bold Arabic script embroidered on its tight chest, which, it subsequently became apparent, was a verse from the Qur’an. This fashion faux pas, which could have offended Muslims, provided Cabu, on 28 January 1994, with a cartoon cover.[[555]](#footnote-556) It featured an angry imam shouting at a statue of a naked Claudia Schiffer: ‘If you want us to buy your Mirage [French jet fighter], you have to change this [pointing at Schiffer’s naked bust]’. This *dessin* was accompanied by the headline ‘Chanel Offends Islam’. The cover was followed by an editorial from Val that reversed the equation and stipulated that it was Islam that offended Claudia Schiffer: ‘The Qur’an is an insult to Claudia Schiffer’. Here, Val argued that this controversy proved that all religions hold ‘a fundamental hatred of women’. Val, who often used his editorials to comment on and even attack other French newspaper headlines and editorials, expressed his disappointment at Karl Lagerfeld’s apology to the offended Muslims, because designers were supposed to be defenders of ‘culture and Western tolerance’.[[556]](#footnote-557)

On the other hand, the Hebron massacre in Palestine’s West Bank, which took place on 25 February 1994 and left 29 Muslims dead in the Ibrahimi mosque during the holy month of Ramadan,[[557]](#footnote-558) did not make it onto the covers nor the headlines of *Charlie Hebdo*, but it did inspire Val’s editorial two weeks later. In fact, Val framed his editorial as a response to an article published by the journalist Jean Daniel in *Le Nouvel Observateur*. Val argued that a certain left represented by Daniel entertained the illusion that a Muslim, a Jew, and a Christian could live in peace together. Furthermore, Val argued that the media coverage of the massacre was pro-Palestinian and biased, and that what happened right after the attack was ‘surreal’. The fact that Palestinians, reacting to the massacre, demanded the liberation of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli prisons, or that the Syrians demanded the liberation of some of their occupied land in the Golan Heights, or that Lebanon demanded that the Israeli army left its occupied territories in South Lebanon: for Val, all these demands were very illogical and even bizarre.[[558]](#footnote-559) In addition, Val believed that those Muslims massacred in the mosque in Palestine were getting too much press coverage, and that their death should not open a debate about Israeli violations in other parts of the Middle East. This stood in contrast to the Taslima Nasrin case, in which Val had expressed his belief that a writer who criticized Islam and portrayed Muslims as criminals was not getting enough press time, in France at least.

Val’s views would create divisions inside his own team, which culminated in the Siné affair of 2007. Meanwhile, Val constructed an editorial line for *Charlie Hebdo* that was influenced by politics which were intertwined with Islam and the question of anti-Semitism as much as they were with his idea of one left he adores and another he abhors.

## 3.3 Pour Aller à Gauche : *Pour aller à gauche* édition spéciale, 30 June 1993

Throughout 1993 and 1994, Val launched a public question, appealing for answers from readers, intellectuals, and even from François Mitterand. He asked: ‘pour aller à gauche, c’est par où?’ / ‘to go left, where is the way?’. Val wished to be at the heart of the debate when the left in France was in full crisis.[[559]](#footnote-560) The year 1993 was marked by the victory of the right in the legislative elections, as well as the nominations of Edouard Balladur as Prime Minister and Charles Pasqua as Minister of Interior Affairs. Both men witnessed huge resistance and social protests to their policies – and provided rich material for the caricaturists’ covers. In general terms, the communist and socialist parties suffered significant decline and a decrease in their memberships from 250,000 in 1980 to 100,000 in 2000 for the communist party, and from 200,000 in 1981 to 100,000 in 2001 for the socialist party.[[560]](#footnote-561) In Algeria, the 1991 elections led the way to new waves of Islamic terrorism and to the rise of F.I.S. (the Front Islamique du Salut or Islamic Salvation Front), a favourite target of *Charlie*’s satire. Meanwhile in Europe, the rise of unemployment often correlated with a resurgence of the extreme right. These deep changes brought in new methods of media-making or, as François Cusset put it, ‘talk shows, hip press, psychoanalytic magazines, booming Internet, mass printing, and experts of political communication ready to light fires everywhere’.[[561]](#footnote-562)

Val had a vision, and a huge ambition to be part of this new order; he foresaw:

A new world that *Charlie* could not survey with the same casualness as before. The first *Charlie* stayed on the wharf, with Professor Choron aboard, waving his scarf splattered derisively with fake spunk, crap, and blood, a bit like Fellini’s cruise ship in *E la nave va*. The second *Charlie* wants to be involved in all world events that come to it. It seizes them, stages them in its own way, and presents them to the readers in legible images.[[562]](#footnote-563)

In critiquing his foe Choron, and the ‘casual’ scatological and ‘pornographic’ material of the 1970s *Charlie* and *Hara Kiri*, Val broke with the *bête et méchant* humour and sought a place in global journalism. On 28 April 1993 the first editorial discussing the question ‘Pour aller à gauche’ signed by Val appeared, followed by a series of other editorials in the following weeks signed by contributors of *Charlie Hebdo*, including both members of the old cohort such as Cavanna, Gébé, and Siné, and the new cohort such as Oncle Bernard, Renaud, and Xavier Pasquini. Val received high-profile responses from President François Mitterand, the director of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, and the writer Françoise Sagan. Val published a special issue gathering all the material written under ‘*Pour aller à gauche, c’est par où*’. Luz drew the cover featuring François Mitterrand hiking up a cliff, reaching the edge and stopping at a sign that says ‘Solutré’.[[563]](#footnote-564) Carrying a compass in his hand and a backpack on his back, the tired president is followed by a looming crowd of political and religious figures including Charles de Gaulle (holding a television set wired on the recurrent target of *Charlie*’s satire: right-wing station TF1), Jacques Chirac, Jean-Marie Le Pen, the Pope, and other ghosts. This was one of the very rare occasions when satire, mockery, or ridicule was not the intended effect behind a *Charlie* cartoon. A glorified and celebrated president at the centre of a special issue cover drawn by Cabu and manufactured by Val is not *bête et méchant* and stands far from the 1970s *Charlie*, which not only had not engaged with the establishment in any kind of dialogue but also had made sure that the socialist president did not escape critique. Aspiring to make *Charlie* an active part of the ‘new world’ and determined to form and influence public opinion, Val situated *Charlie* alongside the left wing of the establishment. *Charlie* was gradually evolving from a satirical magazine to an opinion newspaper that hoped to be part of the elite.

Oncle Bernard seized the opportunity to attack *Le Nouvel Observateur* for its alleged ‘bourgeois’ tendencies, and to pay allegiance to François Mitterrand for his leftist achievements, mainly the abolition of the death sentence. Bernard argued that being leftist meant hating ayatollahs but also believing in open borders and equality, and that ‘Europe belongs to the Arabs, and the Mediterranean belongs to the Europeans’. On the other hand, Siné contributed two different answers; the first was published on 26 May 1993 reflecting his anarchist tendencies: left and right are both the same once in power. The only way is revolution. For the special edition however, he wrote something new and more serious, a manifesto to ensure that ‘France does not become a country where only the rights of the white and rich man are respected’. Siné had a clear answer: ‘to go left is, above all, not to be afraid to express one’s opinions, even if these opinions will entail reprisals’.[[564]](#footnote-565) Siné accused the Balladur government of carrying a policy of ethnic cleansing. Édouard Balladur’s policies on identity control, particularly ‘*la loi sur la nationalité*’, would, he claimed, create two types of people: those who are born French and those who have to prove they deserve to be French. Siné also criticized French policies which were particularly hostile to asylum seekers. Siné neatly summarized his argument as follows:

You need a great dose of hypocrisy not to recognize that taken together these measures aim at exacerbating the marginalization that is hurting the poor, using criteria that the law and practice should rigorously define as RACIST [Siné’s capitals].[[565]](#footnote-566)

Siné then made a statement that should be remembered when he was accused by Philippe Val of anti-Semitism. He said that he did not consider himself particularly privileged for being as French as Charles Pasqua, or Jean Marie Le Pen, or Bernard Tapie. The ‘French’ with whom he felt a certain confluence of heart and spirit were those who fought the anticolonial wars, and those million people who in May 1968, shouted: ‘We are all German Jews’. If Balladur’s measures passed, Siné vowed to burn his identity card and take every initiative to bring direct and practical help to those affected by these ‘apartheid politics’: all immigrants and sons of immigrants, those legal and illegal. Such material from Siné, along with Cyran’s reportages from the banlieues of Paris, Charb’s acerbic weekly column ‘Charb Does Not Like People’, and later the poignant opinions pieces of Mona Chollet (who joined the paper in 1999 and left in 2001), comprised journalistic material that served to stand against and resist discrimination and racism targeted at immigrants and Arabs.

As for Laurent Joffrin, director of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, he opted for a rather nostalgic discourse that would please Cavanna and not displease Val. He opened his column with an appraisal of the 1970s *Charlie Hebdo*:‘Life was beautiful at the time of *Charlie Hebdo*… [it was] an era when everything was conjugated in the future tense: politics, arts, and mores … It was the golden age of the future’. Joffrin surveyed the history of the 1970s and 1980s as an age of optimism and progress, then argued that contrary to expectations, the fall of the Berlin Wall did not mean the end of all ideologies, but rather opened the door to a dominant capitalism and a resurgence of new ideologies: fundamentalism, nationalism, tribalism, and ultra-liberalism.[[566]](#footnote-567) He added: ‘the short phrase which is the left’s foundation, “it is unfair”, is now more subversive than ever’, calling on the faithful readers of *Charlie* and proclaimed that the fight was not over.[[567]](#footnote-568) François Mitterand in a rather poetic short note outlined that the left means different things to different people but what unites them is ‘*le service de la Republique*’. By far the longest article published in this special edition was Cavanna’s, which spread over two full pages. The left, he argued, is against the status quo, and for justice and equity, beauty and sympathy. The left is progress; the right is regression and order. Left is rationalist, right is sentimentalist. Cavanna believed there is only one true left, and that is *l’écologie*, for it is rational, global, and far-sighted. It encompasses all questions including the social. The solution according to Cavanna is to reverse overpopulation, since it is the root of all evils, but he admits that this is already too late. And he regrets that *l’écologie* does not have a Karl Marx, that the West is too preoccupied with its industrialization, and the ‘Third World’ overwhelmed fighting poverty and fanaticism.[[568]](#footnote-569) Cavanna’s words are crucial because a few years later Val would make the Green Party *Charlie*’s new favourite target of mockery, leading to accusations of being reactionary and even right-wing.[[569]](#footnote-570)

To sum up, this special and largely sycophantic issue trying to flatter the establishment and to theorize and debate the left was a patchwork of different but consonant and congruous opinions. It was unlike *Charlie Hebdo* − the 1970s *Charlie Hebdo* at least − to seek the perspective of and even give a platform to the establishment, in the figure of President François Mitterrand, to deliver a serious answer to a serious question. Perhaps in retrospect, Val succeeded in documenting a very important era in the history of the left in France. These texts offer valuable ideas and images that form a great database for the study of *Charlie Hebdo* in its relation to the left. This special issue was optimistic in its tone and forward-thinking in its approach. It also demonstrates that the contributors were given the liberty to express their political affiliations with a surprising degree of autonomy. The influence of this special issue was stressed through emphasizing the contributors’ credentials or renown, with diverse figures including President Mitterrand, the head of the leading newspaper *Le Nouvel Observateur*, and Françoise Sagan. Its influence was also stressed through the style of opinion piece that Val opted which made little claim to impartiality. On 30 June 1993, *Charlie Hebdo*’s issue number 53 celebrated the magazine’s first anniversary since the relaunch, and Philippe Val took to the pages of his own paper to remind readers in a rather short article what exactly lay at the heart of *Charlie Hebdo*. Val argued that ‘laughter is a highly demanding intellectual exercise’ and concluded that *Charlie Hebdo* was a journal of resistance: ‘resistance to barbarism and kitsch’.[[570]](#footnote-571) Positioning humour in the realm of intellectual creation, while it could appeal to Cavanna’s ‘quality’ journalism, does take away from the 1960s *bête et méchant* bad taste humour.

## 3.4 Anti-Zionism, Anti-Semitism: the amalgamation

1995 was a tumultuous year in terms of social protest in France. Internationally, the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in 4 November 1995 by a right-wing religious Israeli extremist divided the French left between those who radically opposed all Israeli policies – a position that was close to that of the anti-American Arab world – and those who defended Israel’s self-determination.[[571]](#footnote-572) This last group included Philippe Val, who opined:

This fake anti-Zionism barely hides its militant hatred towards the state of Israel. Such hatred, which the left shares with the Arab world, made these ‘pure’ and ‘purely anti-American’ leftists form a platform for all those who oppose Israel. This is a time when supposed researchers – in reality, militants – let loose and fanned the flames of an anti-Semitism that was still smouldering from the ashes of the Second World War. This intellectual posture, restyled as ‘geopolitical opposition’, managed to rise from the small-scale furtiveness to which it had been confined, now speaking openly in bright daylight on television and in the newspaper pages. [[572]](#footnote-573)

Val’s favourable position towards Israel was consolidated by his support for the NATO military intervention in Kosovo in 1998, in the sense that *Charlie Hebdo* started adopting and voicing, or maybe simply reflecting, partisan political opinions. In supporting a war, Val went against one of the fundamental principles of *Charlie Hebdo*, ‘a magazine against all wars’, and divided his editorial team. In 2015, he recalled the tension inside *Charlie*, a place where ‘universality of fundamental rights was never an issue’, and his analysis of the situation in *Charlie* centred around two contradictions.[[573]](#footnote-574) The first was the pacifist antimilitaristic tradition of the publication in the face of the disastrous situation afflicting the Kosovo population, threatened as they were with mass execution and thus in dire need of military intervention. The second contradiction, according to Val, was that in order to save ‘the Muslims of Europe’ there needed to be an engagement of the US army, at a time when anti-Americanism, ‘a historic part of the French intelligentsia since the nineteenth century’, was in resurgence.[[574]](#footnote-575) Val claimed that the first editorial he wrote exposing the complexity of the situation raised discontented questions amongst *Charlie*’s readers, but pleased the theorist Pierre Bourdieu, who called Val to tell him how much he appreciated ‘la mesure’ – in other words, moderation – of his editorial. Encouraged by Bourdieu’s feedback, in his next editorial, Val expressed full-blown support for military intervention, with the blessing of two of his journalists, ‘Cabu and Oncle Bernard’.[[575]](#footnote-576) In his account of his years of editorship at the head of *Charlie*, Val often justified his editorial choices by showcasing Cabu’s validation of them. A very well respected and popular artist by the end of the 1980s, Cabu’s blessing of any editorial decision made by Val constituted a legitimating endorsement. Val confessed in his autobiography (2015) that:

One faction of the editorial team leaned towards social struggles, while another held the conviction that progress in education, the advancement of knowledge, and individual liberties were priorities. As directors of the paper, Cabu and I necessarily leaned towards the second group.[[576]](#footnote-577)

Despite having Cabu’s support, Wolinski on the other hand confessed to Val, upon reading the editorial on Wednesday morning after it was printed, that ‘this is a turning point in the history of *Charlie*. The paper will never be the same again. We never supported a war […] but the world has changed and I think you are right. I just don’t know how the publication will handle the upheaval’.[[577]](#footnote-578) These words were reported by Val and could not be verified by Wolinski. It is possible that Wolinski anticipated the serious consequences of such a position but felt that explicitly approving Val’s judgement would sound servile and artificial. Val’s politics positioned him on the side of the establishment as a supporter of Western interventionism. His critique of the left was based on his firm belief that the left was mutating and deviating from its core principles. The left should not support Palestinians, should not oppose wars, and should overcome its complex rapport with the USA.

The Garaudy trial inspired Val to write an editorial on 4 March 1998 attacking the French media, again, for their negligence in an affair that according to him should have been at the top of their agendas.[[578]](#footnote-579) Roger Garaudy had published a book in 1996 which he claimed the deaths of the six million victims in the Holocaust was a myth, which led to his prosecution in 1998 under French law on the charge of Holocaust denial.[[579]](#footnote-580) The Garaudy affair was a very important and dangerous matter according to Val, and a global one as it involved the whole Arab world, the United States, and, of course, Israel. It was dangerous because the ideas that Garaudy believed in fed into paranoia which turned into hatred directed by millions of Arabs towards their neighbour, Israel. This fear and paranoia was kept alive by Arab dictators from Hafez al Assad to Hosni Mubarak and it was summed up in the illusion that Jews were responsible for all the Arabs’ and Muslims’ suffering (Val did, and still does not, distinguish between Arab and Muslim here). Val then concluded that in negating the ‘first genocide’ of the Jews, Garaudy lays the ground for the second. Val stated:

Nine times out of 19, from Algeria to Pakistan, the support of Palestinians is nothing but a strong indication of a solid hatred of Jews, utilized by local media and politicians as a constitutive element of Muslim identity.[[580]](#footnote-581)

Val believed that at the heart of the Israeli−Palestinian conflict lay religion, and the only solution was to build a secular state where both populations could live together in peace and harmony.[[581]](#footnote-582) Similarly, Cabu signed the cover which depicted an Israeli soldier fighting a Palestinian man. The first clutches a rifle and the second holds a rock and a knife. The Israeli occupied the centre of the page, standing on a pile of dead corpses of both Palestinians and Jews. The Palestinian occupied part of the right-hand side of the cover. It is hard to imagine that this was a random positioning of characters; the drawing suggests that even if both parties were murdering each other, the Israeli soldier maintained more control. He was crushing a Palestinian man’s face with his military boots; the latter is simply emerging from the pile of the corpses ready to defend himself. It is confusing, however, that Cabu used the title of Val’s editorial to caption his cartoon, which suggests that one is companion to the other, and that there is continuity between the two men’s line of argument.

On 8 November 2000, Val asked ‘Raciste ou antisémite?’ and explored the reasons that pushed people in Europe, and particularly in France, to perform acts of anti-Semitic violence such as burning synagogues and attacking Jewish people in the streets. Val denounced the automatic association of all Jews with the state of Israel, and the smearing of the whole state of Israel with far-right associations. Then he argued that both the extreme left and the extreme right, as well as a percentage of the bourgeoisie, used Palestinians merely as a convenient vehicle to express an old French racial hatred. Anti-Semitism, Val theorized, was not like any other form of racism, such as anti-Polish, anti-Italian, or anti-Arab racism, because these were temporary anti-immigrant prejudices that would dissipate once the immigrants settled in and became French, whereas the hatred of Jews was permanent. Reminding the reader of the Dreyfus affair and how it drove France close to civil war, Val tried to explain what a Jew was in the mind of an anti-Semite. In anti-Semitic ideology, the Jew was ‘sexually hyperactive, rich, and intelligent’.[[582]](#footnote-583) Put another way, Val claimed that to be Jewish was the dream of every man. It was this assumption that the Jew was a person very different to the self-image of most French people that created a certain jealousy and envy in the racist’s heart against the successful, rich, intelligent, and sexually hyperactive Jew. Using the ideas of Freud and Nietzsche, Val hastily concluded that anti-Semitism was in reality a form of self-hatred.

In 6 December 2000, Siné, in his weekly column ‘Siné sème sa zone’, in what reads like a direct answer to Val, criticized another left, a left that remained silent to the daily tragedy lived by Palestinians. Countering Val, Siné took issue with religious explanations for the Israeli−Palestinian conflict, instead believing this to be ‘a dirty colonial war’. Siné believed that the French left had a guilt complex caused by their inaction and silence towards Jewish deportations under the Nazi occupation. Ashamed of their complicit past, the French were unable to criticize Israel out of fear of being labelled anti-Semitic. Another guilt complex adding to the first one concerned the French silence during the Algerian War in the face of ‘anti-Arab carnage’. Therefore, the French could not now blame the Israeli for what they themselves did to the Algerians a few decades ago. In conclusion, he stated, while Palestinian children were being killed or maimed, the French media was busying itself by reporting the US elections, mad cow disease, paedophile priests, and football. Siné’s opinion and analysis went completely against Val’s editorial line.[[583]](#footnote-584)

On 13 December 2000, Val replied to Siné through his editorial ‘Israel−Palestine: When Atheists Turn Towards Mecca’. The sardonic title should be interpreted as a direct accusation that Siné had turned into an Islamo-leftist. Val first admitted that he had mixed feelings about the conflict because of its many complex layers: historical, psychological, and political. On the historical level, Val attributed the idea of creating the state of Israel to the Dreyfus affair, as was his wont. After an appraisal of the exceptional cultural and intellectual richness of the Jewish population, Val referred to a sense of cosmopolitanism within Jewish identity that was lost by the act of creating a state and a nationality. On the psychological level, Val felt disgust at certain pro-Palestinians who thought that the Israelis were like everyone else: racist, unjust, selfish, just like the French, or the Italians. Val added that the left had just replaced the word ‘Jew’ with Israeli but used the same discourse of the interwar anti-Semitic pamphleteers (here he might be referring to Louis-Ferdinand Celine, a prominent and contested French writer known for his anti-Semitic pamphlets). Israel was just another state capable of making the same mistakes as any other country. Val further observed that those who were ‘radical pacifists’ during the war in Kosovo—which maybe a direct reference to Charb and Siné, who were reportedly the only contributors opposed to the NATO military intervention—now became supporters of Hamas and Hezbollah. Finally, on the political point, Val argued that Israel was not a colony, but a country built on a former Ottoman colony.

A week later, on 20 December 2000, in his weekly column ‘Charb n’aime pas les gens’ Charb replied to Val. He regretted that there were anti-Semitic Nazis who used Palestinians to spread their hatred of Jews, which meant that those who did actually defend Palestinians should make more effort to defend themselves against anti-Semitic accusations. Charb, as an opponent of military intervention in Kosovo, regretted the accusations against him of being a collaborator, le Penist, and pro-Milosevic. Charb observed that the debate had degraded to the point of pro-Palestinianism being equated with the SS. He then declared ‘yes, I am pro-Palestinian. Today, here, now, in this precise moment, in the face of what the Palestinian people are suffering, I am pro-Palestinian’. The Palestinians, according to Charb, were victims of a colonial war. ‘Yes, I am anti-Israel’, he added, just as he was anti-French during the Algerian War, anti-Soviet during the Afghan War, and anti-South African during apartheid. Charb concluded that all peoples have the right to defend themselves when they are attacked or expelled from their homes. While recognizing that Hezbollah and Hamas were ‘anti-democratic, violent and fundamentalist movements’, Charb believed that their fight for the liberation of their countries was legitimate.[[584]](#footnote-585)

Again, on 10 January 2001, Val replied to Charb and Siné, and to an abundance of angry letters he received from *Charlie*’s readers. Clearly, Val succeeded in making the question of anti-Semitism a frequent and a prominent public matter. Even if he did not succeed in telling the readers what to think, he did succeed in telling them *what to think about*. Val argued that the idea that Palestinians were the image of resistance and a fight for liberation was too romantic and did not bear any relation to reality. He then admitted that he had not expressed himself properly and clearly, and that what he was trying to say was that French society could not talk about anti-Semitism using the same register and the same ideas and arguments as they had done before the Dreyfus affair and after witnessing the horrors of the Holocaust.

Did this dialogue prove there was a panoply of voices inside *Charlie* and the magazine was a space where journalists were free to express their political opinions? It does show there was a bond between Siné and Charb: an intellectual complicity, as it were. They both were unconditionally pro-Palestinians, Third-Worldists, and anticolonialist anti-racistes. It also demonstrates the publication’s lack of coherence and consistency, and its conflicting editorial structure. Unlike Cavanna, Val did not give each contributor a page of his own but they occupied permanent features, and worked around the editor’ guidelines. He published the pieces mentioned above but it is unlikely that he commissioned these replies. There was a genuine ideological difference between him and Charb/Siné. It sounded as if Val enjoyed the dialogue as it gave him the opportunity to set the agenda and choose the subject the readers should be interested in. He then pleaded his case in the most important and authoritative page in any publication –the editorial – to tell the readers how to think about a topic he chose. Val continued to publish editorials on the question of defining anti-Semitism, such as a 5 September 2001 piece titled ‘Zionism = SS’ on the Durban summit on racism and xenophobia. Val questioned the presence of countries with racist policies at the conference, naming Mauritania where there is ‘racism against women’, ethnic racism and where slavery was not abolished until recently. He also blamed the French and US governments for sending only low-profile envoys to the conference. He then took a few paragraphs to stress that the origins of slavery are Arab. He blamed Europeans for their indifference to Arabic slavery and theorized mockingly that it was due to the fact that ‘we found it folkloric in turbaned savages who wear the sword with as much insouciance as we carry an umbrella’.[[585]](#footnote-586) He then regretted ‘the resistance [among Europeans] to put into a fair perspective the responsibilities of committing crimes against humanity’.[[586]](#footnote-587) So after discrediting the ‘turbaned savage’ Arabs, Val moved to discredit their proposal to the conference which consisted of equating or assimilating Zionism to racism. He proceeded to reject the proposal in the name of negationism, while assuming that negationism is widespread in Arab countries. It is worth noting that in 1975, the United Nations voted for a resolution that assimilated Zionism with racism, but that was annulled in 1991 after the Madrid negotiations. So, the idea is not actually Arab-made. Val pointed out that the Dreyfus affair and the prosecution of Jews in the Second World War are what ‘made Zionism a patriotic movement at the origin of the State of Israel. It has nothing to do with racism’. Val stated that he disagrees with Siné’s piece in the same issue. One could condemn ‘the attitude’ of the Israeli government, one could ‘curse’ Ariel Sharon. Despite this, wanting to equate the ‘Jews’ to the Nazis [racists] is just a way to ‘deny the intensity, the scale, the specificity, the means employed, the ideology behind, and the human consequences of the Final Solution’.[[587]](#footnote-588) Val used the word ‘attitude’ to describe and dilute a government’s decisions, policies, executive power, and all that it entails in sovereignty. He then suggested that we could go as far as ‘cursing’ Sharon, to summarize all that a civil society, the press, or media in general can do to raise awareness or challenge certain human rights violation by a particular government. Then he deliberately conflates Jews with Zionists. All three statements were made using highly evasive language and inaccurate logic. But when he reached his conclusion that condemning Zionism is a form of negation, he goes into great detail to explain what such an analogy entails. This was a very important conversation between the editor and his journalists which clarified two disparaging positions regarding anti-Semitism. It happened shortly before 9/11, a major global event which brought the question of racism to a completely new level. Studying the repercussions of 9/11 and Charlie’s coverage of it will be a starting point in understanding where Islam fits in the magazine’s worldview.

## 3.5 September 11, 2001

On 19 September 2001 *Charlie*published a special issue number 483 titled ‘special ça va chier’ [special edition: the shit will hit the fan’] with a cover by Cabu depicting the inside of the World Trade Centre seconds before the plane crashed into it. While everyone was busy working on their computers, someone noticed the plane and screamed, ‘Sell it all’. Val reported that he received the news of the terrorist attack while he was on a writing retreat, so he decided to head straight back to Paris and work on the special issue. It is worth quoting Val at length on this point:

The editorial meeting was intense. We absolutely wanted to strike the right tone, we wanted to capture, as much as possible, all the information and the implications of the event. We wanted to show the extent to which we are all connected, intimately, in our lifestyle, in our freedoms, to all the achievements of democracy and *laïcité*, which guarantee the possibility of happiness and joy in our existence.[[588]](#footnote-589)

Val, in his special editorial, analysed President Bush’s speech on good and evil by using metaphors and historical references such as Hitler, Stalin, Pinochet, the mafia, and Pol Pot. Overall, this was a diluted editorial with only the end carrying some statements which could be summed up in the idea that, in face of the necessity to choose a side, Val chooses the camp of Bush. He wrote: ‘those planes did not only crash into the twin towers, they crashed into those who believe in dialogue, those who prefer compromise to victory, and those who choose an imperfect life over a glorious death’.[[589]](#footnote-590) Val argued that the attack marked the end of politics and the reign of new puritanical wars. Charb on the other hand through his drawings warned that the attacks would result in an acceleration of violence against Palestinians and in increased discrimination against Muslims in France. A few weeks later Val wrote another editorial titled ‘Is my enemy’s enemy my friend?’,[[590]](#footnote-591) exploring past alliances involving the Russians, the USA, and Europe during the twentieth century and outlining their disastrous consequences. Oscillating between two ultimatums which are in reality a false dichotomy: the rule of the Qur’an or the rule of the market, Val ended his editorial with a suggestion: that readers should think of a third option.

Val believed that ‘[y]ou cannot treat things in the same way after a tragedy like 9/11, unless you are a damned imbecile’.[[591]](#footnote-592) Indeed, from this point onward, certain subjects related to Islam and French identity started taking prominence, partly because of their topicality but also because those directing *Charlie Hebdo* deemed them newsworthy. New members joined, and others left. Caroline Fourest and Fiametta Venner, both famous for their fight against ‘l’islamo-gauchisme’, arrived, while Olivier Cyran and Mona Chollet departed. Chirac, Sarkozy, and many other political figures including foreign presidents were recurrent subjects of discussion, criticism, and mockery. Additionally, themes that occupied a central point were terrorism, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the *banlieues* riots, the veil, *laïcité,* racism, immigration, the left, and the colonial past. Val was motivated by the idea that terrorism should unite all democratic intellectuals against a single enemy. Val expressed his disappointment that the tragic events of the terrorist attacks were not uniting people but rather dividing them:

I had a sad experience in the following years. Every tragedy, every spectacular crime committed by the Muslim extremists, far from welding and reinforcing the democratic intellectual community against the inacceptable, had, on the contrary, transformed it into a scared game, furbishing excuses to the hunter, in the vain hope of not being one of the future victims.[[592]](#footnote-593)

‘Sad’ at the idea that Muslim extremism was not met with the firmness that was required, Val might have felt isolated in his own political affiliations amongst his colleagues (such as Mona Chollet, Charb, and Siné, none of whom were swept up in War on Terror mania). Moreover, Val did not choose his team initially when he launched the paper. Instead, he inherited them from *La Grosse Bertha*, and those who did not come from *La Grosse Bertha* worked in Cavanna’s *Charlie* in the 1970s, so they joined what they thought was a continuation of that. When he got the chance to recruit, Val chose journalists who shared his perspective. The new voiceshe employed wereCaroline Fourest, Fiammetta Venner, Agathe André, and Robert Misrahi. These individuals became champions of Val’s editorial line, which started to focus on the threat allegedly posed by Islam to Western values. In November 2002, Robert Misrahi, the French Spinoza specialist philosopher, contributed an article devoted to defending Oriana Fallaci’s controversial book *The Rage and the Pride*, a post 9/11 anti-Islam account so prejudiced that even Christopher Hitchens, a figure who would himself be labelled as a prominent proponent of ‘Islamophobia’, disapproved.[[593]](#footnote-594) Misrahi stated that:

Oriana Fallaci shows intellectual courage […] She not only protests against murderous Islamism […] but also against a certain denial in the European mindset, whether Italian or French, that does not want to see or openly condemn the fact that Islam is leading a crusade against the Western world and not the opposite.[[594]](#footnote-595)

This quote perfectly encapsulated Val’s philosophy: for him, the problem was not just Islamism, it was also that the European left was too lenient with Islamists. Caroline Fourest, a journalist, joined *Charlie* circa 1997 (remaining until 2009) and her articles at first focused on the anti-IVF/anti-abortion movements and articulated feminist and anti-clerical views. Agathe André, another journalist, joined in 2003 (remaining until 2010), and Fiammetta Venner, a political scientist and feminist, also joined in 1995 (remaining until 2009). They all left shortly after Val’s departure from *Charlie*. All three were vocal feminists who sought to tackle questions of gender inequalities, but at *Charlie* theyshifted their attention after 9/11 to questions of Islam, the veil, and blasphemy and censorship in countries like Egypt or Afghanistan.[[595]](#footnote-596) These themes became more topical in the post 9/11 context where French citizens and citizens across the Western world took an interest in questions of national security and terrorism. With that event, immigration became a more prominent concern of public opinion, and so did questions of radicalization in the Muslims communities in Europe. Agatha André was *Charlie*’s reporter in Pakistan where she investigated the situation of Muslim women under the authoritarian regime of General Musharraf. Worried about the rise of fundamentalism in the country, André devoted two pages – accompanied by Tignous’s cartoons – to interviews she conducted with young women in different parts of Pakistan.[[596]](#footnote-597) Caroline Fourest published her *Charlie* contributions under columns entitled ‘islamisme’ and ‘l’islam de France’ where she alternated between opinion pieces analysing the news, and interviews with persons she considered exemplary liberal Muslims including politicians such as the Algerian secular opposition leader Said Sadi,[[597]](#footnote-598)the Saudi female journalist Rania Al-Baz,[[598]](#footnote-599) and Ayaan Hirsi Ali.[[599]](#footnote-600)

In fact, Hirsi Ali belongs to a group of committed writers including Michel Houellebecq, Eric Zemmour (discussed in the introduction), Pierre-Andre Taguieff, and Alain Finkielkraut who are repeatedly accused of Islamophobic tendencies. Naturally, they also dismissed the term ‘Islamophobia’ altogether.[[600]](#footnote-601) Indeed, Taguieff prefers the neologism ‘Islamismophobia’.[[601]](#footnote-602) Hirsi Ali, a ‘global icon of the so-called clash of civilizations’, as dubbed by Eric Fassin,[[602]](#footnote-603) sought French citizenship in 2008, and Bernard-Henri Lévy was one of the main figures who argued that the Somali author who did not speak French should be granted French citizenship; he believed that Ali is ‘already French, yes she is, in her heart, her values, and her mind’.[[603]](#footnote-604) *Charlie*’s interest in the anti-Islam discourse disseminated by these figures who enjoyed and still enjoy a great coverage by mainstream media evolved over the years to include within the editorial team voices that have become carriers of the anti-Islam message. These included Zineb el Rhazoui, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4 as she joined in 2011. What is more interesting to observe at this point is that Val in *Charlie*, Levy in *Le Point*, and Fourest in *Prochoix*, convey similar views on Islam and all three were hotly pursued for appearances on French TV.

While the issue of ‘Islam de France’ was already an increasingly important part of *Charlie*’s focus, it was not until 2009 (see Chapter 4) that it became the paper’s central concern.[[604]](#footnote-605) The War on Terror and the terrorist attacks provided current events through which *Charlie* could discuss the question of Islamic extremism, particularly when Muslims and immigrants in France’s most segregated banlieues erupted in protests against decades of social injustice and institutional racism in 2005.

## 3.6 2005 Banlieues Riots (27 October to 17 November)

Whenever the distinctive French social model has come under strain, especially in the key area of education, both in theory and in practice those promoting Republicanism have sought to reformulate the notion of equality to deal with new economic and social realities. For example, in order to fight school dropouts in 1981, Minister of Education Alain Savary created education priority zones (ZEP, zones d’éducation prioritaires). The ZEP’s promotion of communitarian strategies had dangerous repercussions, being an important factor behind the outbreak of suburban rioting in 2005. The government was thus confronted by the fact that its supposedly egalitarian educational system was actually failing those in poor, rundown suburbs, who were largely composed of ethnic minorities.[[605]](#footnote-606)

The riots, which erupted in October 2005, were heavily reported in *Charlie*, through large and detailed drawings from Riss and Charb, and thorough editorial discussions from a socio-economic perspective. Sarkozy, Minister of Interior Affairs at the time, was ridiculed by every contributor in *Charlie* for his discriminatory policies and dismissive statements. On 9 November 2005, Val wrote an editorial where he attacked both Sarkozy and the protesters, saying that ‘more than ideas, he [Sarkozy] likes the fight, the fame, and money. It is his common point with his enemies from the banlieues’. The causes of the social protests are clear according to Val: failed integration, unstable city politics, unemployment, and ‘fantasmic importation of problems of the Middle East and Africa into France’.[[606]](#footnote-607) Val himself imported images from the Palestinian intifada in his depiction of the riots: ‘here and there live bullets from protesters in the direction of the police...Throwers of stones and petanque balls like in Palestine… methods of urban guerrillas’.[[607]](#footnote-608) For those who are comparing the banlieues riots to May 68, Val reminds that the instigators of the latter were just some young men who wanted to get into bed with girls, in other words demanding a sexual revolution. Whereas, for the protestors in the banlieues, it is quite the opposite, since mixing with the opposite gender is their enemy, and what they are after is the ‘veiled girls’. Val finally warns that France will pay the very high price of letting imams lead these protests and play mediators between rioters and the government. Val’s description of the protesters as a mob, which is projecting foreign problems into the French context, is unique compared to other contributors in *Charlie* such as Charb and Riss. Val seems to think that the protestors are motivated by ideological differences, particularly a certain belonging to the Arab and North-African framework, and their demands are stained by a certain Islamic religious mindset. Charb on the other hand, displayed a certain anxiety that the protesters’ legitimate demands for employment were being co-opted by Islamic religious leaders and Imams who misrepresent the motivations and the intentions of the protests.[[608]](#footnote-609)

Riss also opted for an economic explanation to the protests but his dessins seemed to suggest that there is a fundamental generational difference between the protesters and their parents. The picture he draws seems to reward the parents for their hard work and stress the destructive dimension of their children’s protests, while hinting at laziness that underlies the behaviour of the latter.

In fact, the riots did not last more than a few weeks – between 27 October and 17 November – but for months, even years, afterwards the discussion of the social questions the riots triggered was at the centre of the political debate in France. The main culprits for the 2005 banlieues riots were what the press – including *Charlie Hebdo* – called ‘les jeunes de banlieues’. Geisser observed that:

While the majority of children from African or Turkish immigration are now French citizens, they are still designated as *jeunes arabo-musulmans*, the taxonomies still identify them as ‘arab-muslim youth’, a stigmatization process which combines at the same time an ethnic reference (Arab), a religious reference (Muslim), and a reference to ‘juvenility’, supposed to be a carrier of disorder.[[609]](#footnote-610)

On the other hand, the search for an official comment on the 2005 banlieues riots reveals that the French government website directs to a paper by Olivier Roy in which the author dismisses any correlation between the riots and Islam.[[610]](#footnote-611) Roy’s explanation overlaps with Charb and Riss’s socio-economic approach to the protests:

Far from being a revolt of the Muslim community, it is above all a spontaneous movement of young people living in underprivileged neighbourhoods, often from an immigrant origin but not always. The generational and social dimension is more important than the religious dimension, and even more important than the ethnic composition.[[611]](#footnote-612)

Roy refused to look at the riots as something related to an increased public hostility towards Muslims. Taking place in the aftermath of presidential elections which were marked by questions of national security and the loss of the left from the first round, the 2004 law banning the veil in school, the February 2005 law recognizing the ‘positive role’ of colonialism,[[612]](#footnote-613) and a promise from Nicolas Sarkozy (then the Minister for Interior Affairs) to ‘clean up’ the neighbourhood of Courneuve in June 2005, the banlieues riots in 2005 were caused a combination of connected factors but any analysis excluding the rise of Islamophobia is short-sighted.[[613]](#footnote-614)

The 2005 riots exposed the failures of the Republic.[[614]](#footnote-615) Nacira Guénif-Souilamas pointed to the Republic’s deep-seated ‘perpetuation of an inegalitarian order’.[[615]](#footnote-616) The years leading up to the 2005 banlieues riots were marked by increasing tension between the authorities and the Muslim minority in France. The CNCDH – Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’homme – published a report in 2003 regarding the fight against racism and xenophobia which was submitted to the prime minster Jean-Pierre Rafarrin in March 2004. The report was a reflection on the ‘[i]ntolerance and violence against Islam in French society’.[[616]](#footnote-617) Vincent Geisser counted 15 attacks, between January 2001 and January 2003, on Muslim places of worship occurred, including mosques, cemeteries, and Islamic ceremonies and holidays.[[617]](#footnote-618)

Val’s commentaryon the riots, dismissed intertwined discussions about the questions of racism, immigration, and colonization.[[618]](#footnote-619) He looked instead to ‘communautarisme’, a neologism that was deployed increasingly by French media after 9/11. This concept cannot be easily translated into English but is extremely important to decode not least as it seems that in France it originated in the media and was then adopted by politicians. French scholar Fabrice Dhume-Sonzogni argued that the term, which was almost absent from the press before 1995 with fewer than ten mentions per year in *Le Monde*, witnessed a resurgence between 2002 and 2008, with 148 articles for *Le Monde*, and 195 articles for *Le Figaro*.[[619]](#footnote-620) He defines ‘communautarisme’ as a term used by a majority group to deny the speech acts and political expression of minority groups (in this case Muslims) who are perceived as carriers of ‘infra-political demands’ vis-à-vis the French nation-state. Those who denounce ‘communautarisme’ use a ‘catastrophizing’ discourse and present the school, society, and in more general terms the Republic as besieged citadels threatened by an enemy within. This nationalist discourse authorizes ‘a certain racism that was rendered respectable’ (‘*racisme rendu comme respectable*’).[[620]](#footnote-621) Indeed, the author observes that in the mindset of French media, communautarisme in France and multiculturalism in Britain function in the same way, and as such they both pose a threat to the French Republican model which promotes unity, fusion, and assimilation over integration. Joseph Massad argues that the French state and societal racist pronouncements including the charge of communautarisme are in fact derivative, in the sense that they already existed in France’s and Europe’s eighteenth- and nineteenth-century anti-Semitic rhetoric when Jews were perceived as unassimilable and communal.[[621]](#footnote-622) In other words, the politicization of religious minorities, then Jews now Muslims is not new, nor are the accusations of their withdrawal into isolated communities. Roy argues that accusations towards French Muslims of communitarianism are unfounded. The proof is that political candidates from Muslim backgrounds are scattered across the whole political spectrum. There is neither a network of religious schools, nor even a central mosque (equivalent to a cathedral), but rather a multitude of small neighbourhood mosques. The only effort at communitarianism (communautarisme)comes from the state and not its citizens, through the Conseil français du culte musulman and the Grande Mosquée de Paris, who are controlled by the government and do not have any local legitimacy.[[622]](#footnote-623) Roy even argues that the Muslim community is fully assimilated and wryly remarks: ‘the “Muslim community’’ suffers from a very Gallic individualism and remains recalcitrant to the Bonapartism of our elites, and that’s a good thing’.[[623]](#footnote-624)

The fact that these riots occurred after 9/11 – and its aftermath, the war on terror and the increasing ethnic tensions worldwide –, and shortly before the Danish cartoons controversy, and that it involved what Geisser called ‘jeunes arabo-musulmans’ deserves attention. The riots were a major historical event which generated an important public debate around questions of social justice and the treatment of marginalised communities in the suburbs of Paris. Therefore the above analysis of the debate provides important context for the next section.

## 3.7 The Muhammad Cartoons

The Muhammad cartoons episode provided a moment where *Charlie* had to define its rapport with Islam. Issue number 712, published on 6 February 2006, is what became known as the Muhammad caricatures affair or the *Jyllands-Posten* Muhammad cartoons controversy. *Charlie Hebdo*’s handling of the Danish caricature affair resulted in the most high-profile legal case that the magazine was involved in up until that point. Releasing a special edition, *Charlie Hebdo* reprinted a series of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad that had originally appeared on 30 September 2005 in the centre-right Danish broadsheet newspaper *Jyllands Posten*, leading to widespread international protests.[[624]](#footnote-625) In fact, *Charlie* was neither the only nor the first French paper to publish the Danish cartoons. *France Soir* had, a week earlier on 1 February 2006, put the cartoons on the front cover, along with the headline, ‘Yes, we have the right to caricature God’ (*OUI, on a le droit de caricaturer Dieu*). The director of the publication, Jacques Lefranc, was fired the next day by the paper’s French–Egyptian proprietor, Raymond Lakah.[[625]](#footnote-626) *Charlie*’s decision to publish the cartoons was mainly an attempt to show its disagreement with censorship, especially when it came to cartoons and religion. *L’Express* also published the cartoons despite pressure from the newspapers’ owners not to do so.[[626]](#footnote-627)

Alongside reproductions of the original cartoons, the *dessinateurs* at *Charlie* presented their own efforts, such as a Cabu’s coverpage cartoon which showed the Prophet Muhammad holding his face in his hands and lamenting: ‘It’s hard to be loved by idiots’, alongside the headline ‘Muhammad Overwhelmed by the Fundamentalists’. Page 2 included text on a yellow background with a red headline that says ‘For Free Speech’. The subtitle reads: ‘L’Association du Manifeste des libertés (AML) gathers men and women of Muslim culture who carry values of *laïcité* and sharing, and they sent us this text’. The author of this text, Tawfik Allal, states that the Jordanian weekly magazine *Shihane* published three of the Danish cartoons on 2 February. The magazine was banned, and its director harassed. Allal argues that it is in Muslim countries that free speech is most needed. The manifesto brought new supporters to *Charlie Hebdo* from the world’s artists, among them Salman Rushdie. Next to Val’s editorial on page 3 is another caricature of Muhammad holding the Danish newspaper and laughing at the caricatures, his speech bubble stating: ‘It’s really the first time that the Danes have made me laugh’. The 12 Danish cartoons themselves, which were published in *Jyllands-Posten* on 30 September 2005 and sparked major international protests, are minimized and placed around the borders of pages 2 and 3.

Val’s editorial was titled ‘*Petit glossaire d’une semaine caricaturale*’. It came in 11 bullet points. The first paragraph included a short biographical note about the Prophet Muhammad. Val presented his opinion that Muhammad was a human being like all humans and that in countries where free speech is guaranteed, he can be caricatured just as much as Jesus or any other religious figure. The second paragraph, titled ‘The right to representation’ explores the concept of representation from linguistic and literary perspectives, citing classic texts from the *Iliad* to the *Arabian Nights* to modern cinema. The third paragraph, titled ‘A historical reminder’, talks about Jewish deportations under the Nazis and argues that if people had resisted fascist regimes, there would not have been a Holocaust. Equally, free people today should resist the fascist regimes that forbid free speech. The fourth paragraph, entitled ‘Third World War’, argues that the caricatures should not entail any conflicts, and that those who think otherwise are exaggerating hugely. Val states: ‘Only a calm non-aggressive firmness could calm the rage that is rising’ (‘*Seule une fermeté calme et sans agressivité peut calmer la folie qui se lève*’). In the fifth paragraph, entitled ‘The bomb in the turban’, Val admits that there is a chance the Danish cartoons are artistically no good. If they were ‘amazing’ you would have heard artists defending them in the name of aesthetics. Instead, he asserts that it is a question of principle. Drawing an analogy with the Dreyfus affair, Val argues that Jean Jaurès decided to defend a Jew because he believed in his innocence. By extension, the turban represents not Islam but a vision of Islam and of the Prophet that terrorist Muslims hold. Those who pretend that the Prophet inspires them to kill, it is their own vision that they do not want to see represented in these cartoons.[[627]](#footnote-628) Neville Cox observed:

whereas all of the cartoons in relation to Muhammad published in *Charlie Hebdo* were blasphemous (in the sense of treating sacred themes irreverently), those that implied that the Prophet, and thus Islam itself, had inherent connections to terrorism, were also defamatory of religion (in the sense of negatively stereotyping an entire organization by reference to the non-representative actions of a tiny minority).[[628]](#footnote-629)

Fourest herself found that the caricature of the bomb is the most troublesome one, as if it is the cartoonist who is making the amalgam between violence and Islam. In her lengthy column ‘All this fuss for 12 drawings’, she traced – and excused – the story behind the Danish cartoons and the reasons *Jyllands-Posten* decided to run it: the Danish publication hoped to defy censorship and self-censorship, and thus was not seeking to provoke Muslims. Val and Fourest’s explanation is almost identical to the one discussed by Anshuman Mondal who analyses a claim made by Kurt Westergaard (the author of the turban-bomb) that ‘the cartoon is not about Islam as a whole, but the *part* that apparently can inspire violence, terrorism, death and destruction’.[[629]](#footnote-630) Mondal argues that while Westergaard’s explanation in this quote is ambiguous and could be interpreted in two possible ways, his image, the cartoon itself, is quite clear in the message it conveyed.

Westergaard’s ambiguity brings into analysis the term used by Fourest above, ‘amalgam’, which has been used in the context of the cartoons specifically, and in talk about Muslims and Islam in general. When Val concluded that ‘for good and tolerant people, God and his prophet are good and tolerant; for those men filled with hatred and cruelty, God and his prophet are violent and murderers’, he claimed he wanted to avoid all ‘amalgam’. He first argues that the concept of Islamophobia was appropriated in Iran by the mullahs in order to interpret any critique of Islam as an expression of racism. Then he uses that ‘historical’ point to warn against the amalgam of confusing racism with criticism of religion. Additionally, Val argues that taboos should only concern their holders. Val then turns against the offended and criticizes the alleged racism in the Middle East towards Danes and Norwegians because of an act committed by a single journalist. He closes his editorial by criticizing the stagnation of extremists and their inability to debate and accept change.

The word amalgam, as used by both Val and Fourest, is also deployed relentlessly by journalists and intellectuals every time they want to criticize Islam ‘without’ offending Muslims. Former editor-in-chief of *Libération* and *Le Monde* Didier Pourquery pondered on the word amalgam and argued that *Padamalgame* (a phonetic contraction of the phrase pas d’amalgame) is a word that has been used and abused in the way French media talks about Muslims.[[630]](#footnote-631) He adds:

Melange, assimilation… Listen to these words emerging when we try to avoid using amalgam. They are paradoxical. They evoke tendencies more or less positive. ‘We should not assimilate Muslims with terrorists’, for instance. Assimilate is a pleasant word in other contexts. It means integration, right? Certainly, one would argue. However, in the concept of assimilation there are two moments: transformation and integration. To become the ‘same’ (simili) as the others, I have to change first. When I assimilate to a group I imitate their characteristics in order to melt into their ensemble. There we see emerging the problem.

The problem that Pourquery tries to point at, though not quite successfully, is the risk of using obscure words to create a dangerous reconciliation between otherwise separate identities. The apparently harmless intentions behind using the phrase *pas d’amalgame* to urge people not to fall for division creates a new problem. It calls, often not explicitly, to distinguish between two types or figures of Islam: one that is invoked by terrorists and another that peaceful Muslims are attached to. In other words, in an attempt to warn people about the confusion, a distinction between ‘true’ and ‘false’ Islam is introduced into public debate. *Charlie Hebdo* actively participated in this confusion in the way it presented a certain image of ex-Muslims, atheist Muslims, or even secular Muslims (they have to be secular in the French way) as the only legitimate bearers of true Islam.[[631]](#footnote-632)

Fourest added that the cartoons took on a major international dimension when the Norwegian magazine *Magazinet* republished them. The Islamic regimes in Iran and in other Muslim countries supposedly orchestrated the whole affair to impose more censorship on their citizens, according to Fourest. Cavanna wrote that he wished he did not have to write about this affair but when he listened to the debate, he acted out of discontent with the whole idea of being ‘politically correct’. Cavanna believed that freedom should be absolute or not. There is no ‘you can laugh about everything but XXX’ The rest of the issue contained humorous caricatures and *bandes dessinées* by Luz, Riss, Jul, and Tignous around the question of representation.

The following issue had a cover signed by Riss of an angry Jacques Chirac shouting at a terrified kid: ‘No more useless provocation’. The kid had asked Chirac to draw him a lamb. The headlines continued to discuss the cartoons controversy, stating ‘89% of the mail we received were testimonies of support. Amongst them, many Jewish, Arabs, and Christians agree on one point: the clash of civilizations shall not pass’.[[632]](#footnote-633) 90% of the issue was about the controversy, mainly showing off all the support they had received. Page 2 included proud messages of support from journalists and intellectuals from the Maghreb including Raja Ben Slama a writer from Tunisia, Remi Yacine from the Algerian newspaper *el-Watan*, and Ali Lmrabet, a Moroccan journalist. Val’s editorial attacked the president Jacques Chirac for describing the most recent issue of *Charlie* as provocative. Val called Chirac ‘l’homme de la politique arabe de la France’.[[633]](#footnote-634) MRAP (Mouvement contre le racism et pour le l’amitie entre les peuples) sent a letter signed by its president Alain Calles extending its full support to *Charlie Hebdo* in its fight for free speech. Caroline Fourest wrote extensively on her page about the issues of racism and Islamophobia and criticized MRAP for misleading public opinion into thinking that blasphemy and criticism of Islam was a form of racism.

In issue 715, Val published a petition for the right to blaspheme, signed by [Bernard-Henri Lévy](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard-Henri_L%C3%A9vy), [Salman Rushdie](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salman_Rushdie), [Taslima Nasrin](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taslima_Nasreen), and eight others,[[634]](#footnote-635) which became to be known as ‘le manifeste des 12’, titled ‘Ensemble contre le nouveau totalitarisme’. Val prefaced this by stressing that his motive was ‘refusing to be intimidated in the name of respect for cultures and religions’, and urged other newspapers to follow his lead, announcing the manifesto was ‘destined to be published in other European newspapers’.[[635]](#footnote-636) The manifesto occupied most of pages two and three and was superimposed on a large, panoramic caricature depicting a Muslim crusade of waves of bearded men holding the Qur’an, women in burqas, and even suicide bombers. On the European shoreline, waves of people are enjoying food, wine, and music, in other words, the pleasures of life. The apocalyptic scene leaves nothing to the imagination and expresses quite loudly the terror of a Muslim invasion to a peaceful and hedonistic European paradise. Val chose to stop at 12 signatories in a symbolic reference to the original manifeste des 12 published in 15 November 1940 by 12 unionists to protest against Vichy France’s anti-Semitism.[[636]](#footnote-637) *L’Express, Jyllands-Posten,* and *Der Spiegel* published the manifesto.[[637]](#footnote-638)

Another important story within the same issue was in Charb’s weekly column ‘Charb n’aime pas les gens’, this time entitled ‘islamophobie ≠ antisemitisme’.[[638]](#footnote-639) Charb used his column as an attempt to counteract any conflation made by the readers between Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. He evoked an article signed by Georges Corm published in *Telerama* on 18 February where Corm urged European democracies and the United Nations to initiate a law that criminalized ‘slips with racist connotations’ the same way as had been done in the case of anti-Semitism. Charb argued that while anti-Semitism is the hatred of Jews as a population, Islamophobia is the hatred of Islam as a religion. Anti-Semitism is then similar to the hatred of Arabs, which could be coined Arabophobia, and by extension, both anti-Semitism and Arabophobia are forms of racism. Arabophobia existed in France, according to Charb, and society condemned it. Some racists confuse Arabs and Islam, and by attacking Islam they hope to attack Arabs, without realizing that not all Arabs are Muslims and the majority of Muslims are not Arabs. Charb’s conclusion was: ‘There is not really any Islamophobia in France; there is rather discrimination against Arabs and blacks’, and that is racism.[[639]](#footnote-640) In other words, Charb argued that those who suffered discrimination in their place of work or pursuit of a decent home, did so because of their skin colour. While skin colour is visible, religion is invisible. Charb warned against adopting a definition of Islamophobia to designate racism against Arabs and blacks. Finally, Charb argued that the term is dysfunctional because those who are assaulted are assaulted because they are Arabs. There might be some truth in Charb’s observation. But his definition of Islamophobia, or rather his erasure of the concept altogether, does not negate the fact that *Charlie* has expressed a dislike of Islam as a religion and contempt for those who practice it. And Charb’s ‘definition’ of Islamophobia does not constitute a reliable framework.

Accused of incitement to racial hatred, *Charlie Hebdo* stood trial for the Muhammad cartoons. The complaint was led by the Grande Mosque of Paris, the Union des Organizations Islamiques en France, and the Ligue Islamique Mondiale. *Charlie’s* defence team staunchly defended the right to mock religion regardless of the feelings of believers, invoking *laïcité.* Richard Malka and Georges Kiejman, *Charlie*’s lawyers, opted for a populist trial where they invited high profile personalities to testify. These included François Hollande, leader of the Socialist Party at the time; François Bayrou, then the leader of the Union for French Democracy Party; Mohamed Sifaoui, a French-Algerian journalist and writer and secularist Muslim; Denis Jeambar, a neoconservative aficionado of Samuel Huntington; and Nicolas Sarkozy, Minister of the Interior at the time as well as then being the leader of the Union for a Popular Movement Party. Sarkoz, Hollande, and Bayrou were all running for president in the 2007 elections, which Sarkozy won.

On the eve of the trial, 6 February 2007, Val held a press conference accompanied by Caroline Fourest on his left and Mohamed Sifaoui on his right, as well as Flemming Rose, the editor of *Jyllands-Posten*. When asked about his participation in the conference, Rose opined that the trial reminded him ‘very much of the time I was a correspondent in the Soviet Union’.[[640]](#footnote-641) Abdelwahab Meddeb, a well-known French-Algerian novelist, also testified in the trial, expressing his support for *Charlie*’s right to free speech. However, while praising Cabu’s cover in his testimony, he described the Danish caricatures, and particularly the Muhammad bomb turban cartoon as racist and Islamophobic. Unperturbed by the bomb in the turban, Meddeb criticized the cartoon for representing the facial traits of the Prophet Muhammad, an Arab, as ‘excessively sensual and belligerent’, and argued that this particular representation corresponds to an old tradition of anti-Semitic caricatures. On the other hand, Mehdi Mozaffari, Iranian scholar, and political refugee in Denmark, remarked that the same Danish caricature made a direct association between Islam and terrorism, but he remarked that if the Prophet Muhammad existed now with the same mission, he would have used atomic weapons to spread his message of Islam. Kiejman argued that including Mozaffari in the list of witnesses proved that there were Muslim intellectuals who were capable of going even further than *Charlie* in their criticism of Islam. In their decision to include two scholars of Muslim heritage, Val and Malka chose to frame their defence line around the question of free speech and free press. Both their witnesses, Mozaffari and Meddeb had differing interpretation of the caricatures, but these interpretations did not stop them from supporting the magazine’s right to free speech. It is as though Val and Malka dismissed the relevance of any criticism no matter how sophisticated it is – here I refer to Meddeb’s historical postcolonial interpretation – in the face of the importance of protecting free speech.

In the same vein, another symbolic act was Val’s seeking the testimony of filmmaker Claude Lanzmann, author of the Holocaust documentary, *Shoah.* Val’s reasoning in including Lanzmann goes as follows:

Like Sartre, at the time of the Algerian War, Lanzamann’s support of the Arab cause was relentless. He took risks, he was committed, and his commitment mattered. He wove links with the leaders of the time – Ben Bella, Bouteflika, Boumediene – and it is a good idea to remind the court of this.[[641]](#footnote-642)

Sarkozy expressed his support for *Charlie* through a letter he addressed to Val, and which Kiejman read during the trial. Sarkozy classed *Charlie* as a publication that ‘in its own way expresses an old French tradition: of satire, derision, and insubordination’.[[642]](#footnote-643) He added: ‘I could totally understand that certain offensive *dessins* could have hurt the religious convictions of some of our Muslim fellow citizens. To deny this would be unfair to them and would undermine their spiritual authenticity. Yet I prefer an excess of caricature to an absence of caricature’.[[643]](#footnote-644) François Hollande also expressed his support through a note that he sent for the trial proceedings, and stated that his testimony was not ‘in the name of the left to defend a paper of the left, but in the name of the Republic to defend a liberty’, and concluded that freedom of speech is an ‘absolute’ principle. [[644]](#footnote-645)

The press also showed its unconditional support for *Charlie*. The *Libération* cover on 7 February 2007 was a dramatic cartoon by Riss depicting an imam dressed in black attacking a giant pen with an axe; the headline said: ‘The caricatures trial: the censors are fighting back’ (‘*Procès des caricatures: Les censeurs mettent la gomme*’). The ‘*Charlie Hebdo*’ titled replaced ‘*Libération*’ in the masthead. On the other hand, *Charlie*’s cover of the same date was chosen by the paper’s lawyer Richard Malka. This targeted the three Abrahamic religions, had been signed by Cabu, and depicted an imam, a rabbi, and a priest marching in protest and holding a sign which said ‘Veil Charlie’.

It is unclear why *Charlie* was put on trial and not *France Soir* or *l’Express*. Perhaps it was because *Charlie* did not only republish material from *Jyllands-Posten*, but also added to the original cartoons. Giving his verdict on 22 March 2007, the judge, Jean-Claude Magendie, focused on the right to laugh, and linked this to the broadly accepted tradition of provocative satire in France. He stated:

Every caricature should be analysed as a portrait which overcomes good taste to fill in a parodic function, whether in the burlesque mode or the grotesque one… [T]he exaggeration functions then as a mode of pleasantry which allows it to skirt censorship, and to use irony as an instrument of social and political critique that invites judgement and debate.[[645]](#footnote-646)

It would be absurd to think that *Charlie* was in any way in a position to lose the case. It could even be argued that Val and his team were fully aware from the outset of the grave repercussions of their decision to publish the Danish cartoons. *Charlie* not only published extensively in similar cases before: the Rushdie affair, the Ayaan Hirsi Ali fatwa, and Oriana Fallaci; they even received Taslima Nasrin in their offices. Anshuman Mondal rightfully observes the ‘similar trajectory’ and ‘similar dynamic’ of the Rushdie affair and the Danish caricatures affair.[[646]](#footnote-647) Meanwhile Val has witnessed both affairs unfold, and the *France-Soir* escalation as well. In an interview, Cabu opined that ‘the Middle East does not have a culture of caricature’ and that Arabs don’t understand caricatures’, a dismissive conclusion which he based on the observation that under certain Arab dictatorships caricaturing the authorities was censored.[[647]](#footnote-648)

In fact, Val argued that the defendants’ lawyer was pressured by President Jacques Chirac to take the case:

He is a solid Republican, a *laïc* [Republican secular] whose conviction supported by a serious knowledge of history and jurisprudence […] I always thought that Szpiner was very uncomfortable in this affair, for personal ethical reasons, and he never wanted to win the case. Same with maître Bigot, a well-reputed press lawyer who pleaded on Szpiner’s side […] It seems to me that Szpiner dreamt of being on our side, alongside Kiejman and Malka. Acting on Chirac’s demand, he was probably stuck between two loyalties: the president, and his convictions.[[648]](#footnote-649)

As Mondal has demonstrated, the Danish cartoons for *Jyllands-Posten* were not a case of practising absolute free speech, but rather provocation and offence, while so too the case of *Charlie Hebdo* was about editorial calculations.[[649]](#footnote-650) It was not just about provocation, given that Mondal also argues that provocation ‘is merely a point of departure rather than a self-evident conclusion’.[[650]](#footnote-651) Val was confident that both the press and the political elite would defend *Charlie*, and it was quite predictable that this defence would come in the name of resisting censorship and self-censorship, defending free speech, and reinforcing *laïcité*. Val’s decision rested rather on a desire to raise the profile of the magazine by reinventing it as the gatekeeper of free speech in France. Free speech is in itself a malleable principle for Val, as his dispute with Siné would show his decision should be read through his own political ambition as well as through his strategy to place *Charlie* on the international map. This was a desire he expressed as early as 1994 when the president himself was a *Charlie Hebdo* contributor, even if for just one day. Val used the law in his favour because, while free speech is debatable, blasphemy is protected by law.[[651]](#footnote-652) The next episode of Val’s reign over *Charlie* would prove a lot more problematic. The trial put *Charlie* under scrutiny from its readers, and most importantly from its followers. Every editorial decision was thoroughly inspected and questioned, and what would go unnoticed in other publications became a matter of public opinion in the case of *Charlie*. The concept of double standards when it came to mocking Islam versus mocking Judaism was already a problem because of the Dieudonné affair, and it became even worse with the Siné affair.[[652]](#footnote-653)

In 1981, Siné wrote a sentence in *Charlie Hebdo* that eloquently summarized his principles: ‘I like money but not the rich, I like peace but I am ready to kill, I like Jews but not Israel, I like Arabs but not the emirs, I like the workers but not the Communist Party’.[[653]](#footnote-654) Siné was a radical, he belonged to the extreme left, and had anarchist tendencies. He was a fierce atheist who hated all religions. Before *Charlie Hebdo* was conceived, Siné was already publishing his own monthly magazine titled *Siné Massacre* (launched in 1962), an anticlerical, anti-establishment, and anti-colonialist weekly (then monthly) paper. Siné was very crude and explicit. He could be described as the epitome of the politically incorrect. In the nouveau *Charlie Hebdo*, he occupied a permanent column titled ‘Siné sème sa zone’. As discussed earlier, his political affinities were with the immigrants and the poor. His pro-Palestinian conviction increasingly displeased his boss, Val. Siné was one of the pillars of *Charlie* and of the French press in general. A very well-respected figure in France’s cultural scene, his eviction by Val cost both men their jobs.

In 2 July 2008, in his regular column Siné mocked Jean Sarkozy, the son of Nicolas Sarkozy for his engagement to the wealthy daughter of Darty, who was Jewish. Siné ridiculed the hypothetical conversion of Jean Sarkozy to Judaism, and wanted to point at his opportunism, by saying: ‘He just announced his intention to convert to Judaism before marrying his fiancée, the Jewish heiress of Darty. He will go a long way in life, this little one!’[[654]](#footnote-655)

The comment would have gone unnoticed if journalist Claude Askolovitch had not brought it up in his radio show *On refait le monde* in RTL.[[655]](#footnote-656) He stated: ‘It is an affair that will make a lot of noise, in my opinion. It is an anti-Semitic article, in a magazine which is not; it’s called *Charlie Hebdo*’. Askolovitch’s intervention in the affair was unashamedly inflammatory. He evoked the possibility of *Charlie* being hit with a lawsuit for anti-Semitism and dissipated any suspicion against Val by arguing that the latter hated Siné so much that he no longer read or checked the latter’s columns before publication. Under the threat of a lawsuit, Val asked Siné to apologize, which the latter refused to do.[[656]](#footnote-657) On 16 July 2008, Val used his editorial to defend *Charlie* and to publicly shame and fire Siné. It was therefore on reading *Charlie* that Siné learnt he was fired. He sued *Charlie Hebdo* for wrongful dismissal and the court decided in his favour, sentencing *Charlie* to a 40,000 Euro fine. The court declared that the mediatization of his dismissal and Siné’s humiliation given that it was publicly announced to his readers caused the journalist moral injury for which he should be compensated with 20,000 Euros.[[657]](#footnote-658) The court order was not released until December 2010. Meanwhile, and as Askolovitch predicted, the affair made a lot of noise. Petitions were signed and editorials were written on both sides of the dispute. Guy Bedos wrote an open letter to Philippe Val, published in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, in which he compared Sarkozy to Val except that the first was elected and the second came to power through a coup. [[658]](#footnote-659) Feminist lawyer Gisèle Halimi also supported Siné and wrote:

After carefully reading these lines, I can confirm – as a specialist of press law – that it is just a pretext, and a lawsuit over anti-Semitism does not stand a chance of winning.[[659]](#footnote-660)

Furthermore, a petition written by Éric Martin, Benoît Delépine, and Lefred-Thouron (who also left *Charlie* in protest at Val’s censorship) was published in *Le Nouvel Observateur* on 30 July 2008, and was signed by 2,000 people including prominent artists and intellectuals in support of Siné.[[660]](#footnote-661) Val on the other hand received the support of his friends, led by Bernard-Henri Lévy in an article published in *Le Monde* titled ‘De quoi Siné est-il le nom?’.[[661]](#footnote-662) LICRA (La Ligue internationale contre le racisme et l'anti-Semitisme) and SOS racisme brought their support to Val as well.[[662]](#footnote-663)

Inside *Charlie Hebdo*, except for Cavanna and Willem everyone failed to display their support for their colleague Siné. Willem signed the petition mentioned above, while Cavanna chose to remain neutral by arguing that Siné had always been a provocateur, but never an anti-Semite. Charb said that the debate inside *Charlie* during that period did not touch on whether Siné was anti-Semitic or not, but rather concerned the ambiguity of his statement and the multiple interpretations it could evoke.[[663]](#footnote-664) Cavanna said years later: ‘After the terrible storm that followed Siné’s eviction and almost ended the paper, we had the feeling of convalescence. Of a tenacious salvage after a typhoon passed through’.[[664]](#footnote-665)

A few months after the eviction of Siné, in May 2009, Jean Luc Hees promoted Philippe Val to director of Radio France Inter. This promotion was blessed by Sarkozy himself. [[665]](#footnote-666) *Le Monde* in an article titled ‘Philippe Val: fini de rire’[[666]](#footnote-667) revealed a friendship between Val and Carla Bruni, the first lady, who was a big sponsor of Val’s career on France Radio. Siné on the other hand, launched his own satirical paper, *Siné Hebdo*, in September 2008, which became *Siné Mensuel* in 2010.Val himself admitted that the new magazine stole some of *Charlie Hebdo*’s readership, the true loyals to the *bête et méchant* spirit revived by Siné. Not only was the readership attracted by *Siné Mensuel,* joournalists who left *Charlie* such as Lefred-Thouron and Olivier Cyran also joined. In 2009, journalist Emmanuelle Veil will quit *Charlie* and join *Siné*, and so did Patrick Pelloux in 2018.

The Siné affair demonstrated the duplicity of the magazine when it comes to offensive humour targeted at Jewish people; the magazine comfortably adopted a responsible, anti-racist ethical stand towards Jews, but was clearly complacent when it comes to offending Muslims or Christians. In fact, the notion of caricature as an autonomous practice, thriving against a backdrop of Islamophobia, provides a context for the judiciary system’s favourable verdict during the Mohamed cartoons trial as explained above. Now, that the target is not the Muslim, but the Jew, the courtesy extended to Val previously, and to caricature as a French tradition of parody overcoming good taste, have been denied to Siné. While Val was praised for effectively aiming at his target through the Mohamed caricatures, Siné was reprimanded for missing the target, and the narrative of the freedom to use a very peculiar – yet mythologised – medium of caricature and satire was replaced by the narrative of the responsibility to use journalistic practice.

## Conclusion

The nouveau *Charlie* gave the impression at the start that it was going to be a continuation of the good old paper of the 1970s. Before Islam became a favourite topic of caricature and editorial diatribes, the editorial line witnessed a preparatory phase that helped shape its position vis-à-vis Islam. This transitional, preparatory phase was the war on Kosovo, when *Charlie* became the voice of mainstream, interventionist opinion. Clearly, Val wanted to take the lead on certain topics and display a certain independence in choosing to initiate a debate around the question of the left in France. But *Charlie* also turned into a sort of coterie, with a tendency to get caught in the news cycle dictated by big media, which was illustrated in its engagement with attacks, counter-attacks, and rights of reply with newspapers such as *Le Nouvel Observateur* and *Le Monde*. Val’s 17-years reign over *Charlie* was criticized for his political engagement and authoritarian editorship, to which he retorted that:

It is okay to be passionate. That is the life of a newspaper. Of course, it gets aggressive sometimes. But, contrary to polemics over the Kosovo War where the debates over military intervention were very violent, we learned how to argue without excluding each other. As for readers, they love it when fists are flying… so they’re being served.[[667]](#footnote-668)

Many of Charlie’s readers saw in these internal conflicts a sign of sanity, and a testimony that the magazine remains a place where difference in opinions is accepted. It is important to clarify that looking at *Charlie Hebdo*’s anti-Muslim discourse through the internal dynamics of the magazine itself (editorial calculations, Val’s political ambitions, the desire to make financial profit) does not undermine its impact on the public debate. *Charlie Hebdo*’s history as explained so far suggests that the magazine was founded and continued to function on individualistic principles. But these principles are not divorced from those embraced by a large part of society and the establishment alike, and the international mediatization of the Danish cartoons and its rehabilitation by Val was evidence of the influence of the press and media on public debates. Consequently, *Charlie Hebdo*’s banal representations of Muslims, in the overproduced image of the imamized Muslim man and the veiled Muslim woman who revere a terroristic prophet, became swathed in the wider discourse of national identity. The magazine accentuated the difference between a French person and a Muslim person, and widened the gap between an idealized secular or atheist Muslim and a regular Muslim. In this accentuation it created a fissure between Muslims and everyone else, and normalized and mainstreamed Islamophobia.

Daniel Leconte, a French filmmaker and friend of Val, filmed behind the scenes of the Danish cartoons trial in a documentary, which was titled after Cabu’s cover of the Prophet Muhammad ‘C’est dûr d’être aimé par des cons’. The film was nominated for a Golden Camera at the Cannes Film Festival of 2008. Philippe Val, with Bernard-Henri Lévy at his side, walked the Cannes red carpet, a historical moment that was remembered differently by Cavanna and Val. While Val remembered it as an ‘unforgettable moment of celebration’, Cavanna regretted that:

The glorious demonstration of Cannes, where, for the first time, I realized that I was nothing in this joyful band, but an old accessory only useful to gather fans around the resistible ascent of the child prodigy [Val].[[668]](#footnote-669)

Aside from Cavanna feeling manipulated and that his life’s achievement – C*harlie Hebdo* – had served merely to promote Philippe Val’s social ascension and political agenda, the symbolic gesture of walking up Cannes’ red carpet was confirmation of *Charlie*’s new status as part of the elite, a goal far removed from the 1970s *Charlie*. Additionally, *Charlie*’s win in a battle that could not have been lost, positioned the magazine as the gatekeeper of free speech and the free press in France. In 2015, Val blamed the French press for the death of his ex-colleagues in the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings. He deplored that the lack of press solidarity manifest in the act of not publishing the Danish cartoons left the cause of free speech and *laïcité* unresolved. With Val’s decision to leave *Charlie Hebdo* in 2009 to become head of Radio France Inter, Charb took over as director of the magazine. The new episode in the life of the newspaper witnessed an escalation in the intensity of criticism over *Charli*e’s editorial line, which culminated in violent criminal attacks against the publication on two occasions: the firebombing of *Charlie’s* offices in 2011, and the terrorist attack in 2015.

# Chapter 4: *Charia Hebdo*

‘*Dessiner* *ne sert à rien. Mieux vaut s’armer d’une kalachnikov*’

‘Drawing is useless. Better arm yourself with a kalashnikov’

Charb in *Paris Match*, 15 December 2004

## Introduction

On 7 January 2015, when Said and Cherif Kouachi attacked the *Charlie Hebdo* offices in Paris during their weekly editorial meeting killing 12 people, it was the editor-in-chief Stéphane Charbonnier, known as Charb, who was the first and main target of their mission ‘to revenge the Prophet Muhammad’.[[669]](#footnote-670) Charb had already been named in a list of targets issued by *Inspire*, the official Al Qaeda newsletter, in May 2013.[[670]](#footnote-671) Succeeding Philippe Val, Charb became director of *Charlie Hebdo* on 13 May 2009. He had joined the magazine right from its relaunch in 1992. Before that, he had been part of *La Grosse Bertha*. Charb was one of the regular contributors to the magazine’s covers and, as we have seen, produced a permanent weekly column titled ‘Charb n’aime pas les gens’. In addition to his contributions to *Charlie Hebdo*, Charb worked for other newspapers such as *L’Humanité* and *Télérama.* Charb, like Siné, was one of the very few people in *Charlie Hebdo* who was equally a writer and a *dessinateur*. As we will see in this chapter, the versatility of styles in both forms text and image could easily lead to conflicting interpretations of his work and his message. Philippe Val provided a eulogy for Charb:

His drawing was voluntarily heavy and thick. He decided it that way. But, in this heaviness and thickness, he managed to spout expressions, similarities, and subtle movements. It was a far cry from Cabu’s masterful aesthetics, but Charb was determined to make a mark with his own style. Despite his young age, he had a powerful understanding of human nature. Sometimes, I asked him how despite being so young he knew so much, and what kind of supercharged sense of observation he owed that to. This knowledge, like Rimbaud, nourished in Charb a sort of grinning despair. Charb was a non-depressive desperate, always ready to act, to find jokes, to trigger hysterical laughs, all while remaining methodological and conscientious.[[671]](#footnote-672)

Val described Charb as a ‘cynical Stalinist’ and a ‘clandestine sentimentalist’, in a reference to his communist devotion and militant atheism. Charb expressed his political affiliation to the Communist Party on a few occasions, and he used his journalism to criticize the left, and even more so the right. Unlike the previous editors, Charb did not write an inaugural editorial, nor did he occupy the editorial column on page 2. Instead, Val’s editorials were replaced by interviews or reportages done by various contributors, or by a column titled ‘L’apéro’ often signed by Bernard Maris, and on rare occasions by Charb.

Charb the director continued to write his page 14 column ‘*Charb n’aime pas les gens*’, and he introduced another short feature titled ‘*La fatwa de la semaine*’ circa 2013. He made a rather quiet entrance as the head of *Charlie*, stressing a continuity in the editorial line as it was conceived under Val. Charb announced his plan for *Charlie Hebdo* with a concise letter to the readers entitled ‘En route pour “*Charlie Hebdo* 3”!’ at the bottom of page 3 on 20 May 2009. In a statement that called readers to adjust their expectations, while dismissing their opinions as to what *Charlie Hebdo* should or should not be, he declared:

*Charlie Hebdo* was never and will never be a museum that you visit in (skates), a standing stone that you wander around nodding your head. Instead, *Charlie Hebdo* is a living, thinking, howling, belching organism. No one should expect to say one day: ‘*Charlie Hebdo* has finally become what we wanted it to be’. To be able to entertain someone else, you have to keep them in suspense.[[672]](#footnote-673)

Charb clearly wanted to stress that there would be continuities in the way *Charlie Hebdo* was managed and conceived; it did not aim to please an audience, and was not content with mere spectatorship. This recalls the first editorial by Val back in 1992 when he supposedly surveyed the opinion of a 1,000 ‘idiots’ and did the opposite. A week prior to that, Charb wrote a joint column with Sylvie Coma and Riss alongside Val’s last editorial. The column tackled two issues: it delivered a grateful, almost sentimental farewell to Val, and addressed the question of *Charlie Hebdo*’s readership. The authors opined about the uselessness of trying to understand the ‘robot-profile’ of a typical reader. *Charlie Hebdo* had never calibrated its editorial line to a specific market demand, they argued, and would not tailor its content to the needs of a specific clientèle, recalling Cavanna’s statement that the quality criteria of what is publishable is determined by him and his team, something that Wolinski confirmed as seen in Chapter 2. The authors [Charb, Riss, and Coma] stressed: ‘*Charlie Hebdo* will continue to resemble nothing but... *Charlie Hebdo*’, and claimed that they would not submit to any power or ideology.[[673]](#footnote-674) The masthead listed Charb as ‘*directeur de publication*’ (director of publication), Riss ‘*directeur de la rédaction’* (editor), Sylvie Coma ‘*directrice adjointe de la rédaction*’ (assistant editor), Gérard Biard ‘*rédacteur en chef*’ (editor-in-chief), and Cabu ‘*directeur artistique*’ (artistic director). The hierarchy of the job titles in *Charlie Hebdo* is quite complicated. The ‘editor-in-chief’ or ‘managing editor’ was in *Charlie Hebdo*’s job stratification Gérard Biard. The ‘editor’ – in this case, Riss – would then be subordinate to this person but provide oversight to staff in terms of the final detail (look, composition, emphasis, space, and so on) of the publication. However, it was Charb who carried out what are usually conceived as the tasks of the editor-in-chief. In addition, it was Charb who was the face of the publication and its spokesperson with the media, as were Val and Cavanna before him. When he needed to address the readers about issues relating to the financial situation of the publication, these columns were usually signed ‘Charb’.

Even though *Charlie Hebdo* made enormous profits from the Danish cartoons issue, the publication struggled financially after the departure of Val. On 16 February 2011, in a note to readers, Charb thanked them for their annual subscriptions and opened up about the difficult financial situation of the magazine, offering reassurance that *Charlie* would be able to survive the season. He described *Charlie Hebdo*’s readers as ‘bourgeois’ and ‘élite’ because independent newspapers have become a rare commodity and a product of luxury: ‘there are fewer satirical newspapers in France than there are free newspapers funded by advertisements’.[[674]](#footnote-675) Initially, Charb stressed that *Charlie Hebdo* did not and would not accept any donations and urged those who wanted to help to do so by buying the magazine’s annuals and special editions, or purchasing membership subscriptions for their friends and family members. A few months later, *Charlie Hebdo* celebrated its issue number 1000, and Charb confessed in that week’s editorial that *Charlie Hebdo*’s ‘horizon is limited to the Wednesday of the following week’.[[675]](#footnote-676) Producing a new issue every Wednesday was nothing short of a ‘miracle’, argued the director. He indignantly clarified the ownership situation at *Charlie Hebdo*, listing the shareholders as Riss (599 shares), Cabu (1 share), Bernard Maris (1 share), Eric Portheault (the manager and accountant, 299 shares), and Charb (600 shares).[[676]](#footnote-677) Two months before the January 2015 attack, however, Charb signed an editorial titled ‘CHARLIE HEBDO IS IN DANGER, General Mobilization’, in which he revealed that the costs of making the paper were exceeding its profit. He explicitly called on readers to come to the rescue with donations, something he had previously refused, and regretted a ‘press crisis’ which he nevertheless blamed on the press itself, on the economic recession, and on the fact that *Charlie Hebdo* did not engage in advertising. Charb invited readers to join *Charlie Hebdo*’s mission of ‘peaceful jihad against stupidity’, and to resist what he called the two biggest religions of the world, ‘intolerance’ and ‘stupidity’.[[677]](#footnote-678) A nod to Cavanna’s *bête et méchant* spirit, Charb tailored the reference to give priority to what was supposed to be one of his main journalistic features: anti-racism. The use of terms such as ‘jihad’, ‘’intolerance’ and ‘religions’ suggests that Charb was addressing his discourse specifically to a readership interested in topics of religious significance, above, perhaps, other political or social issues. This is noteworthy given that the readership of the satirical press in France had been tradionally steeped in the culture of anticlericalism.

From the early 2000s, *Charlie Hebdo* had become focused on Islam and Muslims, especially Muslim women. *Charlie Hebdo*’s provocative humour about religion in general and Islam in particular was based on two assumptions relating to the concept of political correctness and a certain idea of humour, at least according to Charb. He attempted to explain ‘political correctness’ to his readers in his column, ‘La fatwa de la semaine’, in an article titled ‘Death to the crooks of the politically incorrect’.[[678]](#footnote-679) Charb argued that the political right and reactionaries have a magic phrase they use to silence their opponents: ‘you are being politically correct’. By using such a qualifier, the proponent of political incorrectness implies that the politically correct is simply conformist and coy. This tool, Charb argued, is used to portray the far-right as the true rebels and progressives, which suggests that Charb is situating his editorial line in opposition to, and distancing himself from, the far-right often racist discourse. The Gayssot Act, which is meant to combat racism and anti-Semitism, may serve to stop racists from using racist speech, added Charb, but it cannot stop the government from carrying out a racist policy, and it did not stop the Front Nationale from advancing in the polls.[[679]](#footnote-680) Those who fight discriminatory discourse should not be accused of being ‘bien-pensant’: that is, conventional and orthodox. Interestingly, Charb concluded:

Leading someone to believe that the oppressed is the oppressor, that the powerless are winning, is the tactic of someone who pretends to be politically incorrect. The politically incorrect crook does not overturn the established order, he incarnates the established order.[[680]](#footnote-681)

Charb here wanted to stress that what motivates *Charlie*’s iconoclasm is not a desire to appear or sound politically incorrect, and it is not to use the alibis of political correctness or free speech as tools to advance racist or discriminatory discourse.

When *Charlie Hebdo* came under scrutiny for publishing what was thought to be a racist cover, Charb devoted three pages to an explanation of the meaning of second-degree humour. On 27 November 2013, an illustrated editorial appeared, ‘Second degree for dummies’, after *Charlie Hebdo* was accused of racism for a cover portraying Christiane Taubira, French Minister of Justice (originally from French Guiana), as a monkey. Charb explained that it was second-degree humour, mocking a racist cover from the right-wing newspaper *Minute* which had been published the week before on 13 November 2013. *Minute* had recycled a racist insult made against Taubira. *Charlie Hebdo*, according to Charb, wanted to use its cover to insult *Minute*. However, *Charlie Hebdo*’s cover of Taubira was neither intelligent nor humorous. It was reminiscent of the 1960s and 1970s *Hara Kiri* covers where the magazine thought it could comment on consumerist culture by denigrating how that culture supposedly domesticated women, using the same consumerist tools that sexualized and objectified women. Charb thought that he could succeed in denouncing *Minute*’s defamation of Taubiraby using the same image.[[681]](#footnote-682) Furthermore, using several covers of *Charlie Hebdo* from its relaunch to the current day, Charb juxtaposed first-degree posters and images he had amassed from elsewhere against second-degree parodies, hoping that the readers would understand the difference. He concluded: ‘we could make anti-racist *dessins* while reproducing what we denounce’ (‘*on peut faire des dessins antiracistes en mettant en scène ce qu’on dénonce*’).[[682]](#footnote-683) Charb here defended a trope extensively used by *Charlie Hebdo* whereby authors reserved the right to perpetuate certain images and representations they nonetheless deem worthy of criticism. Sandrine Sanos rightfully pointed at *Charlie Hebdo*’s ‘problematic reliance on racist imagery to denounce racism’, and in her analysis of one of Riss’s covers that mocked the humourist Dieudonné, she revealed that the magazine’s ‘denunciation of Dieudonné’s antisemitism relied on long-standing racist representations of Africans as uneducated and unintelligent (Dieudonné’s father is Cameroonian)’.[[683]](#footnote-684) The use of second degree humour does not always guarantee that the audience will understand the message the way it is intended, and instead view it as first degree humour, that is, merely ridiculing the subject. As this chapter shows, Charb, Riss, Luz, Coco, Catherine, Zineb, Tignous all shared an interest in the theme of Islam, they all had different takes on it. But, the overall effect was a negative view of Muslims. Charb specifically had two criticisms: one directed at the State which violates the principle of *laïcité* by trying to regulate and domesticate Islam, and another criticism directed at Muslims themselves for failing to comply with the requirements of modernity.

A number of national and international events deeply influenced *Charlie Hebdo*’s discourse on Islam, starting with the French ban on conspicuous religious symbols in 2004, and continuing with the Swiss minaret controversy in 2009, the burqa ban in 2010, the ascent of the Muslim Brotherhood in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011 (and Daesh in the Middle East since 2011), and, most importantly, the rise of a political discourse that questioned Islam’s presence in France. Often the talk about national identity was a disguised conversation about the place of Islam in the French Republic. This chapter argues that the magazine, rather than being oppositional and transgressive, was in fact heavily shaped by the political agenda that aimed at obstructing the visibility of French Muslims, particularly Muslim women. *Charlie Hebdo* was reacting to events as they happened and the policies of the government, but in doing so the magazine was also solidifying the idea that Muslims and Islam are a problem. *Charlie Hebdo* was trapped in debates centering around the question of national identity, and the question of what became to be known as ‘Islam de France’, which achieved a new prominence under Sarkozy.[[684]](#footnote-685) Strikingly, looking at issues of *Charlie Hebdo* week by week, the coverage of the theme of Islam was very intense. More than one story (image or text or both) on average was devoted to a theme linked to Islam or Muslims, and often amounted to three or four stories per issue. Islam was now certainly the dominant theme. This chapter unfolds chronologically as well as thematically in order to study the evolution of French national debates – particularly Sarkozy’s policies – and *Charlie Hebdo*’s understanding of them. This chapter demonstrates *Charlie*’s approach as it will detail several episodes where the magazine’s coverage of Muslims and Islam was reacting to social discontent and government policies. Alongside this, the magazine introduced recurring features, such as a highly distinctive satirical image of the burqa, which was often used to mock other subjects. This ensured that stereotypical imagery of Muslim women was always present in the magazine.

## 4.1 *Le Grand Débat sur l'Identité Nationale*

During Sarkozy’s tenure at the Ministry of Interior Affairs (2002-2004) and as President of France (2007-2012), five anti-immigration laws were passed, alongside the issuing of numerous political statements by Sarkozy and his government which alienated immigrants and Muslims in France while ostensibly trying to domesticate Islam.[[685]](#footnote-686) In 2003, in an attempt to establish an Islamic interlocutor, Sarkozy went a step further in the institutionalization of Islam in France and created *Le conseil Français du culte musulman* (French Council of the Muslim Faith).[[686]](#footnote-687) The CFCM was critically regarded as a kind of Islamic assembly on the model of the Jewish assembly created by Napoleon in 1808 that sought to administer the Jewish faith. The establishment of the CFCM was followed by a series of laws aimed at regulating immigration, asylum rights, and integration.[[687]](#footnote-688) These policies culminated in the creation of a Ministry of Immigration and National Identity in May 2007 (which ceased to exist in 2010). In 2009, Sarkozy launched ‘le grand débat sur l’identité national’, and set up the High Commission for Equality and Against Discrimination, HALDE, which showed in its last report that discrimination on the basis of national origin was common practice in France.[[688]](#footnote-689) This was followed by a report by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination in 2010, which criticized France for a ‘notable resurgence in racism and xenophobia’ due to the ‘absence of political will’.[[689]](#footnote-690)

In a government circular sent on 2 November 2009 to all prefects in France, Éric Besson, the Minister for National Identity and Immigration, officially launched the big debate on national identity: ‘le grand débat sur l’identité nationale’.[[690]](#footnote-691) The ways *Charlie Hebdo* reported, wrote, and engaged with the grand debate about national identity reveal strong indicators of Charb’s understanding of nationalism.

In his column ‘Con d’être fier’, Charb used an anagram that mixes the words ‘fier’ and ‘con’ in a way that suggests a correlation between feeling proud and being stupid. The article was a diatribe against Eric Besson’s statement ‘if my ministry is capable of being a machine that produces “good” French citizens, I will be very happy’.[[691]](#footnote-692) Charb accused Besson of articulating an ‘obscene graffiti’, and declared that despite the latter’s statement having outraged a large part of the press, it was his statement ‘we have to cultivate the pride of being French’ that shocked Charb the most. Charb denounced Besson’s statements because he claimed they accentuated differences and nurtured nationalistic sentiments. Charb argued that being a proud Frenchman is first and foremost about ‘overcoming the will of xenophobic governments and becoming the citizen of a democratic republic’.[[692]](#footnote-693) Besson was ‘the anti-France’, an ‘administrative detail’, and ‘an error that will definitely be rectified’, according to Charb. In much of its content, *Charlie Hebdo* alternated between serious journalism and caricatured representations, and Charb’s output served as a perfect microcosm of this tension. Charb also used his brush to mock French fears about Islamic public rituals such as the construction of mosques and erection of minarets. In a strip, titled ‘LA PEUR DU MINARET’ Charb asked the French public: ‘what makes the minaret an expression of radical Islam?’.[[693]](#footnote-694) He manufactured several ludicrous answers: ‘it is pointy’, ‘it is super-aggressive’, ‘it is a macho provocation’, ‘it is always erect’ (the reference is of course sexual here), ‘it oppresses women’, and when Charb asked the public how would they replace it, they allegedly said, ‘with a vagina!’[[694]](#footnote-695) Charb here wanted to stress that the French public’s fear of public displays of Islam such as in mosques and minarets is not only exaggerated but also irrational and idiotic.

Under Charb, *Charlie Hebdo* systematically excoriated government initiatives and policies involved either in the management of religious life, the ‘statistication’ of ethnicities, and the quantification of society. The magazine rejected the debate over national identity and the institution of an ‘islam de France’, under the pretext that both actions are incompatible with the principle of *laïcité*, and on the grounds that statistics concerning ethnicity are illegal in France according to the laws numbered 78-17 passed in January 1978.

In the same vein and to further its opposition to an ethno-racial quantification of French society, *Charlie Hebdo* devoted a double page spread to an interview of Sylvie Coma by SOS Racism, titled ‘Les Bons Comptes Font les Bonnes Ethnies’.[[695]](#footnote-696) SOS Racism criticized the argument that introducing ethnic statistics would remedy the lack of knowledge about discrimination in France, and resisted attempts to put in place a system of ‘ethnoracial quantification’. It is worth noting that ethnoracial quantification divided politicians and academics alike: the socialist party opposed such techniques, deeming them un-Republican as such initiatives go against the strongly assimilationist tradition of the secular Republic, while Sarkozy and the anti-liberal and green left supported it in the name of multiculturalism. The committee[[696]](#footnote-697) tried to count how many people in France were from x or y ethnicity. SOS Racism argued that knowing how many Arabs or Africans or Asians there are in France would not help fight discrimination; rather it would only give employers an exact percentage of how much diversity there should be in their companies. According to SOS Racism, there is a difference between the two tasks of promoting diversity and fighting discrimination. Confusing both terms only underplays both struggles. SOS Racism fights the idea that people should self-define in specific terms. Instead of ethicizing and racializing readings of society, the aim should instead be to eradicate the very ideas of race and ethnicity. The US model of integration is rejected completely by SOS Racism, which states that such a model would not work in France as the two societies are fundamentally different.

This story is symptomatic of the fact that *Charlie* almost always published only the views of their allies, and hardly ever offered a platform for its opponents to present and discuss their ideas. *Charlie* did not engage with a pluralistic approach to journalism and did not seek to circulate divergent opinions. It is therefore essential to look at how opinion and preferred readings were inserted into the stories chosen by the editors of *Charlie Hebdo*, particularly considering their method of singling out certain social questions and highlighting them above others as a way of foregrounding a certain political perspective. *Charlie Hebdo* presented SOS Racism as a reliable commentator that reproduces a consensual view of the world as *Charlie Hebdo* wishes the readers to see it.

Another example arose on 13 January 2010, when *Charlie Hebdo* interviewed renowned left-wing political historian Patrick Weil about the question of ‘mixité scolaire’ in the banlieues and the disadvantaged communities in Paris. The focal point was ‘les grandes écoles’ such as the prestigious highly-selective and elite schools of Ecole Normale Supérieure, Ecole Nationale d’Administration, and Sciences Po Paris. The week after, Charb wrote an in-depth analysis of the importance of foreigners living in France and their contribution to the French economy while criticizing politicians (specifically Sarkozy) for trying to appeal to voters by adopting anti-immigration policy during election times.[[697]](#footnote-698)

Charb expressed a special loathing for the idea of being proudly French. He despised the 14 July military parade, and abhored the national flag. In a 12 July 2010 column titled ‘Fiers d'être fiers’, Charb attacked *France-Soir* for using *L’Institut français d'opinion publique* to set up a poll asking French people if they were proud to be French. 79% replied yes, but if the number was less than 50%, *France-Soir* would not have published it, mocked Charb, who then criticized the poll for not giving responders a third option beyond the affirmative or the negative. In ‘Vive l’anti-France’[[698]](#footnote-699) Charb attacked a right-wing UMP party deputy who, in *Le Figaro*, stated that ‘it seems natural that all members of a nation, regardless of their cultures, their history, or their origins, should be ready to defend their country’. The ‘allegiance to arms’, Charb argued, is part of a discourse that in reality aims to plant a seed of fear within the French psyche so that in the case of war – say with a foreign country such as Algeria – French sons of Algerian immigrants would rather defend Algeria than France. This politics of fear is built on a fantasy that is very unlikely to happen, Charb argued, but remains justifiable due to decades of institutional discrimination against immigrants. Charb displayed a heightened sensitivity against racism and xenophobia and an overall weak sense of nationalism. He also expressed a committed anti-populism, which translated into a vigorous attack on figures from the Front Nationale and UMP, such as Marine Le Pen, and Nicolas Sarkozy. That established, it follows that the analysis of *Charlie Hebdo*’s anti-Muslim rhetoric cannot be undertaken without recognizing the difference between Charb’s individual contributions and those of *Charlie Hebdo* as a whole. In fact, the following analysis will show that on the part of Charb specifically, in his role as writer (in his columns) he showed a different journalistic personality to his role as *dessinateur* (in his signed covers). Indeed, one could almost say that, professionally, he had a split personality.

## 4.2 The Question of the Veil

On 15 March 2004, the Chirac–Sarkozy government introduced a law that banned the wearing of ‘conspicuous signs’ of religious affiliation in state schools.[[699]](#footnote-700) The law identified ‘conspicuous’ as ‘a large cross, a veil, or a skullcap’.[[700]](#footnote-701) Prior to that, in June 2003, President Jacques Chirac had created a commission to oversee ‘the application of the principle of *laïcité* in the Republic’. The commission was presided over by Bernard Stasi and included 20 members, including notable academics such as Mohamed Arkoun, Jean Baubérot, Régis Debray, Henri Pena-Ruiz, René Rémond, Alain Touraine, and Patrick Weil. The Stasi commission, in its final report in September 2003, observed that the question of the veil was no longer a question of liberty, but a question of public order.[[701]](#footnote-702) According to the commission, the context had changed in recent years, tensions and conflicts regarding the wearing of the veil in state schools had become more frequent, and there was both manipulation of – and pressure on – girls to wear the veil. The Republic therefore should not remain deaf to the ‘*cri de détresse de ces jeunes filles*’, and a ban on the veil was necessary.[[702]](#footnote-703) The ban generated heated debate amongst intellectuals in France and abroad. Marlière considered the ban un-Republican as it contradicted fundamental Republican values of liberty and equality, and Laborde argued for the foundation of a new Republicanism ‘pluralistic and strongly egalitarian’.[[703]](#footnote-704)

The law itself was passed on 3 March 2004, a Wednesday. *Charlie Hebdo* ran as usual, and understandably did not cover the news. However, the following week’s issue, on Wednesday 10 March 2004, also notably omitted any discussion of the ban. The Madrid bombings happened on 11 March, and its focus shifted to questions of terrorism and threats to national security. Earlier, however, on 21 January 2004 *Charlie Hebdo* had published a cover signed by Charb and titled ‘Manif pour le voile’, which featured a veiled woman who has visible bruises around her eyes; these have turned red and blue. Taken together with her white scarf, Charb evoked the symbolism of the French flag. Next to the veiled woman stands a bearded Muslim man who observed ‘she is showing her attachment to both the veil and France’.[[704]](#footnote-705)

The same issue featured a strip by Cabu titled ‘the protest of the bearded woman’ [‘la manif des femmes à barbe’] commenting on the pro-veil protests in Paris. Charb and Cabu chose to frame their support of the veil ban on the basis that the veiled Muslim woman is oppressed, physically abused by the Muslim man, and, as Cabu argued (pointing out that two-thirds of the protesters are men), have no autonomy over their bodies. This line of argumentation developed under the leadership of Val and continued under the editorship of Charb. This is clearly a very sharp contrast to the coverage of the burqa ban in 2010. Nicolas Sarkozy, who had opposed banning the headscarf in schools in 2004, was the main force behind banning the face veil in public spaces in 2010. The question why would Charb oppose the state intervention on Islam by trying to institutionalise it through the CFCM (French Council of the Muslim Faith), while also supporting the government’s intervention of banning the veil? The underlying logic would be that in the first instance, the State is putting a direct danger on *laïcité* through creating an institution that acts as a national representative of Islam. The veil, however, is seen as one religio-cultural act that is incompatible with French identity. *Charlie Hebdo*’scoverage of Muslim women whether in texts or in images is not at odds with the mainstream media’s representations of them. The recurrent images that *Charlie* draws of Muslim women perpetuate the dominant stereotypes of Muslims being a threat to Western values and Muslim women, especially veiled ones, as being sexually frustrated, oppressed and even physically abused. The caption of a 2010 cover by Charb, featuring two veiled women wearing the Afghani burqa and having a conversation about sex, says ‘The g spot does not exist’, while one of them says ‘I had doubts’.[[705]](#footnote-706) The context of the story is not clear, but my interpretation is that it has more to do with female sexuality in general than Muslim women in particular. In other words, Muslim women are here used as a tool to mock something else [the headline ‘science’ suggests maybe a news story involving a scientific discovery of a sexual nature], a technique often used in the *Hebdo* publications. Charb thus instrumentalized a topic of a purely sexual nature to advance commentary on the veil. He imposed a correlation in which only a Muslim woman would back up a claim that ‘an orgasm through the g spot is a fallacy’, thus insinuating a lack of sexual emancipation among Muslim women, a typical trope of representing the Muslim woman as sexually unfulfilled. The disturbing part about *Charlie Hebdo*’s caricatures of veiled women generally is that the drawn veil and the whole demeanour of the veiled woman conjures up poor fashion taste and low social status. Under the cartoonists’ brush, the Muslim woman looks poor, plain, peasant-like, unsophisticated, and unrefined. It is as if the French see the veil as a provocative tool by which Muslim women are saying, ‘We challenge your interpretations of freedom, social boundaries, sexuality, and gender, as we have our own’.

It seems that what angers French people most about the veil is that they think that Muslims who come to France, and those who are born in it, must accept the Republican values of liberty and *laïcité*; a process that resembles a pilgrimage to the enlightenment. Those Republicans who could not conceive any other way of being or living than what the Republic had imagined for them, found it challenging, and almost insulting that Muslim women should choose to wear headscarves. Scott argues that the ban on the veil was always debated in terms of dichotomies opposing Islam to the West, the traditional to the modern, while in reality the veil was understood as ‘the ultimate symbol of Islam’s resistance to modernity’.[[706]](#footnote-707)

For most of 2009 and 2010, *Charlie Hebdo* relentlessly ran a feature entitled ‘La burqa de la semaine’ where Luz drew a caricature of the burqa that was usually placed on page 12. Each time the burqa is fashioned in a new and different way that resembles an object or an animal or a concept, while also playing with the word burqa itself. The examples were of ‘Burqalerte a Malibu’ where a caricature of a curvy woman is wearing a bikini burqa running on the beach in a parody of the American show ‘Baywatch’, known in France as ‘Alerte a Malibu’.[[707]](#footnote-708) Alongside Luz’s feature in this particular issue, a column titled ‘Burqa partout feminism nulle part’ [‘Burqa everywhere, feminism nowhere’] featured three *dessins* by Riss, Honoré, and Charb. Riss commented on the Air France plane crash that resulted in the death of 228 people, and concluded that it was also because of the burqa. This was next to a plane that is wearing a burqa, rendering the burqa as a running joke. In Honoré’s *dessin* featuring two women in niqab, the caption reads ‘En burqa chez Ardisson’, and one of the women is saying ‘he did not ask me if fellation is cheating’. Charb’s *dessin* is titled ‘a law banning the burqa? Veiled women will resist’ and depicts a veiled woman who is hammering a nail into her bleeding feet while daring the audience: ‘just try to remove it’. In all of these images, except for Honoré’s who has a distinctive style of drawing in only black and white, the burqa is drawn in bright cobalt blue that cannot be missed regardless of how small the *dessin* is.[[708]](#footnote-709)

Luz’s permanent feature ‘Burqa de la semaine’ included ‘Burqabu’[[709]](#footnote-710) (a caricature of Cabu wearing the burqa), ‘Burqachevalsurlesprincipes’ (a horse rider wearing a burqa and literally riding ‘principles’ alongside an advertisement saying ‘Find a new idiotic burqa every day on [www.](http://www.charliehebdo.com)CharlieHebdo[.com](http://www.charliehebdo.com)), ‘Burqaverell’[[710]](#footnote-711) (an obscure and very contextual reference), ‘Burqathedrale’[[711]](#footnote-712) (a cathedral made out of a burqa), ‘Burqapricorne’[[712]](#footnote-713) ( a capricorn wearing a burqa), ‘Burqabbey road’ (a parody of the famous Beatles poster ),[[713]](#footnote-714) ‘Burqadultere’[[714]](#footnote-715) (featuring a woman in a burqa with a man inside her burqa whose bare legs suggesting the burqa is large enough to hide a man inside for sex), ‘Burqahawaii’[[715]](#footnote-716) (a surfer adapting the burqa to the Hawaiian traditional dress), ‘Burqastro boy’[[716]](#footnote-717) (the burqa as superhero costume), ‘Burqapiculteur’[[717]](#footnote-718) (a honey-maker in full burqa), Burqart nouveau[[718]](#footnote-719) (an art nouveau burqa painting), ‘Burqaristochats’[[719]](#footnote-720) (obscure, the person-in-burqa is surrounded by five disguised cats), ‘Burqarlequin’[[720]](#footnote-721) (a harlequin in a burqa), ‘Burqavatar’[[721]](#footnote-722) (in reference to the movie *Avatar*), ‘Burqamescope’ [[722]](#footnote-723) (a person-in-burqa holding a camcorder-in-burqa), ‘Burqamanite-tue-mouches’[[723]](#footnote-724) (obscure, need to check what could manite-tue-mouches refer to), ‘Burqatalogue’[[724]](#footnote-725) (a catalogue-person wearing a burqa, with pictures inside of women wearing burqas), ‘Burqanette’ (a person-soft-drink can), ‘Burqatmandou’[[725]](#footnote-726) (a peace-loving guitar-playing hippie in burqa), ‘Burqaziza’[[726]](#footnote-727) (a helicopter in burqa about to crash in a desert island, while the song ‘Je te veux sit u veux de moi’ is playing in the background), ‘Burqanicule’[[727]](#footnote-728) (a burqa-person is melting in the heat), ‘Burqagoule’[[728]](#footnote-729) (a burqa-clad woman in a kagoul), ‘Burqatholique’ (a woman in burqa nailed to a cross), ‘Burqathodique’ (a woman-in-burqa, the burqa is a tv with antenna and satellite receiver, and in the tv, another woman in burqa), ‘Burqasque a pointe’[[729]](#footnote-730) (the burqa takes the form of medieval soldier’s helmet), ‘Burqarc-en-ciel’[[730]](#footnote-731) (the burqa person is literally a rainbow), ‘Burqasterix’[[731]](#footnote-732)(Asterix is wearing a burqa), Burqartichaut (a woman is an artichoke wearing a burqa), ‘Burqastor’,[[732]](#footnote-733) Burqasquette (a woman-in-burqa and a baseball hat, referred to as a *casquette* in French), ‘Burqastorama’[[733]](#footnote-734) (a woman-in-burqa with a head made out of a television), ‘Burqananri’[[734]](#footnote-735) (a woman-in-burqa is a canary bird in a cage), ‘Burqafard’[[735]](#footnote-736) (the woman-in-burqa is an insect [*cafard*]), ‘Burkaterine’,[[736]](#footnote-737) ‘Burqamerica’ (the Statue of Liberty is wearing a burqa), ‘Burqatwoman’[[737]](#footnote-738) (catwoman in burqa), ‘Burqacophonie’.[[738]](#footnote-739)

These images did not occupy a prominent place on the pages of the magazine, and they were small and marginal in position, but the bright blue colour, and the consistency in their frequency were eye-catching. Their relentlessness is conspicuous. This visual obsession with covered Muslim women’s bodies mirrors the French political and cultural landscape’s imagination of Muslim bodies as ‘irreducibly different – avatars of difference contaminating the national body’, argued Sanos.[[739]](#footnote-740) Luz’s depictions of the Muslim body did indeed include sexualized images as the list above shows. The reason Luz and *Charlie* behind him face no significant backlash or criticism in the way they *mis-*represent Muslims in the contemporary world is that today’s France sees itself as very different from colonialist or Vichy France, it sees itself as having broken up with racism and antisemitism, because those practices existed in a France that is imperial and non-democratic. The depiction, by Luz, of veiled Muslim women as objects, animals, and alien bodies is done in the name of democracy itself. Remember Val’s definition of free speech in the introduction of this thesis as the product of democracy. The ban on the veil in schools in 2004, the ban on minarets in Switzerland and other similar practices in the Western world are done in the name of democracy’s secular values. The idea that women in France are free and not veiled is shared by the vast majority of the political spectrum. It is what Éric Fassin calls ‘sexual nationalism’, as the ‘litmus test’ which ‘serves to justify, in democratic terms, the rejections of others’, whereby ‘democratic justifications, in particular, in sexual terms, are to be understood as efforts to deflect accusations of racism more than racism itself.’[[740]](#footnote-741)

Charb argued that the right way to discuss the burqa is to ask if it ‘humiliates’ women or not, and that would be the only reason for its banning. Ironically enough, Luz’s caricatures rendered veiled women into insects and objects, a process of othering that results in dehumanization. Perhaps they are doing this on purpose to prove their point that the veil humiliates women, but ultimately such a motive is hard to discern, and the images can easily be read in the style of first degree humour, essentially directly ridiculing Muslim women. What is more interesting in the way *Charlie Hebdo* talks about the veil is that regardless of the context, the veil is always the blue-coloured burqa, in the fashion native to Afghanistan that is associated with the Taliban. Whether they are mocking Moroccan veiled women or Egyptian ones or even French-born Muslim women, it is always the blue-coloured burqa. In the same manner, the following analysis shows how *Charlie Hebdo* intentionally conflated stories about the full-face veil and the headscarf.

The Baby Loup Affair (in 2008) sparked a national debate when Fatima Atif was fired from her job at the Baby Loup nursery in Paris because she refused to submit to her employer’s order to remove the veil during working hours. After getting HALDE’s support, Atif decided to sue her boss Natalia Baleato for racial discrimination.[[741]](#footnote-742) The trial, which took over two years, acquitted the employer. *Charlie Hebdo*’s Silvia Coma dedicated a long interview to celebrating Baleato’s victory for *laïcité,* and the cartoonist Catherine offered a strip depicting seven ways the burqa is dangerous to wear near babies.[[742]](#footnote-743) The problem is that Atif did not wear the burqa, simply a headscarf, while Catherine’s used the blue Afghan-style full body veil as a reference. Needless to say, the plaintiff was not interviewed by *Charlie Hebdo* – or any other prominent newspaper – which suggests that the terms of public debate around the veil in France confiscates Muslim women’s voices, and some have argued it has been doing so since the Islamic scarf controversies in 1989, 2004, and 2010.[[743]](#footnote-744) Natalia opined about the increasing numbers of women wearing the veil in her neighbourhood and the reasons they wore it in the past: ‘The meaning of the veil has changed. It is no longer a symbol of allegiance, but a sign of protest’.[[744]](#footnote-745) Natalia also tried to stigmatize veiled women working in her institution when she complained that ‘they’ pose a hygiene risk when they refuse to roll up their sleeves and wash their hands properly. She stated: ‘some women pretended they were on their periods so that they didn’t have to uncover their bodies and go in the swimming pool with the children’. There were also some clichéd complaints about veiled women interrupting their children’s classes by wanting to take them to prayer. Much of the interview sounded like propaganda against the veil centred on Baleato’s biography and her fight for freedom both in France and in her native country Chile.

Muslim women were not only perceived through the lens of the veil ban. Islamic traditions such as Ramadan were another subject of interest to *Charlie*. In a reportage titled ‘Special Ramadan: In Bed with Mahomet’, written by Zineb and illustrated by Coco, *Charlie Hebdo* ‘explored’ five Parisian mosques during Ramadan, providing a double-page diatribe on the imams, the mosques themselves, and the people who visit them. Zineb used the phrase ‘poor women tangled in their veils [...] we rarely find a pair of Louboutins in this pile of flip flops and *babouche* slippers’.[[745]](#footnote-746) In all mosques, the cleanliness of the toilets was commented on unfavourably. The point of the whole reportage seems to be to verify whether the mosque is a woman-friendly milieu and whether the space fosters feminist values. Alas, Zineb discovered that the mosque – usually unfurnished with an ablution room for women – is instead a place of segregation between men and women, the latter being only second-class Muslims at best. While Zineb’s texts are mostly ironic, Coco’s images, on the other hand, are not caricatural, attempting a more serious critique.[[746]](#footnote-747) In evoking the flip flops and the traditional Moroccan slippers, Muslim women were again presented as plebeian, and at odds with modernity.

Taking a further step into the reproduction of stereotypical racial representations of Muslims, the magazine published yet another double-page article by Zineb and Luz entitled ‘a female zoo in the Saudi desert’ with Luz’s one-piece caricature spreading over one and a half pages.[[747]](#footnote-748) Zineb commented on the news that proclaimed that Saudi Arabia was planning a women-only city in order to reconcile Sharia law with Saudi women’s aspirations for more liberty. Luz’s version of the city is a sexual fantasy domain where women are allowed to walk naked, buy, and use sex toys. The place resembles a zoo, and the women are portrayed with an animalistic sexual appetite and as primitive and stupid. Even if the intention is to expose the Saudi government, the women come out of this *dessin* looking socially backward.

*Hara Kiri* tried to mock consumerist society using the naked female body, using a patriarchal approach. *Charlie Hebdo* tried to mock conservative Muslim society by again using the female body in a different way. Denuding the female body or covering it are both political acts that strip the body from its autonomy, and claim a responsibility for it. It is about male dominance. As if the magazines are the owners of a higher morality which says that women should not run for MPs (think of *Charlie Hebdo*’s 1981 issue) or that they should not 'regress' into covering their bodies. In both cases, the female body is a tool and the real target changed from the 1960s consumerist culture at the heart of society to the Muslim minority culture that is on its margins.

## 4.3 Islam de France

Charb simply and categorically rejected the basic idea of a French Islam. In a 19 May 2010 column, he wrote ‘Pas d’islam de France’, and attacked Besson’s project of training imams in public universities under the pretext of teaching them how to be compatible with the principle of *laïcité*.Charb then saluted UOIF (Union des Organizations Islamiques de France) for reportedly opposing Besson’s project. Charb argued that ‘Islam has the right to exist in France, but the secular Republic should not seek to make it a ‘national religion’. [[748]](#footnote-749) In fact, Charb is basing his argument here on the very principles of *laïcité*, by which the Republic should stay separate from religion and vice versa. Charb is thus using the same measures for critiquing both the religion and the state.

On 18 February 2011, *Libération* published an in-depth article titled ‘Nicolas Sarkozy s’enflamme sur l’Islam’ [‘Nicolas Sarkozy is inflamed by Islam’], stating that the second religion of France had become the president’s favourite enemy: ‘it is the moment’s hot topic, Nicolas Sarkozy wants an “islam de France” and imams who speak French, and he does not want to hear about streets prayers and minarets anymore’.[[749]](#footnote-750) On 5 April, the UMP organized a conference entitled ‘*laïcité* and the place of Islam in the Republic’ [‘*La laïcité et la place de l’Islam dans la République*’] involving think tanks and the party. *Libération* argued that the general secretary of the UMP, Jean-Francois Copé, was driven by a fear of seeing Marine Le Pen dominate the fight for the protection of the values of the Republic. While studying the UMP party’s rapport with Islam and the growing fear of Islamization in France, the journalists of *Libération* reported that Bruno Le Maire, another member of the right-wing party UMP, brought *Charlie Hebdo* to the centre of the debate by arguing that ‘we accept the caricatures of the pope, we must accept those of Mahomet’, while Sarkozy declared ‘What are the limits that we put on Islam? Our political education, and our Parliament should take care of these questions’.[[750]](#footnote-751)

A week after *Libération*’s article, on 23 February 2011 Charb pondered ‘Islam de France ou Islam en France?’ He disapproved of Sarkozy’sIslam de France as a ploy to dictate to Muslims how to be Muslims. Charb argued that the state should not try to regulate or intervene in a religion, be it Islam or any other. It would be against the very principle of *laïcité* to do so. He mocked people who were alarmed and offended by street prayers in the streets of Paris, and sneered at the idea that the street prayers blocked the traffic. Moreover, Charb urged Muslims to protest in their respective prefectures at the lack of Muslim buildings for prayer. He concluded that they should be able to buy or build their mosques as long as they do it with their own money, not public money nor local authorities’ money. It is the state’s job to verify if the money is coming from appropriate sources. He concluded:

We must stop considering Muslims who live in France as emotionally disturbed and irresponsible kids. We should apply to them the same laws we apply to all citizens, without discrimination. Neither positive, nor negative.[[751]](#footnote-752)

In a tone that hangs somewhere between sarcastic and annoyed, Charb exclaimed: ‘Doit-on dire religions de merde ou en merde?’ [‘Shall we say shit religions, or religions in shit?’].[[752]](#footnote-753) He expressed incredulity given that such logic [Muslims having their own special rules] was not applied to Buddhism or Christianity or even atheism, so why should it apply to Islam? The threat of radicalization by imams in France is nothing but ‘a Sarkozian fantasm’, affirmed Charb. This was the first in a series of articles debunking the project of *islam de France* published between February and April 2011. A large strip by Charb titled ‘NO TO STATE RELIGIONS’ or ‘*NON AUX RELIGIONS D’ETAT*[[753]](#footnote-754) (in blue, white, and red), had Sarkozy dressed like a medieval imam holding a green book and saying ‘a shit Islam for a shit *laïcité*’ mocking Sarkozy’s policies that aim at ‘privatizing everything in France, except Islam’, which he wanted instead to nationalize. Charb compared the ‘Muslim of France’ who wears a beret and eats a baguette against the ‘Muslim of elsewhere’ who wears a beard and walks with a prayer rug. The Muslim of France faces Neuilly and the Muslim of elsewhere faces Mecca; the Muslim of elsewhere kills the sheep with a knife and the Muslim of France uses the guillotine; and the liberty cap (*bonnet rouge*) replaces the veil. The debate in *Charlie* is systematically framed quite comfortably around ‘islam’ and ‘islam de France’, giving the impression that this is not about Muslims, but rather about religion. Religion, as an ideology (according to Charb), offers a legitimate cover for those who argue that they are contesting a belief and not a social group in a context where racism would be inadmissible.

In ‘The ten rules of the *islam de France’*,[[754]](#footnote-755) a further satire on Sarkozy’s project Islam de France, Charb dissected ten different ways the project could be implemented: a Muslim *de France* will not take off his shoes before prayer, but like a good old Frenchman he will wax them instead. Prayer rooms will be mixed and women are not allowed to wear the veil during prayer, Muslims of France are allowed to build mosques but minarets should be built underground, upside-down. The state is not allowed to build mosques, but old public buildings could be rehabilitated into mosques. The imam *de France* should say the Friday sermon in French instead of Arabic. Muslims of France should place coins in the parking meter if they want to use the street for prayer, and should use yoga mats instead of prayer rugs. Muslims should also have their own Pope and it could be someone like Tariq Ramadan.

In 6 April 2011, Charb took the matter of *Islam de France* to the cover and portrayed a Muslim man kneeling on the floor in a position that is a cross between a dog stretch and a prostration, saying ‘Sarko Akbar!’ instead of the ‘Allah Akbar’, while Sarkozy stood next to him patting him in the head like a dog, saying, ‘This, this is a good secular Muslim’. This caricature aimed to mock both Sarkozy and *Conseil français du culte musulam* (CFCM) established by the former in 2003.

Finally, in ‘Islam, how many divisions?’ (‘L’islam, combien de divisions?’), [[755]](#footnote-756) Charb drew on Stalin’s famous quote – ‘The Pope! How many divisions has he got?’ – to attack the UMP and its leaders, particularly Eric Besson and Claude Guéant. Guéant argued that the growing numbers of Muslims pose a threat to *laïcité*, and Charb replied that there could be 20 million Muslims in France and it would not change anything. He reminded the reader that in 19 years of its existence, *Charlie Hebdo* was sued 13 times by Catholics and only once by three Muslim organizations combined. Whereas Stalin had pointed to the Pope’s lack of ability to confront Nazism due a lack of military might, in this instance Charb downplayed any notion of Muslims being belligerent. Ironically, he suggested, it was actually the Catholics this time who fulfilled that role. Charb thus concluded that no one cares about how many Muslims are in France except for provocateurs like Guéant! It could be argued that there is a hierarchy of values within *Charlie Hebdo*, whereby the defence of universal values of equality, against discrimination, and racism is elevated, and present at all times, except when it comes to free speech and *laïcité*, and then the vulnerable and the discriminated against are not above it.

As such, Charb opposed the commercialization of halal food. He concluded ‘cohabitation, yes, collaboration, no’. In ‘Proudly Halal’,[[756]](#footnote-757) Charb mocked the emergence of the halal market, and refuted the argument that compared the halal food with the organic food market, positioning both as part of niche trends. Particularly, Charb criticized advertising posters, and while admitting that they are more concerned with material gains than with converting people to a specific lifestyle and the religion behind it, he argued that these images ‘are publicizing Islam’. Charb asked ‘are we going to be asked to go to mass on Sunday, or not to eat meat on Friday?’, and concluded that if atheists (in large groups) protested these advertising campaigns and declared that if they would not eat kosher, halal, nor Friday meat, they would be accused of ‘Islamo-Judeo-Catholicophobia’. The problem with the campaigns, he argued, is that they promote both the product and the religion. Trying to infuse some nuance into his position, Charb stated that Muslims are considered either as consumers or believers, and regretted that they are rarely regarded as citizens.

The question of halal food was again brought up in by Gerard Biard in an article titled ‘Y a bon halal’, in which the author mocks the effort of a TV commercial about a halal supermarket. [[757]](#footnote-758) For Biard, the commercial insinuated that French society is opening up to Arab culture and becoming more inclusive. In a satirical and ironic tone, Biard mocked the commercial and the positive reactions to it. The ad, Biard argued, reified Arabs through their religion and subscribed to a communitarian discourse rather than an egalitarian one. Biard blamed the commercial for stereotyping Arabs in the same way the Banania posters stereotyped Africans back in the 1960s (see Chapter 2). He observed:

The image transmitted by the members of this Arab family, who are snatching the packaged lasagne like they have never seen it before, frustratingly recalls the grand times of the good Banania negro.[[758]](#footnote-759)

Biard concluded that it will be a long time before French people have the intellectual tools to decode such messages. However, after watching, it is clearly generic and just like any other food product. *Libération* (published on 26 August 2009) described the couple as ‘beurgeois’, (word made up of beurre [a pejorative adjective for Arabs] and bourgeois), in other words ‘deux bobos maghrebins’, which dissipates any analogy with the primitive African image in Banania that Biard used. In addition, *Le Figaro,* in an article titled ‘Pub: les marques halal se modernisent’ [‘Advertisement: halal brands are modernizing’], interviewed the manufacturer who declared that they ‘wanted to rid the halal from Orientalist and Arabesque clichés’, and reassured readers that Muslims were interviewed to testify that the commercial portrayed them in just the way they wanted: as modern consumers.[[759]](#footnote-760) The commercialization of halal food, like the question of the veil and the building of minarets, relate to the visibility of Muslims in public life. According to Biard and Charb, a good Muslim is a Muslim who does not really believe or practice Islam. This is deeply problematic in the light of evidence of the many ways Islam and Islamic practices have been mobilized by *Charlie* with ever-increasing frequency. Hence, while the magazine argues in favour of secularizing Islam outside of the State intervention, its intense coverage make it impossible for Islam to be a private religion. In fact, the material analysed so far since the Mohamed cartoons show that the dominant perception, which is a rather simple basic assumption, is that Muslims are resistant to secularization, and Islam is antithetical to the universalizing - but increasingly threatened – inherently Western tradition of secularisation.[[760]](#footnote-761) *Charlie Hebdo*, by routinely pitting Islam to *laïcité*, helps perpetuate these normative truths.

## 4.4 *Charia Hebdo*

The ‘Charia Hebdo’ issue, also known as issue 1011, published on 2 November 2011, caused the biggest controversy since the Danish cartoons in 2006, and the most damage to *Charlie Hebdo*,second only to the January 2015 attack. *Charlie Hebdo* provocatively announced the upcoming special issue by naming the Prophet Muhammad as its editor-in-chief. The offices of *Charlie* were firebombed in the early hours of the morning of the issue’s publication, and its website was also hacked. Charb wanted *Charia Hebdo* to be a parodic celebration of the victory of the Islamic party Nahdha in the first free parliamentary elections to be held in Tunisia post-Arab Spring. The issue was also intended to mock the National Transitional Council which came into being after the fall of Gaddafi in Libya in March 2011, which had said that Sharia law would be the source of legislation in the country.[[761]](#footnote-762) The Libyan council further pledged to reform existing laws that contravened the teaching of Islam, particularly in matters of marriage and banking. *Charlie Hebdo* had already run several stories on Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Morocco covering the political changes in these countries in 2010 and 2011, saluting the democratic secular reforms, and warning against the ascendance of religious extremism. The *Charia Hebdo* cover by Luz is a caricature of the Prophet Muhammad dressed in white with a bright green background, saying ‘100 lashes if you don’t die from laughter’. The caricature is of a Muhammad who looks to the reader wearing a quite slack-jawed smile, his mouth full of teeth, googly eyes slightly crossed, and a turban which looks like testicles. A red banner superimposed on the masthead reads *Charia Hebdo* with a logo of Muhammad’s face with a thumbs up.

Inside the issue, Catherine offered a manual titled ‘Charia Madame’ including tips on how to adapt to the newly imposed Sharia law. Again, the blue-Taliban burqa is used, and women are tortured physically and emotionally on every aspect of their lives.

The ‘halal’ satirical editorial was signed by Muhammad Rassoul Allah (who could be reached at leprophete@charliehebdo.fr). Muhammad, who opined that the Nahdha victory in the elections only proves that Islam is not compatible with democracy, argued that no religion is compatible with democracy if the political party that represents it wants to be in power in the name of God. Muhammad does not deny that a Muslim, Jewish, or Christian person can become a president in a democratic secular Republic, but asserts that the militant of a religious political party cannot, because he will only be serving his religion, and not the people who voted for him. The author analysed Nahdha’s political discourse and warned that it is based on deceiving the Tunisian people into thinking that their rights and liberties will not change, and that Sharia will not be applied. To those who talked about the long nature of revolutions and reminded the Tunisians of the French Revolution, Muhammad was particularly critical, asserting that he would not wish the horrors of the French Revolution on Tunisia. He closed his editorial with a thank you note to Sarkozy and Bernard-Henri Lévy for their ‘work’ in Libya, providing a hint of Sarkozy’s questionable associations with Gaddafi.

To answer the concerns of politicians in the West over the implications of applying Sharia law in Tunisia and Libya, and to explain the meaning of the new concept of ‘Sharia light’, the magazine published a double page manual composed of *dessins* by Luz, Catherine, Riss, Charb, and Honoré. Muhammad explains: ‘in the beginning Sharia law was just a code of good manners like the one by Nadine de Rothschild: the knives on the right, the forks on the left, serving ladies first, do not fart at table...Then, with time, it became all confused’. Luz imagined blasphemy with a change of rules: you cannot draw Muhammad’s face but you can draw his penis. The dessin gets even more grotesque when the person looking at the penis dessin mistakes it for Muhammad’s face. Catherine devised a new capital punishment rule by which instead of the 100 lashes punishment, one lash per day for 100 days is ordained. Sharia light for Charb means that homosexuality is halal as long as gay people wear the headscarf. Riss also visualized a new lapidation method whereby the person to be stoned to death (a woman by default according to Riss) could ask her executioner to use stones made in India by poor artisans, and she would thus be helping a family with food for a week. On the same issue, a few pages later, Wolinski, who was born in Tunisia, depicted the confusion of French society and of the *Charlie Hebdo* team over the vote, and so he called his Tunisian friend ‘Muhammad’ for explanations. The latter contentedly explained that it is the will of the people and it should be respected, and after all a democratic Islamist is better than a secular dictator. On a much more serious note, Zineb wrote a Routard (French Lonely Planet) guide for Sharia light, with all the serious implications it meant for the Arab societies that chose it: marital rape, violence against disobedient wives, and a several more examples borrowed from countries which partly or fully apply Sharia law.

A few interesting insights emerge from these different takes about the consequences of applying Sharia law coming with ludicrous ways to tone it down. First, two striking different strands appear. On the one hand there is the *dessinateurs* who come from an outsider perspective, and thus use a lighter tone of humour both first and second degree. On the other hand, Zineb is strikingly coming from a much more serious angle, perhaps due to her proximity with the subject having lived in Morocco most of her life, and thus feels personally threatened by this change. The use of the lonely planet guide suggests she still uses sarcasm to fit in the tone of the magazine. On the part of the *dessinateurs*, some differences could be detected as they provided their own takes displaying their own concerns. For example, Charb focuses on homophobia, and once again the headscarf is employed, while Riss seems to be mocking both misogyny (stereotypically linked to Islamic teachings) as well as a trendy consumerist approach to charity. Luz uses juvenile humour which tries to say let’s take this question of representation literally, if drawing the prophet is not allowed then his penis should be permitted. A similar kind of humour is used in his depiction of a sexual masochist who subverts the punishment or receiving lashes to satiate his own sexual desires.

Another important observation concerns the depiction of the Prophet Muhammad in this issue. By providing Muhammad with an editorial and including humorous clips where he adopts a light and casual tone, the magazine is appropriating him to present their own views making them sound more reasonable. In one clip Muhammad says that he does not understand the Israeli-Palestinian conflict anymore, all he knows is that meatballs in Ramallah are more delicious and night clubs in Haifa are more fun. Muhammad is thus presented as the apolitical and approachable fun guy. This is similar to the distinction discussed in chapter 3 where two types of Islam are pitted against each other, a peaceful one that the majority of Muslims adopt, and a violent one that extremist terrorists promote. Those who do not see the difference and misunderstand *Charlie*’s intentions are called again not to do any ‘amalgam’.

A week after the *Charia Hebdo* issue, *Charlie* published another controversial cover by Luz depicting a journalist wearing a *Charlie Hebdo* shirt and a pencil behind his ear kissing an imam.[[762]](#footnote-763) Over their watering mouths, the caption reads ‘Humour is Stronger than Hate’. This was a direct response to the attack on its offices. Charb signed the main editorial with the title ‘Même pas mal’ [‘not even hurt’] in which he glorified the power of humour and derision, regretted the loss of his crayons, and rejoiced at the unanimous support *Charlie* got from the French press and the government. Charb stated that the first victims of the attack against *Charlie* are Muslims, and he warned that the incident would be instrumentalized by the extreme right to discredit Muslims. Nevertheless, Charb argued that the magazine ‘understands that a Muslim would not want to represent his prophet, eat pork, or laugh at *Charlie*’s *dessins*. However, we are not Muslims. We therefore have the right to represent Muhammad, to eat pork, and to laugh at anything. We are not Christians, nor Jewish, Buddhists either...’. He concluded that as long as those who commit crimes (such as the firebombing of the magazine’s offices) do it in the name of Islam, then *Charlie* will continue to mock Islam. This is in fact one of those moments when Charb draws on the tradition of anti-clericalism. The right to mock religion regardless of the believers’ sensitivities. What is quite paradoxical is that Charb is quite aware of the climate of Islamophobia in France (though he does not use the term), and he is conscious of the backlash Muslims could suffer due to the use of stereotypes that misrepresent them. Yet he still participates in this work of stereotyping.

The *Charia Hebdo* issue did not change Charb’s position vis-a-vis Muslims, specifically, how terrorist attacks committed by Muslim extremists could be used against innocent Muslims. This was consolidated by the way *Charlie Hebdo* handled the Toulouse and Montauban shootings which occurred in March 2012 committed by Mohamed Merah (a French-Algerian Muslim). The event inspired Charb to create a column and a double-page strip in which the author warned against the dangerous consequences of the terrorist attack on the Muslim minority in France. Charb declared that the attack only benefitted the extreme right, which feeds on fear. Charb feared that Muslims would be stigmatized as a consequence. He said:

The terrorist who represents only himself wishes that the population sees a terrorist in every Muslim. He gambles that in the end the persecuted Muslim will join his cause. Without our fear, without our hatred, the terrorist is nothing.[[763]](#footnote-764)

Moreover, Charb criticized those who tend to draw a difference between right-wing anti-Semitism, and Islamic anti-Semitism. Charb argued that there was no fundamental difference between the two.[[764]](#footnote-765)

The series of controversies that *Charlie Hebdo* has become involved in, from the Muhammad caricatures up to the *Charia Hebdo* issue seemed to urge its staff to become even more fixated on the subject of controversy, that is Islam. Three issues of *Charlie Hebdo* published in 2012 were quite controversial. The first, issue 1057 was the infamous ‘intouchables 2’ published on 19 September. The cover signed by Charb was a parody of the film *The Intouchables* (2011) featuring the Prophet in a wheelchair being pushed by an orthodox Jewish person, both saying ‘Faut pas se moquer!’ The joke is in fact aimed at the film *Innocence of Muslims*, an amateur YouTube film that Peter Bradshaw described as ‘a bigoted piece of poison calculated to inflame the Muslim world’.[[765]](#footnote-766) Charb also filled page two with a statement that was more of a list of different ways to depict the Prophet Muhammad that all end in death:

If you draw a glorious Muhammad, you die. If you draw a funny Muhammad you die. Scribble a sordid Muhammad you die. Make a bad film about Muhammad you die. Resist religious terror, you die. You suck up to fundamentalists, you die. Take an obscurantist for a fool, you die. Try to debate with an obscurantist you die. There is nothing to discuss with the fascists. The freedom to laugh without limits is guaranteed by law; the systematic violence of the extremists is also protected by law. Thanks, pricks.[[766]](#footnote-767)

The statement was surrounded by *dessins* from Riss, Luz, and Jul. The overall message is to ridicule Muslims who protested the film. In prime place was a Luz caricature of the Prophet Muhammad announcing the winner of the best anti-Muslim film.

A week later, *Charlie Hebdo* acquired a new label, ‘JOURNAL IRRESPONSABLE’ in capital letters on a red sign, with a cover by Charb explaining the playful and juvenile side of humour which is mainly to add fuel to the fire.[[767]](#footnote-768) Humour is essentially a provocation, Charb seems to say. Not exactly the *bête et méchant* humour which *Charlie Hebdo* had proclaimed in their front cover in the 1970s, irresponsible humour is not just about bad taste or disgusting obscene vulgar derision. It is a lot more serious than that, it is now about conviction and responsibility. In other words, it is about censorship. Again, upon receiving criticism for the ‘Intouchables 2’ cover, Charb fought back. Alongside the regular issue, he published a supplement of an empty *Charlie Hebdo*. Instead of the usual full cover cartoon, a sign that said ‘JOURNAL RESPONSABLE’ was placed diagonally in a red sign over a white background. The other 16 pages were empty. Column titles were kept but emptied of any texts or drawings. In the ‘irresponsible’ version however, Charb dissected the previous week’s cover, and mockingly, listed the hidden messages that ‘conspiracists’ seemingly uncovered.[[768]](#footnote-769) In addition to the cover and page 2, Charb wrote an editorial titled ‘the end of the Islamist fear’ [‘La fin de la peur Islamiste!’] in which he regretted the terror that a handful of Islamists have caused in French society. He criticized atheist Muslims who do not declare their true religion, the politicians who criticized *Charlie Hebdo* for publishing caricatures that might anger the extremists, and the press who kept finding new words to describe Islamists and renew French people’s fear: words such as Salafists instead of religious extremists. Charb ended with: ‘Fear gives importance to the monotheistic pathetic fascists; ridicule, however, contrary to the proverb, kills them’. Finally, Charb attacked those who accused *Charlie Hebdo* of publishing the Muhammad cartoons for money: ‘In 20 years, *Charlie Hebdo* published 1057 issues. Out of these 1057 issues, three were particularly mediatized and sold better than usual. Every time it was a cover in rapport with Muhammad or Islam. Three “buzz” in twenty years. Why not a buzz every week if we have the magic formula? Waiting for your answers…’.

On 1 October 2014, *Charlie Hebdo* got rid of the ‘Journal Irresponsible’ subtitle. The cover by Charb portrayed an ISIS soldier about to slaughter the Prophet Muhammad who screamed ‘I am the prophet, you fool’, to which the soldier replied ‘Shut up infidel!’.

The caption says ‘what if Muhammad comes back’, an in conjunction with the cover, means that ISIS fighters would not be able to recognize the prophet they pretend to represent, hence drawing a very bold separation between Islam (in the image of Muhammad) and terrorism (in the image of ISIS). The issue generated a wave of renewed threats against *Charlie Hebdo*, to which Zineb replied two weeks later with an article titled: ‘Did Charlie break a taboo?’, and subtitled ‘To draw Muhammad was not a subject for discussion a few years ago, but, due to recidivism, a debate has finally emerged in Muslim countries’.[[769]](#footnote-770) The author argued that the issue of 1 October 2014 did not go unnoticed in the Arab world, although this time the caricature did not ignite protests and indignation. The satire on the cover in question was not targeted at Muhammad but at Daesh, and because Muslims are appalled by the crimes of Daesh, using the image of Muhammad in a caricature against Daesh was no longer the most shocking crime. On the contrary, argued Zineb, *Charlie Hebdo*’s cover was shared on social media by Muslims who approved its message. Zineb evoked a fundamental dissimilarity in the reception of the cover between people from the Maghreb and people from the Middle East. In Middle Eastern Muslim countries, there was not the ‘cultural proximity’ with France that characterized the Maghreb, argued Zineb. Finally, Zineb raised the question of hate speech online, and remarked that ‘the most virulent reactions are expressed online’, often in Arabic, a language she could read.

Tragically, the last few years in Charb’s reign over *Charlie Hebdo*, the editor showed a heightened anxiety over the climate of terrorism in France and what it entails in discrimation to Muslims. Whether readers were able to capture this meaning was hard to discern. The low circulation numbers of the magazine suggest a very limited readership, and as a result a low circulation of Charb’s editorials. Charb and some of the other contributors did not see themselves as racist or islamophobe, but the intensity of their humour, and the lack of interaction with readers and Muslims displayed in the provocative and quite stubborn approach to free speech helped normalize the stereotypes of Muslims.

## Conclusion

Charb ignored the impact caricature can have on public opinion. He knew the law protected his right to free press and free speech, and he fought for his right to use caricature fully and without any type of censorship, but he was oblivious to its effect on those offended by it. Charb is not the same when he wears the hat of the cartoonist or the caricaturist. That is why he oscillates between a self-image of the *dessinateur* and the role of the journalist. It is not just a question of freedom but a question of medium. The medium of cartoons and caricature thrives on exaggeration. The text thrives on reason, subtlety, and seriousness. The reader would not expect a caricaturist to sacrifice satire, irony, and parody for the sake of political nuance. The text is different from the image; it has a different function for the reader and most importantly for the author. The author, through images, thinks differently from the writer; he is volatile; and he is more liberated and adventurous. Val did not have the talent of the *dessinateur* Charb but he had another set of skills that helped him succeed in managing a journalistic enterprise. Charb on the other hand had his convictions as well as the ability to work in both formats. Both editors did not have the same intentions nor motivations, but for a distant reader anti-Muslim images intensified despite Charb’s self-proclaimed intentions. It should be recognized that this intensification on the part of *Charlie* happened during a period where society and the state were both showing signs of anxiety over what they think is an increasing visibility of Islam in the public space.

For the rest of the contributors in *Charlie*, the images of the figure of the Muslim man, the imam, the Islamic terrorist, the Prophet Muhammad, and most importantly the Arab, were indistinguishable. The words Muslim, fundamentalist, and Arab were not scrutinized. *Charlie Hebdo*’s rhetoric regarding the veil is one that wants to make a difference, make a change. Rather than merely dissipating the fear of the Muslim terrorist threat, the veil is something that the Republic can do something about, *Charlie Hebdo* seems to say. The academic consensus being that the French loathing of the veil comes from a strong sense of belonging into French identity.[[770]](#footnote-771) Charb rejected the idea of the Republic being a supreme transcendental system. He disrespected the flag, but religiously defended *laïcité*. Charb’s position regarding Islam reflects *Charlie Hebdo’*s position regarding women. Going against his government’s anti-immigration laws and criticizing official policies that try to domesticate Islam and regulate it looks benign at first glance. It is after all done in the name of protecting the fundamental Republican value of *laïcité*. But this criticism of the Islam de France was in fact another way to claim guardianship over *laïcité* (and free speech).

# Conclusion: Looking back at *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo*

One of the things that Val changed in *Charlie Hebdo* in 1992 was to ban drinking alcohol and smoking tobacco in the offices of the magazine. What seemed like a mundane and marginal addition (or in this case omission), was in fact a very important regulation within the Nouveau *Charlie*, and it draws a striking contrast between two leaderships, two conceptualizations of journalism, and two cultures. There was nothing serious about the 1970s *Charlie Hebdo*. Alcohol was constantly served during editorial meetings, and Choron and Siné were reported to never be sober. Everyone smoked. The offices of the magazine were an open space to all its friends. Choron celebrated every *Hara Kiri* delivery [*bouclage*] with free abundant champagne and the magazine’s naked models were often present. In 1973, in his editorial for *Charlie Hebdo*, Cavanna wrote as a subtitle: ‘a text to add to page 3 because there must be a text to sound serious in a page full of dessins,’ and added:

We are not a ‘real’ newspaper*. Charlie Hebdo*, like its big brother *Hara Kiri* is a drunk bet, a non-stop tour de force. An elephant who does the beautiful on the tip of a needle. It could only work with the total death of everyone and the entente of everyone.[[771]](#footnote-772)

Running a publication was rather an adventure for Choron and his team. Cavanna himself admitted it: ‘*Hara Kir*i was not political’, and the contributors rarely talked politics. The enterprise was so spontaneous that Choron and Cavanna never thought about signing off the copyrights of the magazine. Cabu testified to the unlimited freedom they experienced working for Cavanna. Reiser considered ‘the people of *Charlie*’ his family, and Delfeil de Ton considered Cavanna their father and revered master. *Charlie* was the first ecological paper in France, and animal rights were ironically more protected than women’s rights. The covers were chosen unanimously, and all contributors were involved in the editorial decisions. Provocation was not an end in itself, and even though the trashy humour of Choron did not have any limits, it did not seem to be for lucrative reasons. Choron was untameable, and a ticking bomb, he would not have worked with Val.

This thesis argued that in the life of *Charlie Hebdo*, four phases are discernible. First, *Hara Kiri*, for 10 years, was a place where talents were gathered, cultivated, and constantly improved. An axis of Choron and Cavanna was formed, and the perfect balance between the former’s bad taste, vulgarity and edgy humour; and the latter’s sophisticated literary skills and journalistic commitment resulted in a publication that was quite aligned with the counter-culture spirit of the 1960s. *Hara Kiri* was a cultural phenomenon, and despite Choron’s scatological and obscene sketches, the magazine was also home for sophisticated artists such as Topor and Reiser. *Hara Kiri* did fight and survive censorship. That probably emboldened its *dessinateurs*. The *bête et méchant* humour never seemed to abate. Its anticlerical, anti-consumerist, and anti-establishment material was coherent to a large extent. Then, May 68 happened, and Cabu, Wolinksi, and Gébé started to believe that they could actually change something. In retrospect, Cavanna stated that before May 68, he had the impression that his journalism was not going to change anything. After 68, people started to listen, and he might be able to change something after all.[[772]](#footnote-773) It was time for Cavanna and his team to embark on a new adventure, and *L’Hebdo Hara Kiri* was launched in 1969, marking the second phase of *Charlie Hebdo*. Soon after, the press scene started to thrive on similar publications that rely on *bande dessinée* and humour, *L’Idiot Internationale* was launched in 1969, and *Fluide Glacial* (*Charlie*’s strong competitor) in 1975. The impact of the May 68 on society and culture offered a suitable ground for the *bête et méchant* spirit to flourish but the lack of meaning and structure in the counterculture scene and the absence of ‘grand narratives’ could be seen projected on *Charlie Hebdo*.[[773]](#footnote-774) The latter gathered different talents with different social backgrounds as explained in chapter 2, and politics started to interest them. The leadership of Cavanna reportedly offered unlimited freedom to the multiplicity of voices in the magazine, and the dynamics with his team seemed to have worked. But the lack of a stable readership led to the demise of the magazine.

Under Val’ leadership, *Charlie Hebdo* entered its third phase and took a rather serious turn. Taking over the magazine was for Val a career decision. He has not worked in the previous *Charlie*, and could not be blamed for not knowing how to practise the *bête et méchant* humour. At the same time, the former *Charlie* contributors did not manage to deliver the *bête et méchant* humour under the strict guidelines of the new editor. Val was the boss. He wrote the editorials, picked the covers, and controlled the editorial line. Val was a key figure in the history of *Charlie Hebdo* because his editorship proved that the magazine’s anti-Islam (or anti-Islamism as he likes to call it) was part of his larger ideology, which justified his editorial decision. He supported a military intervention in Kosovo, breaking one of *Charlie*’s rules about not backing wars or the military institution as a whole. Then 9/11 happened and the visibility of Islam and Muslims became more prominent worldwide. Val’s *Charlie* recognized the significance of such global event and its implications. These global questions of national identities reflected on French politics as well as French press. When Charb took over in 2009 marking the fourth – though short – phase in *Charlie*’s history, the Islam ‘problem’ had already become well-established both in the magazine and wider society. Just like Cabu and Wolinski’s talents were cultivated in *Hara Kiri* in the 1960s, Charb’s talent was developed in *Charlie* under the leadership of Val. Charb continued within the editorial line created by Val especially regarding the defence of *laïcité,* despite their fundamental disagreements regarding the question of anti-Semitism.

Val’s reign over the magazine was the longest and the most problematic. His vocabulary of a lost Judeo-Christian past has anticipated a similar shift that has taken place in the National Front’s official discourse. As such, the call for a revival of the Judeo-Greek tradition is a popular idea amongst the far right, and most importantly it reinforces the European identity through the prism of a civilizational superiority. The latter has started, in the past few years, to differentiate between immigrants from Muslim Maghrebin countries and European immigrants from Catholic or Orthodox Eastern European countries. The far-right party establishes this distinction on the basis of a supposed incompatibility of Islamic and Judeo-Christian culture. [[774]](#footnote-775) By advancing that the integration of Muslim immigrants in Europe is hindered by this civilizational difference, the far right has attempted to reinvent itself as the guardian of the European Enlightenment values of *laïcité*, liberty, and equality. By including Jews in the Judeo-Christian paradigm, the National Front dissociates itself from anti-Semitism which usually stains the European far right.[[775]](#footnote-776) Another far-right European leader Filip Dewinter, from the Belgian right-wing party Vlaams Belang, expressed ardent support for and glorification of Jews, highlighting the ‘Judeo-Christian’ foundations of Europe and the West. He announced that ‘Jewish values are European values […] and Jewish civilization is one of the roots of Western civilization’.[[776]](#footnote-777)

Val was rightfully motivated by his fight against anti-Semitism but his belief that anti-Semitism is intrinsic to Islamic identity is dangerous. On 22 April 2018, a highly controversial manifesto ‘against the new anti-Semitism’ signed by 250 personalities in France including Philippe Val, Nicolas Sarkozy, Manuel Valls, Jack Lang (former Minister of Culture and head of Institut du Monde Arabe), Julia Kristeva, and Gérard Depardieu, condemned the ‘silent *ethnic cleansing’ [l’épuration ethnique à bas bruit’]* of Jews by Muslims in certain parts of France.[[777]](#footnote-778) ‘Before France is no longer France’, the manifesto pointed to a Muslim anti-Semitism and criticized a reluctance amongst the left to condemn it for fear of stigmatizing the Muslim community in France and Europe. When faced with accusations of Islamophobia the writers of the manifesto argued that many of the signatories were Muslims.[[778]](#footnote-779) An interesting argument that proposes that a person with a Muslim name or culture or heritage cannot be Islamophobe. Also, it belongs to a tendency in the French press including *Charlie Hebdo* of recruiting ex-Muslims, or atheist Muslims or secular Muslims, to vehicle the anti-Muslim discourse in an attempt to sound and look more credible and somehow to position itself outside the debate.

Having scrutinized the question of the treatment of women in *Charlie Hebdo*, we saw an evolution in Wolinski and Reiser’s positions. They admitted having, prior to May 68, been misogynist in their personal convictions and in their journalistic productions. They also admitted that frequenting the Mouvement de libération des femmes (MLF) during and after the May 68 events changed their perspectives on women’s questions. The conversations that took place at the time and the increasing visibility of a strong feminist movement did raise awareness amongst *Charlie Hebdo*’s members (especially the younger ones Wolinski and Reiser) to the injustices done to women in France. So, a few decades later, when the question of satirizing Muslim women raised questions of bias and the injustice of vilifying a minority, the magazine’s position did not shift but rather replied with more provocation. It seemed to say that *Charlie Hebdo*’s veiled women should be subject to the same satirical criticism as the *Hara Kiri*’s nuns. *Charlie Hebdo* maintaining its position despite the criticism on the vilification of Islam could be explained by the strong support from the establishment, a section of the left, and intellectuals to the magazine’s rhetoric. The fact that the magazine won its Muhammad caricatures lawsuit in such a spectacular public way backed with personalities at the top of the political ladder (Sarkozy from the right and Holland from the left), further and officially validated its discourse. This further proved that *Charlie Hebdo* started to listen and align its politics to the majority against the minority.

One of the most important findings of this thesis is to debunk the assumption that *Charlie Hebdo* should hold a special place in the press scene in France. That it is unique through the talents it gathered (especially *dessinteurs* such as Cabu and Wolinki) is true. However, with Val, *Charlie Hebdo* became an integral part of the establishment, hoped for a place amongst the élite, and functioned like most mainstream media outlets. This leads to the finding that *Charlie Hebdo*, in its second phase, worked like any other publication of its size, and should not be held in a special place where its discourse is sanctified or the way it practises its free speech is rendered unquestionable. In fact, *Charlie Hebdo* became part of media that constantly puts pressure on society to choose the terms of the public debate on Islam. The January attack was the manifestation of decades of press control over politics, and public debate over society.

Since the Muhammad caricatures, *Charlie Hebdo* has been part of a global phenomenon that includes people or groups such as Jordan Peterson, Niall Ferguson, Brendan O’Neill, Sam Harris, and many others who are at the forefront of defending their right to vilify others in the name of free speech. They have been dangerously acquiring and sometimes handed the most vocal platforms and media privileges to disseminate their ideas. In 2019, Zineb el Rhazoui has succeeded to make her own brand outside of the newspaper, recycling the same old ideas of the peril of Islam, and being granted legitimacy by many TV channels on the right and the left – always being introduced to the public as the former *Charlie Hebdo* journalist. Aurelien Mondon evoked a certain ‘normalization, if not normalcy, of Islamophobic discourses, both liberal and illiberal, in mainstream political debates’ after the *Charlie* *Hebdo* attack.[[779]](#footnote-780)There has been a symbiotic relationship between the press, the people, and the intellectuals in the way French society treated the subject of Islam and Islamism. The press entertained popular opinion and the intellectuals looked for validation from the press, so they dabbled in the same rhetoric. Intellectuals have a responsibility in the diffusion and legitimization of a certain number of stereotypes and prejudices on Islam. The intellectual Islamophobia has nothing intellectual about it; it espoused the same forms of popular Islamophobia promoted in the press and elsewhere. That explains how its dissemination to the public was quite easy. Within this process, *Charlie Hebdo* played an active role, and with the emergence of the *je suis Charlie* hashtag , the magazine became a useful symbol in this wider conflict over free speech, and has been exploited by those who are not familiar with the magazine’s style, humour, motivation, and long history. More specifically, further research into *Charlie*’s interaction with neoconservative ideas deserves further examination.

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149. Cavanna, *Bête et Méchant*, pp. 212-213. ‘Un mensuel d’humour qui prétend se vouer strictement à la qualité […] pour des lecteurs exigeants sur la qualité’. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
150. Jean Fourastié introduced the phrase in 1979 in his book *Les Trente Glorieuses, ou la Révolution Invisible de 1946 à 1975* (Paris: Fayard, 1979). An economic expansion period, the Trente Glorieuses witnessed strong and unprecedented industrial growth starting in the mid-1950s. The resulting homogenisation of lifestyles during the Trente Glorieuses along with the spread of Taylorism and Fordism led to a huge rise of industrial productivity. Construction, automobile, and iron/steel were the most developed industries during this period. Services related to improving quality of life multiplied: transportation, telecommunication, insurance, advertisement, tourism, and commerce became an indispensable part of the French lifestyle. Additionally, the Trente Glorieuses witnessed a significant demographic evolution, known as the baby boom (1940-1965) that led to a youthful population, rapid urbanisation, and the rise of mass consumption. The baby-boom generation are the teenagers of the I960s. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
151. Susan Weiner, *Enfants Terribles: Gender, Youth and the Mass Media in France 1945-1968* (John Hopkins University Press, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
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156. *Hara Kiri*, July and August 1962. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
157. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 1, September 1960, p. 4. Original text: ‘On façonne à loisir l’opinion de ce **troupeau** par une préparation savante [...] Telle est la caricature d’opinion publique que fabriquent les marchands de papier sale.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
158. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 1, September 1960, pp. 4-5. Original text: ‘Que l’occupation de l’homme soit de faire un journal, s’il n’a pas une conception ascétique de sa mission, en viendra vite à n’être qu’un marchand de papier noirci, pour qui seul compte le chiffre de vente. Pourquoi chercherait-il à élever le niveau intellectuel de son lecteur, pourquoi voudrait-il apprendre à juger sainement des événements, à penser sainement?’ [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
159. The term ‘francais moyen’ usually refers to the middle-class person specifically in an economic sense. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
160. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 1, September 1960, p6. Original text : “Nous sommes les petits gars qui veulent leur place au soleil. Nous avons la dent longue et le coude pointu. NOUS NE SOMMES À PERSONNE ET PERSONNE NE NOUS A. ! [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
161. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 1, September 1960, p6 : Horoscope et Brigitte Bardot, Margaret et l’éventreur de chaisières, le guérisseur-miracle et le dernier gigolo de notre grande chanteuse nymphomane nationale, Tour de France et fesses de Marilyn, dernière Citron et bombe au mercure, comment maigrir sans cesser de s’empiffrer, comment bronzer sans soleil, comment découper une femme en dix-huit morceaux et l’expédier en port dû. Le manège tourne, tourne et toujours les mêmes vieux chevaux de bois passent et grimacent. Assez, assez! [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
162. Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire*. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
163. Robert, *Mohicans*, Entretien avec Georges Bernier, 2 November 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
164. Robert, *Mohicans*, Original quote: ‘Le numéro 3, c’est-à-dire le premier en kiosque, se vend à environ  1 500 exemplaires. Selon Odile Vaudelle, le numéro suivant est vendu à 2 500 exemplaires et celui d’après à 4 000’ (Bobet, *Moi, Odile…*, *op.cit*., p. 112). [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
165. Robert, *Mohicans*. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
166. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 7, April 1961, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
167. Cavanna, *Bête et Méchant*, p. 241. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
168. Cavanna occupied permanently page three which until November 1977 was titled ‘*Je l’ai pas lu, je l’ai pas vu, mais j’en ai entendu causer*’ as well as signing the feature titled *‘si c’est pas vrai, je suis un menteur’* [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
169. Cavanna, *Bête et Méchant*, p. 241. Original text: ‘Chacun était le patron dans ses pages. Cela donnait un journal fait d’autant de journaux qu’il y avait d’auteurs. Une espèce de tableau d’affichage. Pas d’instructions, pas même de concertation avant la mise en chantier du numéro. Chacun choisissait ses sujets. On avait bien eu, un temps, le projet de consacrer chaque numéro a un thème, chacun devant traiter un aspect du thème général et tous devant traiter un aspect du thème général et tous ensemble, en réunion, devions mettre au point un certain nombre de pages communes. Il y avait eu un numéro sur les snobs, un sur la faim, un sur les « z’occultes » … Ça n’avait pas duré. Individualistes comme des bernard-l’ermite.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
170. Georges Bernier will be referred to as Choron from this point onward. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
171. Robert, *Mohicans,* p. 41. Original quote: ‘Il s’est passé quelque chose. Le bébé *Hara Kiri*, comme Gargantua au berceau, s’est mis à faire péter ses langes, à faire péter le berceau, à faire péter les murs. L’enfant colosse né de nous, à peine né, courait plus vite que nous. Sans que nous prenions garde, il nous a fait changer, et vite fait […] Cette liberté totale que nous revendiquons sans trop savoir ou ça nous mènerait, nous y brulions comme dans l’oxygène pur. Nous osions nous en servir, nous prenions conscience de nos brides et de nos entraves en les voyant tomber.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
172. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
173. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
174. Christophe Chavdia, ‘Il Était Une Fois Hara-Kiri, Journal *Bête* Et Méchant*et méchant*, Et Ses Interdictions’, Neuviemeart.citebd.org, 2016. <http://neuviemeart.citebd.org/spip.php?article847> [accessed 5 August 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
175. Robert, *Mohicans*, p. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
176. Christophe Chavdia, ‘Il Était Une Fois Hara-Kiri, Journal *Bête* Et Méchant*et méchant*, Et Ses Interdictions’, Neuviemeart.citebd.org, 2016 <http://neuviemeart.citebd.org/spip.php?article847> [accessed 5 August 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
177. Vauclair and Weston Vauclair, *De Charlie Hebdo à #Charlie*. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
178. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
179. Alex Hughes and Keith Redaer*, Encyclopedia of Contemporary French Culture* (London: Routledge 1988), p. 345. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
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182. Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire,* p. 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
183. Choron, *Vous me Croirez si vous Voulez,* Original quote: ‘Pour moi, de Gaulle, c’était le symbole de mes interdictions à *Hara-Kiri*. Il avait coupé les couilles au journal. C’est lui qui m’avait interdit au numéro dix, lui qui m’avait balancé la deuxième interdiction […] à l’époque où Hara-Kiri vendait plus de deux cent mille exemplaires.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
184. Weston, ‘*Bête* Et Méchant’*et méchant*’, p. 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
185. Cavanna, *Bête et méchant*, p. 344. Original text: “Honteusement chassés de la rue Choron à cause de je ne sais combien de termes impayés”. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
186. Jean-Pierre Rioux and Jean-Francois Sirinelli, *La Culture en Masse en France de la Belle Epoque à Aujourd’hui* (Paris: Fayard, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
187. Jon Stratton, ‘Coming to the Fore: The audibility of women's sexual pleasure in popular music and the sexual revolution’, *Journal of Popular Music*, 33.1 (2014), pp. 109-128. See also Helen Brown, ‘The Life of a Song: Je T'aime... Moi Non Plus’, *Financial Times*, 7 May 2017. <https://www.ft.com/content/bd89aef2-73ca-43e1-b8ea-a6b7b789d564> [accessed 16 June 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
188. Diana Holmes, ‘“A Girl of Today”: Brigitte Bardot’ , in *Stardom in Postwar France*, ed. John Gaffney and Diana Holmes (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), pp. 40-67. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
189. Bernard Papin, ‘Les Raisins Verts: Le « surréalisme attardé » de Jean-Christophe Averty’, *Television*, 6 (2015), pp. 143-156. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
190. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
191. François Cavanna, *Les Ritals* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1980), p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
192. Cavanna, *Bête et Méchant*, p. 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
193. Ibid. p. 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
194. Ibid.*,* p. 210. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
195. Ibid.*,* p. 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
196. Ibid.*,* p. 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
197. Ibid.*,* p. 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
198. Ibid.*,* p. 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
199. L'invité de FR3, ‘Conférence de rédaction de l'équipe de Charlie Hebdo’, *France Régions 3*, 1981. <<http://www.ina.fr/video/I15012828/conference-de-redaction-de-l-equipe-de-charlie-hebdo-video.html>> [accessed 16 May 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
200. Klaus Dodds and Philip Kirby, ‘It's Not a Laughing Matter: Critical Geopolitics, Humour and Unlaughter’, *Geopolitics*, 18.1 (2013), pp. 45-59. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
201. Dodds and Kirby, ‘It's Not a Laughing Matter’, p. 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
202. Noël Carroll, ‘Ethics and Comic Amusement’, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 54.2 (2014), pp. 241-253. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
203. Sharon Lockyer and Michael Pickering, ‘You Must Be Joking: The Sociological Critique of Humour and Comic Media’, *Sociology Compass*, 2.3 (2008) pp. 808-820. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
204. Alain Vaillant, ‘Le rire agressif est une tradition française’ *Le Monde*, 30 March 2018. <http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2018/03/30/alain-vaillant-le-rire-agressif-est-une-tradition-francaise\_5278364\_3232.html [accessed 16 May 2018]. See also Alain Vaillant, *Esthétique du Rire* (Nanterre: Presses universitaires de Paris Nanterre, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
205. Cavanna, *Bête et Méchant*, p. 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
206. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 3, Novembre 1960. Original text: Mais attention: pas l’irrespect pour l’irrespect, pas le corrosif à tout prix, le râle chronique, ni la colère à tant la ligne. Il est facile (et payant) de débiter de la bile a jet continu. *Hara Kiri* veut se garder de démolir systématiquement aussi bien que de taper sur les quelques têtes de Turc interchangeables et sans danger du répertoire chansonnier. Il veut être, dans notre vie de tous les jours, un stimulant de l’esprit de libre critique’. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
207. François Cavanna, *La Grande Encyclopédie Bête et Méchante* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1980). [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
208. Lemonnier Bertrand, ‘L'entrée en Dérision’, *Vingtième Siècle, Revue d'histoire*, 98.2 (2008), pp. 43-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
209. Christian Savès, *Éloge de la Dérision, une Dimension de la Conscience Humaine* (Paris: Le Harmattan, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
210. Arnaud Mercier, ‘Pouvoirs de la Dérision, Dérision des Pouvoirs’, *Hermès*, 29 (2001), pp. 9-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
211. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
212. Michael Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule: Towards a Social Critique of Humour* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2005). p. 173. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
213. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
214. Moira Smith, ‘Humor, Unlaughter, and Boundary Maintenance’, *The Journal of American Folklore*, 122.484 (2009), pp. 148-171. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
215. Scott Woodcock, ‘Comic Immoralism and Relatively Funny Jokes’, *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 32.2 (2015), pp. 203-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
216. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 1, September 1960. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
217. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 1, September 1960. Original quote : ‘’Aujourd’hui, l’ignorance n’est plus causée par le manqué de moyens d’information. C’est, au contraire, la surabondance des textes (lus ou écoutés) ineptes, mensongers ou futiles qui plonge l’homme du XXe siècle dans une nuit plus profonde que celle ou stagnait le manat illettré du Moyen-Age. Nuit mille fois plus dangereuse, car elle se prend pour la lumière.’’ [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
218. François Cavanna, *La Pub nous prend pour des cons, La Pub nous rend cons* (Paris: Hoêbeke, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
219. *Cavanna Raconte Cavanna*, p. 92. Original quote : “La publicité nous prend pour des cons, la publicité nous rend cons. C’est une profession de foi. C’est la mienne. Ce fut celle de *Hara Kiri* entre 1960 et 1985. C’est celle de Charlie Hebdo. Ce devrait être celle de tout journal, de tout media, qui se veut libre.’’ [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
220. This is not an exhaustive list, but amongst others, there was *Aspro, Chicoree Leroux, Petit Bateau, Bonux, Hermes, Tampax, Heudebert, Pall Mall, Rexona, Buitoni, Amora, Olida, Nikon, Esso, Vitafor, Dim and Tampax on one ad, Panzani, Perrier.* [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
221. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 79, April 1968. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
222. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 76, January 1968. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
223. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 131, August 1972, and *Hara Kiri*, Issue 137, February 1973. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
224. Cavanna, *La Pub nous prend pour des cons, La Pub nous rend cons*, p. 7. Original quote : ‘‘nous étions au début assez timides’’. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
225. Ibid., p. 7. The official Charlie Hebdo site provides a timeline of all the lawsuits that incurred on *Charlie Hebdo*, those that the magazine win and lost. However, there is no record of the lawsuits against Hara Kiri except what was mentioned by Mazurier and Cavanna/Choron themselves. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
226. Ibid., p. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
227. Raymond Bachollet, *Négripub: L’image des Noirs dans la publicité* (Paris: Somogy, 1992), pp. 73-156. [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
228. Frantz Fanon, *Peau Noire, Masques Blanc* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1993) Kindle Edition, location 366. [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
229. *Hara Kiri*, September 1972. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
230. Cavanna, *Bête et Méchant*, p. 249. ‘Nous avons quelques haines en commun, rien de tel pour unir les hommes. L’une d’elles, la plus virulente, peut-être - « Apres l’armée !” me dit Cabu-, a pour objet la publicité, cette pute violeuse. Dès les premiers numéros, nous nous étions jetés en hurlant de joie dans la publicité parodique. C’est presque trop facile ! La démagogie flatte-gogos des spécialistes de la chose flamboie d’une si triomphale connerie organisée, d’un si éclatant mépris pour la « cible » si bien nommée, qu’il semble impossible de faire plus énorme. Notre enthousiasme trouva bientôt comment. Les pages de publicité-bidon de *Hara Kiri* s’élaboraient en commun.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
231. Ibid. Original quote: ‘Elles furent vite célèbres et concoururent beaucoup au succès du journal. Au début, nous travestissions légèrement les noms des marques, par prudence, et puis, l’audace nous venant, nous allâmes carrément. Beaucoup crurent que nous agissons avec l’accord des marques, que nos vacheries n’étaient qu’astuces de margoulins. Les margoulins eux-mêmes, après nous avoir répondu par quelques procès, finirent par comprendre qu’insulter leurs produits pouvait être une nouvelle façon d’attirer l’attention sur eux, une nouvelle et efficace façon, et l’on vit peu à peu fleurir des affiches, des annonces, des films ou les marques se moquaient d’elles-mêmes.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
232. François Cavanna, *Lettre Ouverte aux Culs-bénits* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994), p. 119. Original quote: ‘Un climat d'intolérance, de fanatisme, de dictature théocratique s'installe et fait tache d'huile. L'intégrisme musulman a donné le « la », mais d'autres extrémismes religieux piaffent et brûlent de suivre son exemple. Demain, catholiques, orthodoxes et autres variétés chrétiennes instaureront la terreur pieuse partout où ils dominent. Les Juifs en feront autant en Israël.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
233. For an overview of anticlerical print culture in France see Guillaume Doizy, ‘De la Caricature Anticléricale a la Farce Biblique: Une tradition de caricature’, *Archive de Sciences Sociales des Religions*, 134 (2006), pp. 63-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
234. *Hara Kiri,* Issue 4, January 1961, p. 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
235. Ibid., p. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
236. Ibid., p. 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
237. *France-Soir,* Issue published on 1 January 1961. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
238. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
239. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 35, January 1964, pp. 3-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
240. Ibid., pp. 3-7. Original quote: ‘les syndicats de Pères Noel, désireux de réduire la trop longue période de morte saison inventèrent un jour le Saint-Père. Il ne restait plus qu’à mettre au point un uniforme de Saint-Père aussi facile à repérer que celui du Père Noel, aussi chatoyant, aussi populaire, mais s’en différenciant toutefois assez nettement pour que la confusion ne fut guère possible, même à l’œil nu. Ceci vous explique pourquoi vous n’entendez jamais parler du Saint-Père au moment de Noel. Et aussi pourquoi vous n’entendez jamais parler du Père Noel au mois de Janvier. Vous voulez d’autres preuves ? Quand le Saint-Père est montré au people, depuis la célèbre fenêtre de la place Saint-Pierre, à Rome, vous remarquerez qu’il ne fait qu’un seul geste, répété inlassablement: il lève le bras droit en étendant deux doigts. C’est vraiment tout ce qu’il sait faire. Cette pauverté de gestes devraient vous être un trait de lumiére: ce que vous voyez là, c’est une marionnette. Nous nous élevons donc avec énergie contre ceux qui projettent de supprimer le Saint-Père sous prétexte que c’est un mythe puéril, absurde, abêtissant, et qu’il détourne l’ésprit de nos enfants de la réalité. Nou, nous disons l’enfant a besoin de rêve. On ne peut pas toujours croire au Père Noel, le Saint Père est un excellent Père Noel pour la seconde enfance. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
241. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 76, January 1968. [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
242. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 48, February 1965. [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
243. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 47, January 1965. [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
244. Ibid*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
245. *La Caricature*, Issue 181, April 1834. [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
246. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 236, 1981. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
247. Sylvie Chaperon, *Les Années Beauvoir (1945-1970)* (Paris: Fayard, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
248. Claire Duchen, *Women's Rights and Women's Lives in France 1944-1968* (London: Routledge, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
249. Caroline More, ‘Sexualité Et Contraception Vues à Travers L'action Du Mouvement Français Pour Le Planning Familial De 1961 à 1967’, *Le Mouvement Social*, 207 (2004), pp. 75-95. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
250. Christine Bard, *Les Femmes dans la Société Française au 20e Siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
251. Cavanna, *Bête et Méchant*, p. 229. Original quote: ‘avortement, contrôle des naissances, féminisme, guérisseurs, immigrés, et aussi écologie mais ça ne s’appelait pas encore comme ça…Y vinrent des gens prestigieux que je fus stupéfait de voir accepter aussi facilement’. [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
252. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
253. Ann Miller, *Reading Bande Dessinée: Critical Approaches to French-language Comic Strip* (Bristol: Intellect Books Limited, 2007), pp. 179-197. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
254. Gustave Kahn, *La Femme dans La Caricature Francaise* (Paris: A. Méricant, 1911). [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
255. By a reader’s approach, I am referring –though loosely – to the Reader-response approach. Elizabeth Freund, in *The Return of the Reader* (London-New York: Routledge: 2002) provides a good survey and discussion of the most important contributions to Reader-Response Criticism such as E.D Hirsch’s ideas on the authority of the author and Stanley Fish’s stress on the authority of the reader. [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
256. *Hara Kiri,* Issue 9, June 1961, p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
257. Susan Weiner, ‘Two Modernities: From *Elle* to *Mademoiselle*: Women's Magazines in Post-war France’, *Contemporary European History*, 8.3 (1999), pp. 395-409 (p. 396). [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
258. Ibid., p. 398. [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
259. Andrée Michel and Geneviève Texier, *La Condition de la Française Aujourd’hui* (Geneva: Editions Gonthier, 1964), p. 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
260. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 15, March 1962. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
261. Susan Sontag, *A Susan Sontag Reader* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1982), p. 354. [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
262. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 87, December 1968. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
263. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 82, July 1968. [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
264. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 45, November 1964. [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
265. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 49, March 1965. [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
266. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 50, April 1965. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
267. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 51, May 1965. [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
268. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 57, November 1965. [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
269. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 62, April 1966. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
270. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 64, June 1966. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
271. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 39, May 1964. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
272. *Hara Kiri,* Issue 53, July 1965. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
273. Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars Clean Bodies, Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1999), p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
274. See also Michel Gervais, Marcel Jollivet and Yves Tavernier, *La Fin de la France Paysanne Depuis 1914* (Paris: Seuil, 1977). The authors estimated the loss of 2 million farmers between 1954 and 1968, and specify that farmers represented 31 percent of the population in 1954 but decreased to 17 per cent in 1968, p. 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
275. *Hara Kiri,* Issue 42, August 1964. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
276. *Hara Kiri,* Issue 43, September 1964. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
277. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 52, June 1965. [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
278. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 55, September 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
279. Ibid*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
280. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 64 June 1966. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
281. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
282. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 67, Mars 1967. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
283. Ibid*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
284. *Le Nouveau Candide*, Issue 341, November 6th, 1967. [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
285. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 74, November 1967. [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
286. Andreas Angyal, ‘Disgust and Related Aversions’, *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 36.3 (1941), pp. 393-412. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
287. Jonathan Haidt, Clark McCauley and Paul Rozin, ‘Individual Differences in Sensitivity to Disgust: A scale sampling seven domains of disgust elicitors’, *Personality and Individual Differences*, 16.5 (1994), pp. 701-713 (p.704). [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
288. Gabriel P. Weisberg, ‘Scatological Art’, *Art Journal*, 52.3 (1993), pp. 18-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
289. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 66, February 1967. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
290. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 78, March 1968. [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
291. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 101, February 1970. [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
292. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 39, Mai 1964. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
293. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 173, February 1976. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
294. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 59, January 1966. [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
295. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
296. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 61, March 1966. [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
297. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 60, February 1966. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
298. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 90, March 1969. [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
299. William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
300. *Hara Kiri*, Issue 105, June 1970. [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
301. Arthur Marwick, ‘Locating Key Texts Amid Distinctive Landscape of the Sixties’ in *Windows on the Sixties, Exploring Key Texts of Media and Culture*, ed. by Anthony Aldgate, James Chapman and Arthur Marwick (London: I.B Tauris, 2000), p. xi. [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
302. Marwick, ‘Locating Key Texts’, p. xiii. [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
303. Cavanna, *Bête et Méchant,* p. 235. Original quote: ‘Une ‘doctrine’ *Hara Kiri* se dessinait, non formulée mais parfaitement mise en action. Pour l’essentiel, on peut la résumer ainsi: Applaudir aux plus beaux exploits de la Bêtise et de la Méchanceté, en en rajoutant, en allant dans le même sens qu’elles mais plus loin qu’elles, le plus loin possible dans leur logique tordue, jusqu’à l’absurde, jusqu’à l’odieux, jusqu’au grandiose. C’est le principe du judo : ne va pas contre, accompagne-le.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
304. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
305. Jerelle Kraus, ‘Roland Topor: 1938-1997’, *Print*, 51.6 (1997), p. 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
306. Marwick, ‘Locating Key Texts’, p. xiii. [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
307. Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970). [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
308. Literature on May 68 is vast. For an excellent account of the literature on May 68 see Julian Jackson, ‘The Mystery of May 1968’, *French Historical Studies*, 33.4 (2011), pp. 625-653. See also, Raymond Aron, *The Elusive Revolution? Anatomy of A Student Revolt* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1969); Daniel Singer, *Prelude to Revolution: France in May 1968* (London: South End Press, 2002); Kristin Ross, *May ’68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Julian Jackson, Anna-Louise Milne, and James S. Williams, *May 68: Rethinking France's Last Revolution* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and Richard Horton, ‘Offline: The legacy and lessons of May '68’, *The Lancet*, 391 (2018), p. 1560. [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
309. For an overview of the history of the *Mouvement de Libération des Femmes* see Christine Delphy, ‘Les Origines Du Mouvement De Libération Des Femmes En France’, *Nouvelles Questions Féministes*, 16.18 (1991), pp. 137-148. For an analysis of the sexual liberation in French society in the aftermath of May 68, see Anne-Claire Rebreyend, ‘May 68 and the Changes in Private Life: A ‘Sexual Liberation’?’ in *May 68: Rethinking France’s Last Revolution*, ed. by Julian Jackson, Anne-Luise Milne, and James S. Williams (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) pp. 148-163. For a survey of the role played by radio during the events of May 68 see Jean-Jacques Cheval, ‘Mai 68, un entre deux dans l’histoire des medias et de la radio en France’, *Groupe de Recherches et d’Etudes sur la Radio* (2009) <http://www.grer.fr/upload/articles\_en\_ligne/Mai\_68\_un\_entre\_deux\_dans\_l%5C-histoire\_des\_medias\_et\_de\_la\_radio\_en\_France.pdf> [accessed 02 April 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
310. Parisis, *Reiser,* p. 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
311. *Hara Kiri*, June 1968. Original quote: ‘la sublimation non répressive tel doit être l’aboutissement de nos efforts actuels’. [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
312. Delfeil de Ton joined *Hara kiri* in 1967. His real name was Henri Roussel, and he was born in Paris into a petit bourgeois milieu. He served in the military for two years and a half in Algeria during the war. His initials DDT are also the name of a pesticide, but he never revealed his choice of pseudonym. Upon receiving DDT’s writing for the first time Cavanna said:

     ‘I had this happiness shock which we have only once in life’. Respectively, DDT revealed that joining *Hara Kiri* was like a dream come true : When I joined Hara Kiri, I told my wife, it’s like I joined the French Academy for me at the time Hara Kiri was the best magazine in the world’. See Mazurier, *Bête et méchant et hebdomadaire*, p. 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
313. Choron, *Vous me croirez si vous voulez* in Stéphane Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire*, p.50. Original quote: ‘68, je l’ai vécu un peu en allant voir. Le soir, on allait se balader dans le V. çatabassait...C'était le bordel. Tu aurais jamais voulu que ça s’arrete ! C'était vraiment grandiose!’ [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
314. Mazurier, *Bête, méchant et hebdomadaire*,p. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
315. *Action* was created by Jean Schalit who was one of the main participants of the 22 March movement. *Action* was distributed directly by students. This further shows the extent of Wolinski’s involvement in the ‘revolt’. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
316. Gil Delannoi, *Les Années Utopiques* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1990), p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
317. Christian Delporte, Denis Marechal, Caroline Moine, and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson, *Images et Sons de Mai 68* (Paris: Editions Nouveau Monde, 2011), pp. 55-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
318. Bertrand Tillier, *A la Charge!: La caricature en France de 1789 à 2000* (Paris: L’Amateur, 2005), p. 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
319. Ibid., p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
320. Paul Fenouillet, ‘1958-2008: Presse subversive et art de la transgression sous la Vème République’, *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, 12 (2008), pp. 255-264 (p. 260). [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
321. Delporte et al., *Image et Sons de Mai 68*, p. 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
322. Christian Bobet, *Moi Odile, la Femme a Choron*: *La petite histoire de Hara-Kiri et de Charlie Hebdo* (Paris: Mengès, 1983), p. 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
323. Pierre Nora and Marcel Gauchet, ‘Les cinq langages de l’esprit du temps’, *Le Débat*, *Gallimard*, 50.3 (1988), pp. 171-189. [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
324. Jean Claude Olmi, ‘La Presse Sauvage’, *Esprit*, 3 (1972), p. 494. [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
325. Choron, *Vous me Croirez si vous Voulez*. [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
326. Jeremi Suri, ‘The Rise and Fall of an International Counterculture, 1960-1975’, *The American Historical Review*, 114.1 (2009), pp. 45-68 (p. 46). [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
327. Issue did not include day of the month. [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
328. Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire*, pp. Between 1976 and 1981, Éditions du Square launched a few ephemeral publications such as Surprise, B.D. l’hebdo de la BD, and Mords-y-l’oeil on the hope of expanding their bande dessinée (also refered to as BD) repertoire.Surprise was a quarterly of bande dessinée directed by Willem (one of Hara Kiri’s own cartoonists). However, this publication could not survive the year and was censored for its inappropriacy to a readership of minors, vanishing from circulation in 1976. In 1977, Choron launched the weekly paper B.D. to huge publicity. Cavanna was editor for 17 issues, and Gébé and Reiser contributed, as well as new members. The first issue sold 70,000 copies, but again this publication did not manage to survive. Siné launched Mords-y-l’oeil -mensuel super politique- where each of the 48 issues focused on one political personality. When all these failed, Choron turned to publishing albums of works done by contributors to the Charlie Hebdo and Hara Kiri titles. See Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire*, pp. 72-73. [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
329. Stéphane Mazurier, ‘De de Gaulle à Mitterrand: L'assaut de *Charlie Hebdo* (1969-1982)’, *Sociétés & Représentations*, 36.2 (2013), pp. 125-141. [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
330. Cavanna, *Les Années Charlie*, p. 154. Original text: ‘sans la moindre formation de journaliste mais tous mordus au ventre par l’ambition de faire quelque chose de très beau, de très intelligent, de très dur, pour leur faire voir, à tous ces cons’ [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
331. *Hara Kiri* magazine continued to publish monthly until 1985, that means years after *Charlie Hebdo* had ceased in 1981. [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
332. *Hara-Kiri Hebdo*, February 3rd, 1969. [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
333. *Hara-Kiri Hebdo,* 3 February 1969. ‘généreuse révolte contre l’absurde kafkaïen qui régit les actions de l’homme social, révolte pudiquement caché derrière le masque outré du rire *bête et méchant*? Il semble que les jeunes de Mai ne s’y sont pas trompés, eux”. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
334. François Cavanna, *Cavanna Raconte Cavanna* (Paris: Editions Les Echappés, 2012), pp. 96-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
335. *L’Hebdo Hara-Kiri*, isuue n1, editorial. Original quote: ‘Si nous pensions n’être pas à la hauteur, nous ne ferions pas un journal d’humour. Si nous vous prenions pour un imbécile, nous ne ferions pas ce journal-ci.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
336. Mazurier*, Bête, Méchant* *et Hebdomadaire*, p. 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
337. François Cavanna, *De Coluche a Mitterand* (Paris: Belfond, 1984), p. 12. Original quote: ‘le principe de base qui avait présidait à la conception du journal et auquel j'étais parvenu après bien des tâtonnements, était tel: chacun, qu’il écrive ou qu’il dessine, était journaliste à part entière et avait à sa disposition une certaine surface du journal, qu’il remplissait à sa guise. Chacun était, en somme, son propre rédacteur en chef. Aucune connivence préalable, pas même de réunion de rédaction, sinon, en fin de bouclage, pour trouver ensemble le sujet de couverture, tâche essentielle. Donnez pleine liberté a des gars de cette trempe, vous avez ce miracle : *Charlie Hebdo* ! et, sans jamais se concerter, ils avaient une pensée commune, je dirai même unique. Je suis très fier d’avoir travaillé aux côtés des ces géants.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
338. Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant, et Hebdomadaire*, p. 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
339. Cavanna, *Les Années Charlie*, p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
340. Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire*, p. 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
341. *L’Hebdo Hara-Kiri*, issue number 73, 22 June 1970. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
342. Parisis, *Reiser*, p. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
343. Stéphane Mazurier, ‘“Ces gens-là nous ignoraient” : *Charlie Hebdo* et la presse “sérieuse”’, *Acrimed*, 27 April 2009. <<https://www.acrimed.org/Ces-gens-la-nous-ignoraient-Charlie-Hebdo-et-la-presse-serieuse>> [accessed 04 April 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
344. Gaëlle Clavandier, ‘Recourir au fait divers dans les situations post-catastrophiques : Le cas des rumeurs’, *Cahiers du Journalisme*, 17 (2007), pp. 90-104. [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
345. *L’Express*, 23 November 1970. [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
346. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 19 November 1970. [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
347. Bobet, *Moi, Odile, la femme à Choron*,p. 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
348. Parisis, *Reiser*, p. 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
349. Denis Robert and Nina Robert, *Cavanna, Jusqu'à L'ultime Seconde, J'écrirai* (France: Blaq Out, 2015) [DVD]. [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
350. *Charlie Hebdo*, 23 November 1970. [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
351. *Charlie Hebdo*, 30 November 1970. [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
352. Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire*, p. 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
353. Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire,* p. 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
354. Jean-Marie Charon*, La Presse en France de 1945 à nos jours* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1991), p. 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
355. Michel Jamet, *La Presse Périodique en France* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1983), p. 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
356. *Charlie Hebdo*, 8 September 1977. [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
357. *Charlie Hebdo*, 3 February 1975. [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
358. *Hara Kiri Hebdo*, 10 March 1969. [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
359. *Charlie Hebdo*, 29 May 1975. [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
360. *Charlie Hebdo*, 4 January 1977. [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
361. *Charlie Hebdo,* 2 October 1972. [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
362. *Charlie Hebdo*, 24 March 1977. [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
363. Sadoul, *Dessinateurs de Presse*, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
364. Sophie Bachmann, ‘Les réformes de l'audiovisuel depuis 1974: L'éternel retour’, *Quaderni*, 10 (1990), pp. 29-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
365. *Charlie Hebdo*, 27 May 1974. [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
366. Choron, *Vous me Croirez si vous Voulez*, p. 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
367. Choron, *Vous me Croirez si vous Voulez*, p. 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
368. *Le Monde*, ‘Hara Kiri a dépassé les “limites” de la liberté d’expression’, 04 February 1980. <<https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1980/02/04/hara-kiri-a-depasse-les-limites-de-la-liberte-de-la-presse_2812603_1819218.html>> [accessed 20 February 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
369. *Hara Kiri*, Issue number 221 bis, February 1980. [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
370. *Charlie Hebdo*, 5 March 1980. [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
371. *Charlie Hebdo*, 5 March 1980. [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
372. *Hara Kiri*, March 1980. [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
373. Jean-Pierre Dormois, *The French Economy in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
374. Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire*, p. 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
375. Isabelle Cabut, ‘On a crée *Charlie Hebdo* parce que gueuler était nécessaire’, *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, 7 January 1982, p. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
376. Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire,* p. 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
377. ‘Manifeste des 343 salopes’, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 5 April 1971. <https://www.nouvelobs.com/societe/20071127.OBS7018/le-manifeste-des-343-salopes-paru-dans-le-nouvel-obs-en-1971.html> [accessed 04 April 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
378. *Charlie Hebdo*, 12 April 1971. [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
379. *L’Hebdo Hara Kiri*, 02 February 1970. [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
380. *Charlie Hebdo*, 09 February 1978. [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
381. *Charlie Hebdo*, 19 February 1976. [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
382. *La Semaine de Charlie*, 16 July 1981. [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
383. Marcus Collins, *The Permissive Society and its Enemies: Sixties British culture* (London: Rivers Oram, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
384. Parisis, *Reiser*, p. 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
385. Parisis, *Reiser,* p. 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
386. Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire,* p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
387. *Soir: C’est à lire*, France Régions 3, 21 December 1979. <http://www.ina.fr/video/DVC7908306201/c-est-a-lire-cabu-video.html> [accessed 14 May 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
388. *Le Petit monde des humouristes*, Office national de radiodiffusion télévision française, 22 December 1968. <<http://www.ina.fr/video/I15008814/cabu-a-propos-de-l-humour-video.html>> [accessed 14 May 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
389. Bertrand Tillier identifies at least two different ‘genres’ in caricature drawing, the portrait charge and the caricature de type. The former goes back to early 19th century through artists such as Daumier and Henry Monnier and others. See Tillier, *A la Charge!.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
390. Cabu, *Les nouveaux Beaufs sont arrivés*, (Paris: Cherche-Midi, 1992), pp. 3-4. ‘Il en fait le symbole vivant du sale con ordinaire qui se croit brave type, de l'épais primaire avaleur d’information prédigérée qui porte sur toute chose des jugements péremptoires qu’il croit originaux et qui ne sont que l'écho stéréotype de ce qu’il y a de plus rétrograde, de plus conforme, de plus moutonnier et de plus féroce dans la population...’ [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
391. *Le Petit Robert*, Beauf ‘Beauf. Beau-frère (d'après une B.D. de Cabu). Français moyen aux idées étroites, conservateur, grossier et phallocrate.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
392. Samedi et demi, Cabu, *Antenne 2*, 10 November 1979. <http://www.ina.fr/video/CAB7901827101/cabu-video.html> [accessed 18 April 2018]. ‘Le beauf c’est le type qui assène des vérités, ses vérités, il ne réfléchit absolument pas, il est porté par les lieux communs, par le « bon sens » entre guillemets, par des certitudes dont il ne démordrai jamais. Il ne lit plus d’abord. Il ne lit plus de journaux. C’est la mort du papier.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
393. Florence Aubenas, ‘Champagne light pour le nouveau beau’, *Libération*, 2 January 1996. <https://www.liberation.fr/portrait/1996/01/02/champagne-light-pour-le-nouveau-beauf\_161122> [accessed 3 February 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
394. Cabu worked at *Pilote* during the ban on *Hara Kiri*. [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
395. Alain David and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, *Cabu: Reporter-Dessinateur Les Années 70* (Paris: Vents d’Ouest, 2007), p. 5. ‘je me reconnais tout à fait dans le Grand Duduche. Il est très fleur bleue comme je l'étais à l'époque. Il est toujours en décalage par rapport à son époque. Je le suis toujours.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
396. Ibid., p. 7. ‘En Mai 1968, J'étais tous les jours à la Sorbonne [...] C’est le seul moment où j’ai cru que l’intelligence arrivait au pouvoir. Les élections qui ont suivi m’ont déçu. C'était trop tard, la société de consommation était deja amorcee. On parle souvent de moi comme d’un ex-soixante-huitard. C’est vrai je le revendique’. [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
397. Ibid., p. 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
398. Sadoul, *Dessinateurs de Presse*, p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
399. Ibid., p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-400)
400. Ibid., p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-401)
401. Egen, *La Bande à Charlie*, p. 132. ‘je sais que dans Charlie, je peux aller plus loin je peux être de mauvaise foi..’ [↑](#footnote-ref-402)
402. Les 4 verites, *France 2*, 7 November 2001. <https://www.ina.fr/video/1854867001/cabu-video.html> [accessed on 3 February 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-403)
403. Sadoul, *Dessinateurs de Presse*, p. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-404)
404. 19 20. Edition nationale, ‘Cabu, dessinateur de presse’, *France 3*, 2012. <https://www.ina.fr/video/4686873001022/cabu-dessinateur-de-presse-video.html> [accessed on 3 February 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-405)
405. Weston Vauclair, ‘*Bête et* Méchant’, pp. 109-129. [↑](#footnote-ref-406)
406. *Le Figaro*, 22 May 1973. Original quote: ‘Je cherche à faire rire tout d’abord, mais je suis un journaliste politique. Je fais mon métier de dessinateur. Je ne m’attaque pas à une personne, mais à ce qu’elle représente. À Charlie hebdo, on cherche à faire reculer les limites du bon goût, qui est une notion bourgeoise dont on n’a que faire. Il faut secouer les gens, il faut dire les choses’ [↑](#footnote-ref-407)
407. Cabu, *Cabu et Paris* (Paris: Connaissance des Arts Hors Série, 2006). ‘Reiser parlait à propos de nos styles de dessin séquencé. C’est une manière de jouer de l’espace bien plus libre et surtout définitivement en rupture avec les canons ou dessins humoristiques ou même ceux de la BD. Cela vient de ‘Hara-Kiri’ où nous voulions nous exprimer avec une écriture, un langage différents, sorte de contrepoint à notre humour noir et incisif.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-408)
408. Parisis, *Reiser,* p. 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-409)
409. Fremion, *Reiser*, p. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-410)
410. Cavanna*, Bête et Méchant,* p. 232. ‘Je n’avais pas besoin de trouver des gens pour travailler. Ils se présentent, en avalanche. A moi d'éliminer tous les tocards. Sur cent bonshommes, un de valable. J’ai vu rappliquer Reiser. C'était maladroit, pas au point, mais il avait déjà la patte et l’esprit’ [↑](#footnote-ref-411)
411. Parisis, *Reiser*, p. 49. ‘Cavanna n’a jamais remplacé le père de Reiser, mais il fut pour lui un très grand frère altruiste et catalyseur. Sans témoignage excessif d’affection. Ce n'était pas son genre, ni celui du héros.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-412)
412. Ibid., p. 49. Longtemps Cavanna lui a donné des cours. Il ne lui a pas tenu la main, ne lui a pas appris à faire rire -c’est impossible- mais il a aimanté sa vision vers le tragique, le dérisoire, l’aiguisant, le débridant, avec des discours de révolte. Références à l’appui : Bosc, Chaval, Sempé. Pour la liberté, l’esprit, l'inquiétude. Non pour les copier. [↑](#footnote-ref-413)
413. Ibid.*,* p. 199. ‘Les gens de Charlie Hebdo, c’est plus que l’amitié, c’est une espèce de famille [..] des gens avec lesquels j’ai avant tout une identité de vues.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-414)
414. Fremion, *Reiser*. [↑](#footnote-ref-415)
415. Parisis, *Reiser*, p. 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-416)
416. Ibid.*,* p. 66. ‘Un jour, un jour inoubliable, Reiser est arrivé au journal, posant une chemise de dessins sur la table. Nous n'étions pas très presses de les regarder. Fred et moi, on décide de l’ouvrir...c'était génial, ses dessins avaient changé de registre. Il avait explosé ! La férocité tranquille du Pont des enfants perdus!’ [↑](#footnote-ref-417)
417. Ibid., p. 67. ‘Il s'était inventé un père ivrogne. A l’époque c’était extrêmement culotte de s’attaquer à l'autorité paternelle. Sa rage rejoignait la nôtre contre tout ce qui paraissait aberrant, absurde, illogique. Pour lui comme pour nous, l’injustice n'était que la conséquence de l’illogisme. Ce n'était pas une position sentimentale.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-418)
418. *Hara-Kiri Hebdo*, Issue 2, 10 February 1969. [↑](#footnote-ref-419)
419. Parisis, *Reiser*, p. 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-420)
420. Choron, *Vous me Croirez si vous Voulez*, p. 194. [↑](#footnote-ref-421)
421. Parisis, *Reiser*, p. 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-422)
422. Claude Goguel, ‘Les Vacances des Français’, *Communications*, 10 (1967), pp. 3-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-423)
423. Tillier, *A la Charge!* p. 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-424)
424. Mazrurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire,* p. 246. [↑](#footnote-ref-425)
425. Parisis, *Reiser,* p. 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-426)
426. Apostrophes, ‘Jean Marc Reiser Sur L'engagement Politique Des Artistes’*, Antenne 2*, 1981. <https://www.ina.fr/video/I00013204/jean-marc-reiser-sur-l-engagement-politique-des-artistes-video.html> [accessed 02 February 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-427)
427. Parisis*, Reiser*,p. 236. [↑](#footnote-ref-428)
428. Parisis, *Reiser,* p. 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-429)
429. Alain Schifres, ‘Bonjour, Monsieur Reiser’, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, January 1981. [↑](#footnote-ref-430)
430. Soir 3, ‘Extrait ‘vive les femmes’, hommage à Reiser’, *France Régions 3*, November 1983. <http://www.ina.fr/video/CAC87041642> [accessed 04 April 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-431)
431. Parisis, *Reiser,* p. 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-432)
432. Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire*, p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-433)
433. Cavanna, *Bête et Méchant*, p. 274. [↑](#footnote-ref-434)
434. Ibid., p. 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-435)
435. Parisis, *Reiser*, p. 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-436)
436. Actualités Dernière, ‘La bande dessinée’, *Télévision Française*, 22 January 1978. <https://www.ina.fr/video/CAA7800323001/la-bande-dessinee-video.html> [accessed 05 February 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-437)
437. Wolinski, *Le Bonheur est un Métier* (Paris: Glénât, 2016), p. 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-438)
438. *Thé ou café*, ‘Portrait de Georges Wolinski’, *France 2*, January 2006. <https://www.ina.fr/video/3017302001010/portrait-de-georges-wolinski-video.html> [accessed 05 February 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-439)
439. Numa Sadoul, *Dessinateurs de presse*, p. 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-440)
440. Wolinski, *Pitié pour Wolinski* (Paris: Drugstore-Glénat, 2010), p. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-441)
441. René Andrieu, *Wolinski dans l’Huma* (Paris: Editions de l’Humanité, 1977), p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-442)
442. Andrieu, *Wolinski dans l’Huma*, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-443)
443. Wolinski, ‘Pourquoi je travaille à *l’Humanité’*, in *Charlie Hebdo*, Issue number 355, 1 September 1977, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-444)
444. *Charlie Hebdo*, issue number 356, 8 September 1977. ‘C’était une blague ! Toute la vérité sur la plus formidable supercherie de tous les temps. Wolinski dit c à Marchais et quitte *l’Huma* en claquant la porte avec un grand éclat de rire.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-445)
445. Gerd‐Rainer Horn perceived May 68 in terms of a ‘spirit’ to refer to the changes on behaviours and mores rather than political achievements or a series of events. See Gerd‐Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of ‘68: Rebellions in Western Europe and North America, 1956-1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-446)
446. Daniel Singer, ‘1968 Revisited: Be Realistic, Ask for the Impossible’, *New Politics*, 8.1 (2000), p. 133. [↑](#footnote-ref-447)
447. Harold James, *Europe Reborn: A History, 1914-2000* (Harlow: Longman, 2003) especially chapter 11: ‘Right Step: The 1980s’. [↑](#footnote-ref-448)
448. Suri, ‘The Rise and Fall of an International Counterculture’, p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-449)
449. See Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, *68: Une histoire collective, 1962-1981* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-450)
450. Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (London: Allen Lane, 1969), p. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-451)
451. Suri, ‘The Rise and Fall of an International Counterculture’, p. 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-452)
452. Pascal Ory, Christian Delporte and Bertrand Tillier, *La Caricature… et si c’était sérieux ?* (Paris: Nouveau Monde Edition, 2015), p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-453)
453. Parisis, *Reiser*, p. 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-454)
454. He could not direct it because he was en liquidation judiciaire, in Mazurier, *Bête, Méchant et Hebdomadaire*, p. 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-455)
455. Ibid., p. 66-67. [↑](#footnote-ref-456)
456. Cavanna raconte Cavanna page 113, dernier édito de *Charlie Hebdo* 23 décembre 1981: “Cette fois c’est la fin”, [↑](#footnote-ref-457)
457. Parisis, *Reiser*, p.160. [↑](#footnote-ref-458)
458. ‘Une si courageuse, si talentueuse, si estimable vieille chose! Qu’on lisait en cachette, au lycée.’ Si un journal ne se vend pas, c’est qu’il ne plaît pas, un point c’est tout. S’il est vendu et qu’il ne se vend plus, c’est qu’il a mal vieilli. Ou que le public a mal vieilli, mais, encore une fois, le public lui a le droit, le public est roi. Au journal de s’adapter. Ou de crever.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-459)
459. In Ory, Delporte and Tillier, *La Caricature*, p. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-460)
460. ‘Ce qui plaît à l’immense majorité des gens nous emmerde. Or, nous ne sommes certainement pas seuls. Pas beaucoup, soit, mais pas seuls. Ces quelques-uns-là, cette frange marginale qui veut du bon et que le tout-venant emmerde, ça représente peut-être de quoi faire vivre, modestement mais vivre, un journal. Pari tenu. Et gagne. Pas tout de suite. Ce fut long, et dur, et déprimant, et exaltant. C'était il y de cela vingt-deux ans’ [↑](#footnote-ref-461)
461. Julia Resnik, ‘The Democratisation of the Education System in France after the Second World War: A Neo-Weberian Global Approach to Education Reforms’, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 55.2 (2007), pp. 155-181 (pp. 155-58). [↑](#footnote-ref-462)
462. *Charlie Hebdo*, 1 January 1982, ‘toute la presse a chié sur le cercueil de *Charlie Hebdo*’. [↑](#footnote-ref-463)
463. Rioux and Sirinelli, *La Culture de Masse*. [↑](#footnote-ref-464)
464. Parisis, *Reiser*, p. 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-465)
465. Gerard J. DeGroot, *The Sixties Unplugged: A Kaleidoscopic History of a Disorderly Decade* (London: Macmillan, 2008), pp. 20-29. [↑](#footnote-ref-466)
466. Gébé is said to have come up with the title *La Grosse Bertha*. He was quickly joined by Cabu, Wolinski, and other ex-members of *Charlie Hebdo*. Cabu brought his friends Frédéric Pages from *Le Canard enchaîné*, as well as Philippe Val and Patrick Font who at the time worked as a cabaret duo specialising in political satire. Forcadell brought in dessinateurs he had been working with since the launch of his magazine *Un Bon Dessin Vaut Mieux Qu’un Long Discours* in October 1986.Other dessinateurs such as Willem, Siné, Lefred-Thouron, Tignous, Charb, Loup, Faujour, Honoré joined, along with journalists such as Gérard Biard, and Jean-Jacques Peroni. [↑](#footnote-ref-467)
467. Robert, *Mohicans,* p. 97. Kafka’s article was titled ‘La guerre comme si vous y étiez’ in page 2, was in the form of a dialogue between two famous French sports commentators reporting the war in Iraq like it was a football match. This page 3 as well as the cover is available on Forcadell’s online blog Fait d’Image. [↑](#footnote-ref-468)
468. Actualités régionales Ile de France, ‘La "Grosse Bertha": nouveau journal satirique’, *France Régions 3*, 19 January 1991 <http://www.ina.fr/video/PAC02010168> [accessed 21 September 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-469)
469. Robert, *Mohicans,* p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-470)
470. François Forcadell, ‘Ce malheureux Philippe Val’, *Iconovox*, Fait d’images, 13 November 2015. <http://www.iconovox.com/blog/2015/11/13/ce-malheureux-philippe-val/> [accessed 19 September 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-471)
471. Ibid. Original quote: ‘et j’ai démissionné parce que je ne voulais pas m’affronter avec Cabu qui voulait m’imposer Philippe Val comme rédacteur-en-chef pour les textes’. [↑](#footnote-ref-472)
472. Robert, *Mohicans,* p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-473)
473. Email interview with Francois Forcadell, 28 September 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-474)
474. Original quote: ‘Un conflit m’oppose à Philippe Val depuis plusieurs mois. Je considère que La Grosse Bertha, conçu comme le journal qui “salit tout” est trop respectueux d’un certain establishment’. [↑](#footnote-ref-475)
475. Robert, *Mohicans*, p. 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-476)
476. Val, *C’était Charlie*, p. 148. Original quote: ‘Avec le départ d’Artur, de Kafka, de Konk et de Forcadell, s’est constituée la première petite cellule d’opposition qui pendant des années n’a jamais cessé de chercher à nous nuire. Je crains que mon statut d’étranger au sérail journalistique ne soit pour beaucoup dans leur rancune’. [↑](#footnote-ref-477)
477. Choron sued Philippe Val on the basis of counterfeit because he submitted, under the name of the company Stars, the copyrights for *Charlie Hebdo*. Choron was at the time bankrupt (liquidation fiscal) and thus not in any legal position to start any businesses. See Virginie Vernay, *Ça, C’est Choron* (Paris: Editions Glenat, 2015), p. 23. According to Val’s story, however, it was Gébé who was present at the meeting because he was one of the very few contributors who had maintained an amicable relationship with Choron throughout the years, and because Cabu refused to go as he did not trust Choron. See Val, *C’etait Charlie*, Chapter 4, ‘les débuts des emmerdements’. [↑](#footnote-ref-478)
478. Robert, *Mohicans*, p. 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-479)
479. Sylvia Lebègue, Jean-Pierre Le Roux and Jackie Berroyer, *Choron Et Moi : Récits, témoignages* (Paris: L'Archipel, 2014), Kindle Edition. Many found the book shocking as it uncovered an extremely dark side of Choron’s personal life and depicted him as an alcoholic, an emotionally and physically abusive partner, and a megalomaniac. [↑](#footnote-ref-480)
480. Lebègue et al, *Choron Et Moi*, chapter 7, Kindle edition. quote : ‘ce qu'il voulait, c'était redevenir le patron, le boss, le chef, le king, comme avant, un point c'est tout’. [↑](#footnote-ref-481)
481. Choron launched a children’s magazine titled *Grodada* (1991-1996), and another publication for adults in the style of *Hara Kiri* sold only in the street titled *La Mouise* (28 issues published intermittently between 1994 and 2006). Overall, Choron struggled financially and spent the rest of his life either in debts or in dire poverty. [↑](#footnote-ref-482)
482. Vauclair and Weston Vauclair, *De Charlie Hebdo a #Charlie, Enjeux*, p. 155. [↑](#footnote-ref-483)
483. Ibid., p. 155. [↑](#footnote-ref-484)
484. Pierre Carles and Eric Martin, *Choron Dernière,* *Vie Et Mort De Professeur Choron Et De Charlie Hebdo* (France: Tadrart Films, 2009) [DVD]. Original quote: ‘Charlie doit tout à Cavanna d’abord, c’est Cavanna qui a trouvé l’équipe, le ton de Charlie, c’est lui qui a tout fait’ [↑](#footnote-ref-485)
485. Robert, *Mohicans*, p. 115. Original quote: ‘Cavanna était notre inventeur, notre maître vénéré, notre inspirateur. Sans lui, nous ne serions pas là. Personne ne serait la…’ [↑](#footnote-ref-486)
486. Robert, *Mohicans*, p. 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-487)
487. Robert and Robert, *Cavanna, Jusqu’À L’ultime Seconde, J’Écrirai*. [↑](#footnote-ref-488)
488. Robert, *Mohicans*, p. 129. [↑](#footnote-ref-489)
489. Ibid., p. 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-490)
490. The principles that Cavanna outlined were not in the text of the contract but instead in a separate document attached to the contract. [↑](#footnote-ref-491)
491. ‘*Charlie Hebdo*: Le testament sirituel de Cavanna’, *L’Obs*, 1 July 2015. <https://www.nouvelobs.com/charlie-hebdo/20150701.OBS1823/charlie-hebdo-le-testament-spirituel-de-cavanna.html> [accessed 12 August 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-492)
492. *Charlie Hebdo*, 3 September 1973. [↑](#footnote-ref-493)
493. PV de l'Assemblée Générale des Editions Rotative, June 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-494)
494. Weston, ‘*Bête et* Méchant’, pp. 109-129, 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-495)
495. Alexis Delcambre, ‘L’équipe *Charlie Hebdo* fête son nouveau statut d’entreprise solidaire’, *Le Monde*, 21 July 2015 <https://www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2015/07/21/l-equipe-de-charlie-hebdo-fete-son-nouveau-statut-d-entreprise-solidaire\_4692714\_3236.html> [accessed 17 October 2018]. The question of ownership was raised when the families of the victims and surviving contributors (Luz, Zineb el Rhazoui, and Patrick Pelloux) complained that the 14 January 2015 survivors issue’s revenues estimated by 10 to 12 million euros (before tax) were distributed unjustly and exclusively amongst the shareholders. There were also concerns raised about the donations and how they were unevenly distributed. Eventually Luz, Patrick Pelloux, and Zineb el Rhazoui left the publication between May and September 2015. See France Ouest, ‘*Charlie Hebdo*, Après Luz, Patrick Pelloux annonce lui aussi son départ’, 26 September 2015. <https://www.ouest-france.fr/culture/charlie-hebdo-lurgentiste-patrick-pelloux-va-cesser-sa-collaboration-3718368> [accessed 15 February 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-496)
496. Robert, *Mohicans*, p. 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-497)
497. Yves Marie Labbe, and Dorian Saigre, ‘De la bande de copains à l’entreprise prospère’, *Le Monde*, 29 July 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-498)
498. Delfeil de Ton, ‘Cabu et Val duettistes’, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Biblios*, 18 August 2008. <https://www.nouvelobs.com/opinions/20080818.OBS7701/cabu-et-val-duettistes.html> [accessed 17 October 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-499)
499. ‘Cabu et Val écrivent a l’Obs’, *Le* *Nouvel Observateur*, 5 September 2008. <https://www.nouvelobs.com/medias/20080904.OBS0048/cabu-et-val-ecrivent-a-l-obs.html?fbclid=IwAR25yrspTcvQlyVJ4UbBFMdEOXvuyfhG-U-MMbSHEg9y8prCGgzRaK5\_1Mk> [accessed 17 October 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-500)
500. Denis Robert, Frédéric Thouron, Sylvie Caster, François Forcadell, Francis Kuntz, Bob and Catherine Sinét, Virginie Vernay, Laurent Cavanna, Jérôme Cavanna and Marie Montant, ‘C'était Charlie' contient de nombreuses erreurs et contrevérités” : lettre à l'éditeur de Philippe Val’, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 3 January 2016. <https://bibliobs.nouvelobs.com/actualites/20160103.OBS2159/c-etait-charlie-contient-de-nombreuses-erreurs-et-contreverites-lettre-a-l-editeur-de-philippe-val.html> [accessed 30 August 2018]. Original quote: ‘… sans que je m’en doute, une société de gestion s’organisait, des actions se distribuaient… Il paraît qu’on m’en a proposées. Je n’en ai nul souvenir. En tout cas, si on l’a fait, on n’a guère insisté ou crié dans mon oreille sourde. J’étais donc, paradoxe, propriétaire exclusif du journal de part le droit d’auteur, et je n’en possédais rien. Mon insouciance pour les questions d’argent mais aussi mon manque de sens de l'intérêt faisait que, stupidement, je ne me rendais pas compte des profonds changements’. [↑](#footnote-ref-501)
501. François Cavanna, *Lune de Miel* (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), pp. 67-88. Kindle Edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-502)
502. Robert, *Mohicans*, p. 111. Original quote : ‘Il s’aimaient. Sur la fin, ils ne se voyaient plus. Cavanna en était malheureux’. [↑](#footnote-ref-503)
503. Ibid., p. 113. Original quote: ‘C’était quelqu’un de très fier, à juste titre. Il était parfaitement lucide sur son statut à *Charlie Hebdo*. Il m’avait dit « maintenant ils me mettent comme les vieilles potiches qu’on met sur le haut de la chemine’. [↑](#footnote-ref-504)
504. Robert, *Mohicans*, p. 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-505)
505. Ibid., p. 115. Original quote: ‘Il y avait donc un journal, *Charlie Hebdo*, ou Cavanna n’était rien. Il n’était pas directeur, pas rédacteur en chef. Il n’était même pas actionnaire. Il n’était rien’. [↑](#footnote-ref-506)
506. Cavanna, *Lune de Miel*, p. 274. Original quote: Quand, en 1992, après dix années de silence, il fut question de prélever Charlie Hebdo de ses décombres, je voyais cela comme un joyeux prolongement du passe, et je brandissais en grande liesse l’étendard du « *Bête et méchant* » qui allait de nouveau secouer le vieux cocotier de la connerie, ainsi que le proclamait le dessin de la « une ». Quelle erreur fut la mienne, et que Choron eut donc raison de m’envoyer me faire foutre lorsque je lui proposai de se joindre à nous ! [↑](#footnote-ref-507)
507. Cavanna, *Cavanna Raconte Cavanna*, p. 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-508)
508. Ibid., p. 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-509)
509. Val published *Le Référendum des Lâches: Les arguments tabous du oui et du non à l'Europe* (Paris: Le Cherche midi, 2005); *Les Traîtres et les Crétins: Chroniques politiques* (Paris: Le Cherche midi, 2007); *Reviens, Voltaire, ils sont Devenus Fous* (Paris: Grasset, 2008); *Malaise dans l’Inculture* (Paris: Grasset, 2015); *C'était Charlie* (Paris: Grasset, 2015); *Cachez cette identité que je ne saurais voir* (Paris: Grasset, 2017); ‘Le mépris de l'innocence’, in *Le nouvel antisémitisme en France*, Ed. by Elisabeth de Fontenay (Paris: Albin Michel, 2018); *Tu Finiras Clochard comme ton Zola* (Paris: éditions de L'observatoire, 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-510)
510. Original quote: ‘Il y a en chacun de nous un Grec, qui, depuis deux mille cinq cents ans, arpente l’agora en améliorant sa définition du juste et de l’injuste, un Juif qui ne cesse d’interroger la langue pour lui faire dire un droit universel’. [↑](#footnote-ref-511)
511. Radio Taf: la radio francophone de Tel-Aviv, ‘Philippe Val: En Israël “Je Suis Chez Moi”, C'est “Un Bout De Ma Patrie”’, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osAxay8ZKQc> [accessed 13 January 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-512)
512. Michel Dreyfus, *L'Antisémitisme à Gauche: Histoire d’un paradox de 1830 à nos jours* (Paris: La Découverte, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-513)
513. Val, *Reviens, Voltaire, ils sont Devenus Fous*. Original quote : Cet anticolonialisme – désormais sans colonies – qui est l’étrange idéologie de la gauche alter souverainiste s’est constitué historiquement et idéologiquement pendant la guerre d’Algérie, et demeure une référence bien plus forte que la Seconde Guerre mondiale. C’est leur aventure. Beaucoup d’entre eux avaient manqué l’occasion de la vivre pendant la guerre, ils allaient donc se laver de cette distraction. Leur engagement intellectuel et parfois physique aux côtés des Arabes a marqué profondément cette mouvance. Il en est résulté un attachement inconditionnel à la cause arabe. Cette gauche-là aime « les Arabes » à proportion qu’elle déteste « les Américains ».

     Juif = colon, colon = nazi, donc Juif = nazi, voilà le syllogisme qui, dans le monde musulman, parcourt l’opinion sans rencontrer beaucoup d’obstacles, et qui traverse (discrètement, pour des raisons morales et judiciaires) la France alter souverainiste. [↑](#footnote-ref-514)
514. Such a view is also a feature of many other political philosophies that prioritise the role of the individual over the role of social structures, going back at least to many of the nineteenth century classical liberals. This has become a dominant feature of right-wing politics in the west over the past few decades with the ascendency of neoliberal – or, alternatively, ‘New Right’ – movements such as Thatcherism and Reaganism, their focus on individual responsibility over structural critiques, and their accompanying policies such as ‘workfare’ programmes. Thatcher, of course, famously declared that “there's no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families.” ‘Margaret Thatcher: A life in quotes’, *The Guardian*, 8 April 2013 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/apr/08/margaret-thatcher-quotes> [accessed 27 March 2019]. For an old, but still useful, account of the emergence of different forms of individualism see Steven Lukes, *Individualism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985). For two overviews of neoliberalism and the ‘New Right’ that discuss the central importance of individualism and notions of individual responsibility to their values and programmes see George Peden, ‘Liberal Economists and the British Welfare State; From Beveridge to the New Right’, in *Liberalism and the Welfare State: Economists and arguments for the welfare state*, ed. by Roger E. Backhouse, Bradley W. Bateman, Tamotsu Nishizawa, and Dieter Plehwe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 39-56; Rachel S. Turner, *Neo-Liberal Ideology: History, Concepts and Policies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press: 2008). Interestingly, perhaps due to how individualism and social structural explanations have become so aligned with each side of the political divide, a recent study found that most sociologists in the US self-identified as left leaning. As a focus on systemic explanations is central to the discipline this makes sense, and is likely true in other nations as well. M. Horowitz, A. Haynor, K. Kickham, ‘Sociology’s Sacred Victims and the Politics of Knowledge: Moral Foundations Theory and Disciplinary Controversies’, *The American Sociologist*, 49.4 (2018), pp. 459-495. [↑](#footnote-ref-515)
515. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes,* 1755. [↑](#footnote-ref-516)
516. The term was first popularised in France in 2002 by the sociologist Pierre-Andre Taguieff in his book *La Nouvelle Judéophobie*. The author used the term to show that a certain leftist tiers-mondisme [third-worldism] exists within the pro-palestinian mobilisations especially amongst diverse islamist groups. The author condemns the antizionism of the ‘new tiers-mondiste, neo-leftist, neo-communist configuration, better known under the label of ‘anti-globalisation’ movement [...] Some Jews could be tolerated, even accepted in this isalmo-gauchiste movement as long as they demonstrate an unconditional palestinophilia and a fanatic antizionism’ See Sonya Faure and Frantz Durupt, ‘Islamo-gauchisme, aux origines d’une expression mediatique’, *Libération*, 2016. <https://www.liberation.fr/debats/2016/04/14/islamo-gauchisme-aux-origines-d-une-expression-mediatique\_1445857> [accessed 17 January 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-517)
517. Originally the concept of ‘tiers-mondiste’ was born during the Bandung conference in April 1955. The tiers-mondiste movement was popular in the 1960s and during the Vietnam War, but it witnessed its first crisis in the 1970s with the rise of Maoism, the Palestinian Liberation movement, and South American guerrillas. *Tiers-mondisme* is now a pejorative term to describe a person who believes that the western world is partly or entirely responsible for the economic struggles of the ‘tiers-monde’ (third world). In France, the term became very polemical in 1985 after a conference titled ‘Le tiers-mondisme en question’ was held in the Senat in Paris, organised by the foundation Liberté sans frontières (LSF) which emanated from Médecins Sans Frontières. Some describe *Le Monde Diplomatique* as a tiers-mondiste sympathising paper. To understand the origins of tiers-mondimse, its main themes and its actors see Edmond Jouve, *Le Tiers Monde* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996). Gérard Chaliand’s highly influential *Mythes Révolutionnaires du Tiers Monde: Guérillas et socialisme* (Paris: Points Politique, 1979) was one of the first books to cover the obstacles and failures of revolution guerrilla movements based on research in the Maghreb, tropical Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and Latin America. The book criticises the ‘illusions’ of Fanonism (see Chapter ‘Stratégie politique de la lutte armée.’). On intellectual tiers-mondisme, see Maxime Szczepanski-Huillery, ‘L'idéologie Tiers-mondiste: Constructions et usage d’une catégorie intellectuelle en crise’, *Raisons Politiques*, 2.18 (2005), pp. 27-48. This surveys the intellectual force behind the movement in France and lists: Jean-Paul Sartre, Franz Fanon, Claude Bourdet, Jean-Marie Domenach, the magazines *Esprit*, *Temps modernes*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, and the Gauche prolétaire movement. In the context of *Charlie Hebdo*, the term is used pejoratively to describe the pro-Palestinian political affiliation amongst the left, and in more general terms to describe the anti-globalisationmovement. [↑](#footnote-ref-518)
518. *Charlie Hebdo*, 1 July 1992. [↑](#footnote-ref-519)
519. *Charlie Hebdo*, 1 July 1992, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-520)
520. These women journalists included Anne Sophie Mercier (2006-2010), Luce Lapin (ongoing), Elsa Cayat (?- 2015), Helene Constanty (2009-2011), Zineb el Rhazoui (2013-2016). There are no records of when the following names joined: Louison, Sigolene Vinson, Camille Besse, Marie Darrieussecq, Marine Chanel, Sylvie Coma. [↑](#footnote-ref-521)
521. Paul Hainsworth, ‘France Says No: The 29 May 2005 Referendum on the European Constitution’,

     *Parliamentary Affairs*, 59.1 (2006), pp. 98-117. [↑](#footnote-ref-522)
522. Launched in 2003 and discontinued in 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-523)
523. L’Observatoir Français des Media stemmed out of the World Social Forum held in Brazil in 2003 and which aimed at developing an alternative future in a globalised world. The OFM itself aimed at monitoring big media companies, and promoting the right to access free and pluralistic information. See: ‘L’Observatoire français des médias lance ses activités’, *Acrimed*, January 2004. <https://www.acrimed.org/L-Observatoire-francais-des-medias-lance-ses-activites> [accessed 12 January 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-524)
524. Leonard Ray, ‘Anti-Americanism and Left-Right Ideology in France’, *French Politics*, 9.3 (2011), p. 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-525)
525. *Charlie Hebdo*, Issue 601, 24 December 2003. [↑](#footnote-ref-526)
526. See Ruth Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island: Alfred Dreyfus and the affair that divided France* (London: Penguin, 2011); Katrin Schultheiss, ‘The Dreyfus Affair and History’, *Journal of The Historical Society*, 12.2 (2012), pp. 189-203; and Jean-Marc Ginoux and Christian Gerini, ‘The Dreyfus Affair’ in *Henri Poincaré: A Biography Through the Daily Papers*, ed. by Jean-Marc Ginoux and Christian Gerini (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co, 2014), pp.141-175. [↑](#footnote-ref-527)
527. *Charlie Hebdo*, 22 June 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-528)
528. *Charlie Hebdo*, 28 April 1993. [↑](#footnote-ref-529)
529. *Charlie Hebdo*, 2 June 1993, pp. 8-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-530)
530. When responding in 1989 to the publication of Rushdie’s book *The Satanic Verses* Ayatollah Khomeini broadcast a fatwa on the radio ordering his death. [↑](#footnote-ref-531)
531. For a discussion of the Salman Rushdie affair, see Mondal, *Islam and Controversy*, pp. 13-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-532)
532. *Charlie Hebdo*, 2 June 1993, pp. 8-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-533)
533. Jean Paul 2, Lettre Encyclique Veritatis splendor sur quelques questions fondamentales de l'enseignement moral de l'Eglise, published on 5 October 1993 <http://www.vatican.va/beatificazione\_gp2/documents/pontificato\_gp2\_fr.html> [accessed 17 January 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-534)
534. See Charles Pasqua, ‘Facing the Facts’, *Harvard International Review*, 16.3 (1994), pp. 32-33. [↑](#footnote-ref-535)
535. For an excellent analysis of the Muslims’ struggle over visibility in the public space in Europe see Nebahat Avcıoğlu, ‘The Mosque and the European City’, in *Islam and Public Controversy in Europe*, ed. by Nilüfer Göle (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), pp. 57-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-536)
536. *Charlie Hebdo*, 10 November 1993. [↑](#footnote-ref-537)
537. In a similar vein, see Haoues Seniguer and Robert Bistolfi, ‘Les Musulmans dans la République: des enjeux majeurs de société’, *Confluences Méditerranée*, 106 (2018), pp. 9-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-538)
538. *Charlie Hebdo*, 10 November 1993. [↑](#footnote-ref-539)
539. Cyran published a long piece on 5 December 2013, in which he replied to a piece written by Charb and Fabrice Nicolino (*Charlie Hebdo* journalist) published in *Le Monde* on 20 November 2013. See Cyran, ‘“Charlie Hebdo” pas raciste? Si vous le dites…’, Article 11, 2013. <http://www.article11.info/?Charlie-Hebdo-pas-raciste-Si-vous> [accessed 07 April 2019] also translated in English by Daphne Lawless, ‘Hebdo not racist? If you say so…’ <https://daphnelawless.com/charliehebdo/Charlie\_Hebdo\_article%2011.htm> [accessed 07 April 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-540)
540. For an analysis of the sans papiers movement in France see Jane Freedman, ‘The French “Sans-Papiers” Movement: An Unfinished Struggle’, in *Migration and Activism in Europe Since 1945: Europe in transition*, ed. by Wendy Pojmann, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 81-96. [↑](#footnote-ref-541)
541. Taslima Nasrin is a Bangladeshi-Swedish poet who in 1993 published a novel titled *Lajja* which angered many Muslims in Bangladesh who accused her of vilifying Islam, and eventually cost her a fatwa. Nasrin had to live in hiding for over two years before she could escape to Sweden in 1995. For more on Nasrin’s case, see: Iqbal A. Ansari, ‘Free Speech-Hate Speech: The Taslima Nasrin Case’, *Economic and Political Weekly,* 43.8 (2008), pp. 15-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-542)
542. *Charlie Hebdo*, 4 May 1994, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-543)
543. Philippe Val, *C’était Charlie*, location 1978. Original quote: ‘nous avions suivi de près l’affaire Taslima Nasreen, cette jeune femme poète, médecin et féministe héroïque. En 1994, comme Salman Rushdie, elle est victime d’une fatwa et une prime est promise à qui la décapitera. Nous l’avons évidemment soutenue. Elle est venue nous voir à Charlie, un soir d’hiver, accompagnée de Fiammetta Venner et de Caroline Fourest.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-544)
544. Caroline Fourest in *Charlie Hebdo* 7 June 2006, Charb and Cabu in *Charlie Hebdo* 14 June 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-545)
545. ‘ASIE Bangladesh : la solitude de l’écrivain Taslima Nasrin’, *Le Monde*, 23 July 1994 <https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1994/07/23/asie-bangladesh-la-solitude-de-l-ecrivain-taslima-nasreen\_3818418\_1819218.html?xtmc=taslima\_nasreen&xtcr=231> [accessed, 12 January 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-546)
546. *Charlie Hebdo*, 10 August 1994, p. 3. Original quote: ‘Quand les choses se répètent beaucoup, comme les crimes des intégristes, par exemple, ou l’assassinat d’un Noir à Paris, ou d’un Turc en Allemagne, elles vont rejoindre le fatras des faits inéluctables sur lesquels on ne peut pas agir.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-547)
547. *Charlie Hebdo*, 10 August 1994, p. 3. Original quote: ‘ les crimes racistes, nos terrifiantes similitudes avec tous les habitants de tous les pays, notre commune incapacité à souffrir, la valeur strictement égale de la vie sous toutes les latitudes, l’oppression des femmes dans le monde, tout cela n’est que fantasmagories, petites démangeaisons intellectuelles en voie de guérison.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-548)
548. For an excellent survey of the evolution of the terms freedom of ‘expression’, ‘speech’, and ‘press’ from Article 11 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789 to Article 19 of 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, see Denis Ramond, ‘Liberté d’expression: De quoi parle-t-on?’, *Raisons Politiques*, 44.4 (2011), pp. 97-116. [↑](#footnote-ref-549)
549. Val, *C'était Charlie*. Original quote: ‘Le petit monde autour du Monde diplomatique et de Serge Halimi se déchaîne avec une certaine perversité vis-à-vis de Charlie : ils ne manquent jamais de présenter la rédaction comme une victime que j’ai prise en otage. Ils cherchent à populariser l’idée que Charlie serait un merveilleux journal s’il n’y avait pas la “bande à Val”’. [↑](#footnote-ref-550)
550. While Halimi’s books analysed the press, Nizan’s book*, Les Chiens de Garde* (Watchdogs), 1932, analysed the philosophers of its epoch and criticised their idealism so detached from reality to a point that it perpetuated the principles of the bourgeoisie. [↑](#footnote-ref-551)
551. Serge Halimi, *Les Nouveaus Chiens de Garde* (Paris: Raisons d’agir, 2005), p. 143. Original quote: des médias de plus en plus concentres, des journalistes de plus en plus dociles, une information de plus en plus médiocre. Longtemps, le désir de transformation sociale continuera de butter sur cet obstacle.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-552)
552. Halimi, *Les Nouveaus Chiens de Garde*, p. 133. [↑](#footnote-ref-553)
553. Halimi, *Les Nouveaus Chiens de Garde*, p. 134. Original quote: directions de collection, contrats inhabituellement généreux en échange de manuscrits exceptionnellement médiocres, pleines pages de publicité payes par les éditeurs pour flatter la vanité des auteurs, même quand leurs livres ne rencontrent aucun succès [...] Car il faut l’admettre, la profession est mafieuse’. [↑](#footnote-ref-554)
554. For *Acrimed* articles related to Val’s *Charlie Hebdo*, see 49 articles published between April 2003 and September 2009 see: <<https://www.acrimed.org/+-Philippe-Val->+> [accessed 9 March 2019]. For *Le Monde* artciles see for example: Michel Delberghe, ‘Controverses sur la nouvelle orientation éditoriale de Charlie-Hebdo’, *Le Monde*, 4 March 2000. <https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/2000/03/04/controverses-sur-la-nouvelle-orientation-editoriale-de-charlie-hebdo\_3684372\_1819218.html> [accessed 12 March 2019]; Ariane Chemin and Caroline Monnot, ‘Kosovo: la gauche bolchevique face à la gauche mouvementiste’, *Le Monde*, 9 April 1999; ‘Un brûlot «bête et méchant»’, *Le Monde*, 7 February 1999 ; ‘Une Lettre de *Charlie Hebdo’, Le Monde*, 28 March 2000. For the 87 articles published between 01 January 1992 and 28 September 2009 in *Le Monde* and which have as a main subject *Charlie Hebdo* and Philippe Val, see:https://www.lemonde.fr/recherche/?keywords=Philippe+Val+Charlie+Hebdo&page\_num=1&operator=and&exclude\_keywords=&qt=recherche\_texte\_titre&author=&period=custom\_date&start\_day=01&start\_month=01&start\_year=1992&end\_day=28&end\_month=09&end\_year=2009&sort=desc [↑](#footnote-ref-555)
555. I cannot find evidence if this incident provoked protests amongst Muslims in France or abroad. [↑](#footnote-ref-556)
556. *Charlie Hebdo*, 26 January 1994, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-557)
557. Derek Brown, ‘From the Archive, 26 February 1994: Massacre At The Mosque’, *The Guardian*, 26 February 2010 <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2010/jun/08/archive-massacre-at-mosque-1994> [accessed 28 August 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-558)
558. *Charlie Hebdo*, 9 March 1994, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-559)
559. For an overview of the divisions inside the socialist party since 1952 see: Michel Winock*, La Gauche en France* (Paris: Tempus Perrin, 2006); Razmig Keucheyan, *Hemisphere Gauche*: *cartographie des nouvelles pensées critiques* (Paris: La Découverte, 2017); Eric Hobsbawn, *The New Century* (London: Abacus, 2003), chapter 4 ‘What’s Leftleft of the Left, pp. 95-116. And most importantly see Pierre Bourdieu, ‘Pour une gauche de gauche’, *Le Monde*, 8 April 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-560)
560. Daniel Boy, François Platone, Henri Rey, Françoise Subileau, and Colette Ysmal, *La Gauche Plurielle* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2003), p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-561)
561. François Cusset, *Une Histoire (Critique) des Années 1990: De la fin de tout au début de quelque chose* (Paris: La Découverte), p.114. [↑](#footnote-ref-562)
562. Philippe Val, *C'était Charlie* (essai français) (French Edition) Chapitre 7, Des Musulmans du Kosovo à la Ligue islamique mondiale (Kindle Locations 1424-1425). Grasset. Kindle Edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-563)
563. *Charlie Hebdo*, 30 June 1993. This is in direct reference to François Mitterrand’s *La Paille et le Grain,* 1978. ‘De là, j'observe ce qui va, ce qui vient, ce qui bouge et surtout ce qui ne bouge pas’. (‘From there, I watch that which goes, that which comes, that which moves, and overall that which does not move’). [↑](#footnote-ref-564)
564. *Charlie Hebdo*, 26 May 1993. [↑](#footnote-ref-565)
565. *Pour aller à gauche spéciale édition*, 30 June 1993, p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-566)
566. This is probably a response to Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History and the Last Man* which was only published in 1992. Fukuyama argued that ‘liberal democracy may constitute the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution.’ See Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man,* (New York and Toronto: The Free Press, 1992), p.xi. [↑](#footnote-ref-567)
567. *Charlie Hebdo*, special edition, 30 June 1993, p. 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-568)
568. *Charlie Hebdo*, special edition, 30 June 1993, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-569)
569. Mathias Reymond, ‘Une Histoire de Charlie Hebdo’, *Acrimed*, 8 September 2008. <https://www.acrimed.org/Une-histoire-de-Charlie-Hebdo> [accessed 16 September 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-570)
570. *Charlie Hebdo*, 30 June 1993, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-571)
571. See Colin Shindler, ‘Israel, the European Left and the Complexity of the Middle East’, *Bulletin du Centre de Recherche Français à Jérusalem*, 25 (2014). <https://journals.openedition.org/bcrfj/7328> [accessed 07 April 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-572)
572. Val, *C’était Charlie*, Location 1671. Original quote : Le faux nez de l’antisionisme dissimule de plus en plus mal une haine militante de l’Etat d’Israël. Cette haine qu’elle partage avec le monde arabe a fait de cette gauche « pure » et « purement antiaméricaine » le relais compréhensif de tout ce qui s’oppose à Israël […] C’est l’époque où les prétendus chercheurs – en réalité, des militants – se sont lâchés et ont contribué à souffler sur les braises d’un antisémitisme qui couvait toujours sous les vieilles cendres de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Cette posture intellectuelle relookée en « opposition géopolitique » a pu ainsi sortir de la clandestinité groupusculaire où elle était jusqu’alors confinée, pour s’exprimer au grand jour dans les tribunes des journaux ou sur les plateaux télévisés. [↑](#footnote-ref-573)
573. Ibid., Chapter 6, paragraph 20/23/27. [↑](#footnote-ref-574)
574. Ibid., Chapter 6, paragraph 20/23/27. For an argument in the vein of Val’s analysis of the left’s alleged Judeophobia and anti-americanism see Robert Redeker, ‘De New York à Gaillac: Trajet d’une épidémie logotoxique’, *Les Temps Modernes,* 56 (2001), pp. 4-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-575)
575. Val, *C’était Charlie*, Chapter 6, paragraph 20/23/27. [↑](#footnote-ref-576)
576. Ibid., Chapter 7, paragraphs 20/23/27. Original quote : ‘Une partie de la rédaction penchait pour les luttes sociales, une autre avait plutôt la conviction que le progrès de l’éducation, les conquêtes du savoir et des libertés individuelles étaient prioritaires. Etant dirigeants du journal, Cabu et moi pesions forcément sur le second plateau de la balance.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-577)
577. Ibid., Chapter 7, paragraph 28. Original quote : ‘J’ai lu ton éditorial. C’est un tournant dans l’histoire de Charlie. Le journal ne sera plus jamais comme avant. Nous n’avons jamais soutenu une guerre. Traditionnellement, on s’en sortait avec des pirouettes pour éviter ça. Mais le monde a changé et je pense que tu as raison. Je ne sais pas comment le journal supportera ce bouleversement.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-578)
578. In 1996 Garaudy published *Les Mythes Fondateurs de la Politique Israelienne* translated into English as *The Founding Myths of Modern Israel*. He was accused of historical negationism, specifically of the Holaucaust, which is forbidden by French law. See: ‘Roger Garaudy: Veteran of the Resistance who later became a Holocaust denier’, *Independent*, 25 June 2012. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/roger-garaudy-veteran-of-the-resistance-who-later-became-a-holocaust-denier-7879645.html> [accessed 17 November 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-579)
579. See also Henry Rousso, Lucy Golsan, and Richard J. Golsan, ‘The Political and Cultural Roots of Negationism in France.’ *South Central Review*, 23.1 (2006), pp. 67-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-580)
580. *Charlie Hebdo*, 11 October 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-581)
581. *Charlie Hebdo*, 11 October 2000, Val wrote ‘Arrêtez Tout Dieu n’existe pas’, a two-page editorial (instead of the regular one page). [↑](#footnote-ref-582)
582. *Charlie Hebdo*, 8 November 2000, p. 3. Original quote: ‘dans la vulgate antisémite, le Juif est sexuellement sur actif, riche et intelligent’. [↑](#footnote-ref-583)
583. *Charlie Hebdo*, 6 December 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-584)
584. *Charlie Hebdo*, 20 December 2000. ‘Oui, je suis propalestinien. Aujourd’hui, là, maintenant, à cet instant précis, en regard de ce que subit le peuple palestinien, je suis propalestinien.; ça ne veut pas dire que j’aime les Palestiniens individuellement ou collectivement, ça veut dire que je les reconnais comme victimes d’une guerre colonial. Et si être anti-israélien, c’est condamner la barbarie à laquelle se livrent l’armée et les colons de ce pays en Palestine, oui, je suis anti-israélien. […] Oui, le Hezbollah et le Hamas sont des mouvements antidémocratiques…pour autant, leur lutte en tant qu’elle est une lutte de libération nationale est légitime.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-585)
585. ‘On le trouvait folklorique chez des sauvages enturbannés, portant le sabre avec autant de naturel que nous un parapluie’ [↑](#footnote-ref-586)
586. ‘Cette difficulté à remettre dans une perspective juste les responsabilités des commis contre l'humanité’ [↑](#footnote-ref-587)
587. *Charlie Hebdo*, 5 September 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-588)
588. Val, *C’était Charlie,* Location 1812. Original quote: ‘La conférence de rédaction était intense. Nous voulions absolument « sonner juste », ne pas botter en touche et saisir, autant qu’il était possible, toutes les données et les implications de l’événement. Nous voulions montrer à quel point tout le monde était concerné, intimement, dans notre mode de vie, dans nos libertés, dans tous les acquis de la démocratie et de la *laïcité* qui garantissaient à nos existences la possibilité du bonheur et de la joie. [↑](#footnote-ref-589)
589. *Charlie Hebdo*, Issue number 483, 19 September 2001, p. 3. Original quote: ‘les avions ne se sont pas seulement écrasés sur les tours, ils se sont écrasés sur ceux qui croient au dialogue entre les hommes, qui préfèrent le compromise à la victoire, et une vie imparfaite a une mort glorieuse’. [↑](#footnote-ref-590)
590. *Charlie Hebdo*, 3 October 2001, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-591)
591. Val, *C’était Charlie,* Location 1851. Original quote: ‘On ne traite plus les choses de la même façon après une tragédie comme celle du 11 Septembre, à moins d’être un foutu imbécile’. [↑](#footnote-ref-592)
592. *Charlie Hebdo*, 19 September 2001. Original quote: J’en ferais la triste expérience dans les années suivantes. Chaque tragédie, chaque crime spectaculaire commis par les extrémistes musulmans, loin de souder et renforcer la communauté intellectuelle démocratique contre l’inacceptable, allait au contraire la transformer en gibier effaré, fourbissant des excuses au chasseur, dans le vain espoir de ne pas faire partie des prochaines victimes. [↑](#footnote-ref-593)
593. To read more on Oriana Fallaci, see: Annabelle Timsit, ‘How Oriana Fallaci's Writings on Islamism Are Remembered—and Reviled’, *The Atlantic*, 15 December 2017 <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/12/oriana-fallaci-journalist-views-islamism/544736/> [accessed 12 September 2018], and on Christopher Hitchens’ feedback on her book see: Christopher Hitchens, ‘Holy Writ’, *The Atlantic,* April 2003. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2003/04/holy-writ/302701/> [accessed 12 September 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-594)
594. *Charlie Hebdo,* 13 November 2002. ‘Oriana Fallaci fait preuve de courage intellectuel. (…) Elle ne proteste pas seulement contre l’islamisme assassin. […] Elle proteste aussi contre la dénégation qui a cours dans l’opinion européenne, qu’elle soit italienne ou française par exemple. On ne veut pas voir ni condamner clairement le fait que c’est l’islam qui part en croisade contre l’Occident et non pas l’inverse’. [↑](#footnote-ref-595)
595. In 1997, Fiammetta Venner founded with Caroline Fourest the magazine revue and association. Prochoix devoted to the defence of women’s rights, especially the right to abortion, and gay rights. Prochoix itself, like *Charlie*, evolved from an anti-FN anti-Catholic publication to an anti-Islam in France circa 2003. [↑](#footnote-ref-596)
596. *Charlie Hebdo,* 28 December 2005, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-597)
597. *Charlie Hebdo*, 26 October 2005, pp. 8-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-598)
598. *Charlie Hebdo*, 12 October 2005, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-599)
599. *Charlie Hebdo*, 18 May 2005, pp. 8-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-600)
600. For a review of the representation of Islam in Michel Houellebecq’s latest novel *Soumisssion*, see Landis MacKellar, ‘La République Islamique de France? A Review Essay’, *Population and Development Review*, 42.2 (2016) pp. 368-375. For an anlysis of Islam in all of Houellebecq’s work see Camil Ungureanu, ‘Michel Houellebecq’s Shifting Representation of Islam: From the death of God to counter-Enlightenment’, *Philosophy & Social Criticism,* 43.5 (2017), pp. 514-528; Alain Finkielkraut, *L'Identité Malheureuse* (Paris: Stock, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-601)
601. Pierre Andre Taguieff, ‘17 thèse sur l’islamisme, l’anti-islamisme et l’islamophobie’, *Huffington Post*, 4 May 2017. <https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/pierreandre-taguieff/17-theses-sur-l-islamisme-l-anti-islamisme-et-l-islamophobie\_a\_22068934/> [accessed 19 January 2019]. By ‘islamismophobie’, Taguieff argues that it is not fear of Islam that is the problem, but rather fear of islamism. [↑](#footnote-ref-602)
602. Eric Fassin, ‘National Identities and Transnational Intimacies: Sexual Democracy and the Politics of Immigration in Europe’, *Public Culture*, 22.3 (2010), pp. 507-529. [↑](#footnote-ref-603)
603. Par Annick Cojean, ‘Ayaan Hirsi Ali en quête d’une protection et d’une Nationalité’, *Le Monde*, 11 February 2008 https://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2008/02/11/ayaan-hirsi-ali-en-quete-d-une-protection-et-d-une-nationalite\_1009884\_3214.html [accessed 3 January 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-604)
604. More generally see Gino G. Raymond, ‘From Islam en France to Islam de France: Contradictions of the French left's responses to Islam’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 43.5 (2009), pp. 481-496. [↑](#footnote-ref-605)
605. See Graham Murray, ‘France: The Riots and the Republic’, *Race & Class*, 47.4 (2006), pp. 26-45; Jim Wolfreys, ‘Regroupment and Retrenchment on the Radical Left in France’, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 16.1 (2008), pp. 69-82. [↑](#footnote-ref-606)
606. *Charlie Hebdo*, 9 November 2005. Original quote ‘importation fantasmique des problèmes du Moyen Orient et de l’Afrique en France.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-607)
607. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-608)
608. *Charlie Hebdo*, 9 November 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-609)
609. Geisser, *La Nouvelle Islamophobie*, p. 11. Original quote: ‘alors que la grande majorité des enfants issus de l’immigration africaine, maghrébine et turque sont aujourd’hui des nationaux français, les taxonomies persistent à les désigner comme des ‘jeunes arabo-musulmans, processus de stigmatisation qui combine à la fois un référent éthnique (arabe) et un référent religieux (musulman), sans oublier bien sur la référence à leur juvénilité, censée être porteuse de désordre.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-610)
610. https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/ [accessed 3 January 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-611)
611. Olivier Roy, ‘Intifida des banlieues ou émeutes de jeunes déclassés?’ <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/0501-ROY-FR-2.pdf> [accessed 8 April 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-612)
612. ‘Loi n° 2005-158 du 23 février 2005 portant reconnaissance de la Nation et contribution nationale en faveur des Français rapatriés’ was revisionist law, proposed by Minister of Defense Michèle Alliot-Marie, aimed at rehabilitating the French colonial past through highlighting the positive role of French colonisationadvocating for a rewriting of school textbooks and erecting museums and monument-based projects aimed at valorising colonialism. See Nicolas Bancel, ‘France 2005: A postcolonial turning point’*, French Cultural Studies*, 24.2 (2013), pp. 208-218. [↑](#footnote-ref-613)
613. See also Piettre Alexandre, ‘Islam (im)politique et quartiers (im)populaires: Retour critique sur les émeutes de novembre 2005’, *L'Homme & la Société*, 187 (2013), pp. 89-129. [↑](#footnote-ref-614)
614. See Nacira Guénif Souilamas, Laurent Mucchielli, Christine Delphy, and Joëlle Marelli, *La République mise à nu par son Immigration* (Paris: La Fabrique, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-615)
615. Ibid., p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-616)
616. CNCDH, ‘Etude 2003, Intolérance et violences à l’égard de l’islam dans la société française’, 2003. <https://www.cncdh.fr/fr/publications/la-lutte-contre-le-racisme-lantisemitisme-et-la-xenophobie-annee-2003> [accessed 8 April 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-617)
617. Geisser, *La Nouvelle Islamophobie*, p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-618)
618. See Timothy Peace, ‘The French anti-racist movement and the 'Muslim Question'’ in *Political and Cultural*

     *Representations of Muslims: Islam in the Plural*, ed. by Christopher Flood, Stephen Hutchings, Galina Miazhevich and Henri Nickels (Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 131-146. Peace explores the anti-racist movement in France (particularly in the period between 2003 and 2004) and its most representative organisation, and analyses how the question of anti-Semitism, then ‘Islamophobia’, divided them. The literature on the 2005 Riots is rich, see amongst others, Hugues Lagrange, ‘Émeutes, Ségrégation Urbaine Et Aliénation Politique’, *Revue Française de Science Politique*, 58.3 (2008), pp. 377-401; Matthew Moran, ‘Opposing Exclusion: The Political Significance of the Riots in French Suburbs (2005–2007)’, *Modern & Contemporary France*, 19.3 (2011), pp. 297-312; John P. Murphy, ‘Baguettes, Berets and Burning Cars: The 2005 Riots and the Question of Race in Contemporary France’, *French Cultural Studies*, 22.1 (2011), pp. 33-49. [↑](#footnote-ref-619)
619. Fabrice Dhume-Sonzogni*, Communautarisme: Enquête sur une chimère du nationalisme français* (Paris: Demopolis, 2016), p. 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-620)
620. Dhume-Sonzogni*, Communautarisme*, p. 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-621)
621. Josef Massad, Islam in Liberalism (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp.44-52 [↑](#footnote-ref-622)
622. Roy, *La Peur de l’Islam*, pp. 16-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-623)
623. Ibid., p. 18. ‘ ‘’la communauté” musulmane souffre d'un individualisme très Gaulois, et reste rétive au bonapartisme de nos élites. et c'est une bonne nouvelle.’  [↑](#footnote-ref-624)
624. See Peter Hervik, ‘The Predictable Responses to the Danish Cartoons’, *Global Media and Communication*, 2.2 (2006), pp. 225-230. [↑](#footnote-ref-625)
625. Pascale Santi, ‘Retour sur la *une* controversée de *France Soir*’, *Le Monde*, 6 February 2006. <https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2006/02/06/retour-sur-la-une-controversee-de-france-soir\_738337\_3214.html?> [accessed 6 October 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-626)
626. *L’Express*, 9 February 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-627)
627. See also See Malcolm D. Evans, ‘From Cartoons to Crucifixes: Current Controversies concerning the Freedom of Religion and the Freedom of Expression before the European Court of Human Rights’, *Journal of Law and Religion*, 26.1 (2010-2011), pp. 345-370. [↑](#footnote-ref-628)
628. Neville Cox, ‘The Freedom to Publish ‘Irreligious’ Cartoons’, *Human Rights Law Review*, 16.2 (2016), pp. 195-221. [↑](#footnote-ref-629)
629. Mondal, *Islam and Controversy*, p. 155. [↑](#footnote-ref-630)
630. Didier Pourquery, ‘Juste un Mot: Amalgame’, *Huffington Post*, 30 January 2015. <https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/didier-pourquery/juste-un-mot-amalgame\_b\_6569032.html> [accessed 17 October 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-631)
631. See also Samin Laacher and Cedric Terzi, ‘“Pas d’amalgame”? Un mot d’ordre ambivalent’, *Huffington Post*, 21 January 2015. <https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/smain-laacher/amalgame-musulmans-terroristes\_b\_6507586.html> [accessed 17 October 2018]. They argue that the word is founded on fear that every person likely to be seen as Arab (because of skin colour, name, physical appearance) will be associated one way or another with potential terrorists and thus considered a threat. [↑](#footnote-ref-632)
632. The term ‘Clash of Civilizations’ had a long pedigree but rose to prominence throughout the 1990s before gaining even greater traction after the events of 9/11. Although evident since at least the early twentieth century, the term was first notably used in a French context by Albert Camus, who described “au choc de civilisations” in a 1946 interview. Samuel Huntington popularised the idea in the early 1990s after delivering a lecture which was expanded into first an article and then a book, responding to Francis Fukuyama’s famous argument in ‘The End of History’ that with the end of the Cold War liberal, capitalist democracies would eventually become the only political system across the globe. Huntington instead posited that larger cultural blocs – such as Western civilization, or Muslim civilisation– would instead persist and increasingly drive conflict. The term gained widespread recognition both within academia and across western media. Samuel Huntington, ‘The Clash of Civilizations?’, *Foreign Affairs*, 72.3 (1993), pp. 22-49; Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (London: Free, 2002). For the Camus interview, see<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pl7APX_E7M>> [accessed 19 January 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-633)
633. *Charlie Hebdo*, Issue N713, 15 February 2006, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-634)
634. The 12 signatures are by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Chahla Chafiq-Beski, Caroline Fourest, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Irshad Manji, Maryam Namazie, Mehdi Mozaffari, Taslima Nasrin, Salman Rushdie, Antoine Sfeir, Philippe Val, and Ibn Warraq. [↑](#footnote-ref-635)
635. *Charlie Hebdo*, Issue 715, 01 March 2006, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-636)
636. ‘Le Manifeste des Douze, 15 Novembre 1940’ <http://archives.memoires.cfdt.fr/Document-du-moment/p19/Le-Manifeste-des-Douze-15-novembre-1940> [accessed 17 October 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-637)
637. Jacqueline Remy, ‘Le Manifeste des Douze: Ensemble contre le nouveau totalitarisme’, *L’Express*, 2 March 2006 <https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/le-manifeste-des-douze-ensemble-contre-le-nouveau-totalitarisme\_482860.html> [accessed 17 October 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-638)
638. *Charlie Hebdo*, Issue 715, 1 March 2006, p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-639)
639. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-640)
640. Daniel Leconte, *C’est dur d'être aimé par des cons* (France : Doc en Stock, 2008) [DVD] [↑](#footnote-ref-641)
641. Val, *Reviens Voltaire*, location 1463. [↑](#footnote-ref-642)
642. Elisabeth Fleury, ‘Nicolas Sarkozy S'invite Au Procès Des Caricatures’, *Le Parisien*, 8 February 2007. <<http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/nicolas-sarkozy-s-invite-au-proces-des-caricatures-08-02-2007-2007751114.php>> [accessed 10 October 2018]. Original quote ‘qui, à sa façon, exprime une vieille tradition française : celle de la satire, de la dérision et de l'insubordination’ [↑](#footnote-ref-643)
643. Ibid. Original text : ‘Je puis tout à fait comprendre que certains incriminés aient pu heurter les convictions religieuses de certains de nos concitoyens musulmans. Le nier serait injuste à leur égard. Ce serait négliger l'authenticité spirituelle qui les anime […] je préfère l'excès de caricature à l'absence de caricature’. [↑](#footnote-ref-644)
644. Pascale Robert-Diard, ‘Au Procès Des Caricatures, Tension, Fureur Et Fous Rires’, *Le Monde*, 8 February 2007. <<https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2007/02/08/tension-et-fous-rires-au-proces-des-caricatures_865043_3224.html>> [accessed 10 October 2018]. Original quote : ‘Je ne suis pas ici au nom de la gauche pour défendre un journal de gauche, mais au nom de la République pour défendre une liberté’. [↑](#footnote-ref-645)
645. Original quote: Toute caricature s’analyse en un portrait qui s’affranchit du bon gout pour remplir une fonction parodique, que ce soit sur le mode burlesque ou grotesque […] [L]’exagération fonctionne alors à la manière du mot d’esprit qui permet de contourner la censure, d’utiliser l’ironie comme instrument de critique sociale et politique, en faisant appel au jugement et au débat. Pascale Robert-Diard , ‘Attendu Que Charlie Hebdo Est Un Journal Satirique… ’, *Chroniques judiciaires*, in *Le Monde*, 22 March 2007. <<http://prdchroniques.blog.lemonde.fr/2007/03/22/attendu-que-charlie-hebdo-est-un-journal-satirique/>> [accessed 8 May 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-646)
646. Mondal, *Islam and Controversy*, especially chapter 4 ‘Visualism and Violence: On the Art and Ethics of Provocation in the Jyllands-Posten Cartoons and Theo Van Gogh’s Submission’. [↑](#footnote-ref-647)
647. Sadoul, *Dessinateurs de Presses*, p. 14. The first satirical magazines in Egypt, for instance, date back to Abu Nazzara Zarqa (The Man with the Blue Glasses) in 1878 see Eliane Ursula Ettmüller, ‘Caricature and Egypt’s Revolution of 25 January 2011’, Studies in Contemporary History, 9 (2012), pp. 138-148. [↑](#footnote-ref-648)
648. Val, *Reviens Voltaire*, Location 1196. [↑](#footnote-ref-649)
649. Mondal, *Islam and Controversy,* pp. 147-168. [↑](#footnote-ref-650)
650. Ibid.*,* p. 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-651)
651. See Anastasia Colosimo, ‘Le blasphème en France et en Europe : droit ou délit ?’, *Insititut Montaigne*, 13 November 2018 <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/blog/le-blaspheme-en-france-et-en-europe-droit-ou-delit> [accessed 11 May 2019] [↑](#footnote-ref-652)
652. Dieudonné is a French stand up comedian whose humour was deemed anti-Semitic multiple times and who in November 2007 was condemned for ‘racial defamation’ See ‘Dieudonné condamné à 7,000 euros d'amende pour des propos antisémites’, *Le Monde*, 11 September 2007. <https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2007/09/11/dieudonne-condamne-a-7-000-euros-d-amende-pour-des-propos-antisemites\_953977\_3224.html> [accessed 20 June 2017]. [↑](#footnote-ref-653)
653. ‘J’aime le pognon mais pas les riches, j’aime la paix mais je suis prêt à tuer, […] j’aime les juifs pas Israël, les arabes pas les émirs, les prolos pas le PC’. [↑](#footnote-ref-654)
654. *Charlie Hebdo*, 2 July 2008. Original quote: ‘Il vient de déclarer vouloir se convertir au judaïsme avant d'épouser sa fiancée, juive, et héritière des fondateurs de Darty. Il fera du chemin dans la vie, ce petit !’ [↑](#footnote-ref-655)
655. <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x65qrl> [accessed 20 June 2017]. C’est une affaire qui a mon avis va faire beaucoup de bruit. C'est un article antisémite dans un journal qui ne l'est pas qui s'appelle *Charlie Hebdo*. [↑](#footnote-ref-656)
656. Jérémie Couston, ‘“L’affaire Siné”, une chronologie’, *Télérama* <<https://www.telerama.fr/idees/l-affaire-sine-une-chronologie,31699.php>> [accessed 20 June 2017]. [↑](#footnote-ref-657)
657. ‘*Charlie Hebdo* condamné pour le licenciement abusif du dessinateur Siné’, *Le Monde*, 10 December 2010, <https://www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2010/12/10/charlie-hebdo-condamne-pour-le-licenciement-abusif-de-sine\_1451578\_3236.html> [accessed 21 June 2017]. [↑](#footnote-ref-658)
658. ‘Ce qu'en pense Guy Bedos’, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 30 July 2008. <<https://www.nouvelobs.com/medias/medias-pouvoirs/20080718.OBS3428/ce-qu-en-pense-guy-bedos.html>> [accessed 21 June 2017]. [↑](#footnote-ref-659)
659. Gisèle Halimi, ‘Gisèle Halimi: le « procès en sorcellerie » fait à Siné par Val’, *Le Nouvel Observateur,* 18 July 2008. <<https://www.nouvelobs.com/rue89/rue89-medias/20080718.RUE5021/gisele-halimi-le-proces-en-sorcellerie-fait-a-sine-par-val.html>> [accessed 21 June 2017]. Original quote: ‘A la lecture attentive de ses quelques lignes, je suis en mesure d’affirmer – en spécialiste du droit de la presse – qu’il ne s’agit que d’un prétexte ; un procès pour antisémitisme n’aurait guère de chances d’aboutir’. [↑](#footnote-ref-660)
660. ‘2.000 Signatures Pour La Pétition De Soutien À Siné’, *L'Obs*, 22 July 2018. <<https://www.nouvelobs.com/medias/medias-pouvoirs/20080721.OBS3753/2-000-signatures-pour-la-petition-de-soutien-a-sine.html>> [accessed 4 September 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-661)
661. Bernard Henri Levy, ‘De quoi Siné est-il le nom ?’ *Le Monde*, 21 July 2008 <<https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2008/07/21/de-quoi-sine-est-il-le-nom-par-bernard-henri-levy_1075542_3232.html>> [accessed 4 September 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-662)
662. Daniel Schneidermann, ‘CHARLIE: LA LICRA ET SOS RACISME SOUTIENNENT VAL’, *Arrêt sur images*, 20 July 2008 <<https://www.arretsurimages.net/articles/charlie-la-licra-et-sos-racisme-soutiennent-val?id=1211>> [accessed 4 September 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-663)
663. ‘Affaire Siné: les points de vue de Charb et Cavanna, historiques de *Charlie Hebdo*’, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 30 July 2008. <<https://www.nouvelobs.com/medias/medias-pouvoirs/20080727.OBS4800/affaire-sine-les-points-de-vue-de-charb-et-cavanna-historiques-de-charlie-hebdo.html>> [accessed 4 September 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-664)
664. Cavanna, *Lune de Miel*, p. 274. Original quote: ‘Apres la terrible tourmente qui suivit l’éviction de Siné et qui manqua bien faire crever le journal, on a l’impression d’une convalescence. Du relevage tenace de ruines après le passage d’un typhon…  [↑](#footnote-ref-665)
665. Véronique Brocard, ‘Philippe Val comme trophée gouvernemental’, *Télérama*, 26 October 2009 <https://www.telerama.fr/radio/philippe-val-comme-trophee-gouvernemental,48709.php#cmtavis> [accessed 4 September 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-666)
666. ‘Philippe Val: Fini de rire’, *Le Monde*, 1 November 2010 <<https://www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2009/06/17/philippe-val-fini-de-rire_1207872_3236.html>> [accessed 4 September 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-667)
667. ‘Tensions à Charlie sur le référendum, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 26 May 2005. <<https://www.nouvelobs.com/monde/20050525.OBS7776/tensions-a-charlie-sur-le-referendum.html>> [accessed 4 September 2018]. Original quote: ‘Ce n’est pas grave d’être dans la passion. C’est ça, la vie d’un journal. Bien sûr, on se fout sur la gueule les uns les autres. Mais contrairement aux polémiques sur le Kosovo, où les débats sur l’intervention militaire ont été très violents, on s’est éduqués. Depuis, on a appris à s’engueuler sans s’exclure. Quant aux lecteurs, ils aiment que ça châtaigne, et là ils sont servis. [↑](#footnote-ref-668)
668. Cavanna, *Lune de Miel*, p. 267. Kindle Edition. Original quote: La glorieuse démonstration de Cannes, où, pour la première fois, je pris conscience de n’être plus guère, dans la joyeuse bande, qu’un vieil accessoire utilisable à la rigueur pour faire la foule autour de la résistible ascension de l’enfant prodige. [↑](#footnote-ref-669)
669. Europe 1, Riss: ‘C’est Triste À Dire, Mais Je Crois Qu’ils Voulaient Surtout Charb’, *Youtube*, 23 January 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWFX23QOoKQ> [accessed 17 November 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-670)
670. Hélène Sallon, ‘Charb, Cible Désignée De La Revue D’Al-Qaida Au Yémen’, *Le Monde*, 8 January 2015. <https://www.lemonde.fr/attaque-contre-charlie-hebdo/article/2015/01/08/charb-cible-designee-de-la-revue-d-al-qaida-au-yemen\_4551615\_4550668.html> [accessed 16 November 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-671)
671. Val, *C'était Charlie Hebdo*, location 285. ‘Son dessin était volontairement lourd et épais. Il en avait décidé ainsi. Mais, dans cette lourdeur et cette épaisseur, il parvenait à faire jaillir des expressions, des ressemblances, des mouvements subtils. C’était loin de l’esthétique virtuose de Cabu, mais Charb était résolu à imposer sa manière. Malgré sa jeunesse, il avait une connaissance de la nature humaine qui faisait presque peur. Parfois, je lui demandais comment, si jeune, il en savait déjà autant, à quel sens de l’observation surdéveloppé il devait cette connaissance qui d’ailleurs, à l’instar de Rimbaud, nourrissait chez lui une sorte de désespoir rigolard. Charb était un désespéré non dépressif, toujours prêt à agir, à chercher des blagues, à déclencher des fous rires, tout en restant méthodique et consciencieux.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-672)
672. *Charlie Hebdo*, 20 May 2009. ‘*Charlie Hebdo* n’a jamais été et ne sera jamais un musé qu’on visite en patins, un menhir dont on fait le tour en hochant la tête d’un air grave. *Charlie Hebdo* est un organisme vivant, pensant, gueulant, rotant. Que personne ne s’attende à pouvoir dire un jour : “*Charlie Hebdo* est enfin devenu ce qu’on voulait qu’il devienne”. Pour pouvoir faire marrer l’autre, il faut le suspendre.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-673)
673. *Charlie Hebdo*, 13 May 2009, p. 2. ‘*Charlie Hebdo* continuera à ne ressembler à rien d’autre qu'à…*Charlie Hebdo*’. [↑](#footnote-ref-674)
674. *Charlie Hebdo*, 16 February 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-675)
675. *Charlie Hebdo*, 17 August 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-676)
676. *Charlie Hebdo,* 9 March 2011. The question of ownership and shareholding was never a problem in Cavanna’s *Charlie*. As we have seen in chapters 1 and 2, both *Hara Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo* oscillated between times of financial crises where the main aim was to stay alive, and times of affluence and good circulation where the journalists were paid better than in any other publication (as Cabu and Wolinski testified in chapter 2). In the 1960s and 1970s *Charlie*, the concern was about being paid and how much and not about owning the paper. There was not a system of shareholders under Choron’s management. [↑](#footnote-ref-677)
677. *Charlie Hebdo,* 5 November 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-678)
678. *Charlie Hebdo,* 22 February 2012. ’Mort aux escrocs du politiquement incorrect!’. [↑](#footnote-ref-679)
679. The Gayssot Law is a French anti-revisionist bill which was enacted in 1990. The bill punishes (with a prison sentence and a fine) anyone who denies or disputes a crime against humanity (especially the Holocaust) as established by the Nuremberg Tribunal (1945\_1946). [↑](#footnote-ref-680)
680. Faire croire que l’oppressé est l’oppresseur, que le sans-pouvoir les détient tous, c’est la tactique de celui qui se prétend politiquement incorrect. L’escroc du politiquement incorrect ne bouleverse pas l’ordre établi, il l’incarne, l’ordre ! [↑](#footnote-ref-681)
681. See Wulf D. Hund and Charles W. Mills, ‘Comparing black people to monkeys has a long, dark simian history’, *The Conversation*, 2016. <https://theconversation.com/comparing-black-people-to-monkeys-has-a-long-dark-simian-history-55102> [accessed 8 April 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-682)
682. *Charlie Hebdo*, 27 November 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-683)
683. Sandrine Sanos, ‘The Sex and Race of Satire: *Charlie Hebdo* and the Politics of Representation in Contemporary France’, *Jewish History*, 32 (2018), pp. 33–63, p.46. [↑](#footnote-ref-684)
684. See Fredette*, Constructing Muslims in France*, pp. 47-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-685)
685. See Enes Bayrakli, Farid Hafez and Léonard Faytre, ‘Engineering a European Islam: An Analysis of Attempts to Domesticate European Muslims in Austria, France, and Germany’, *Insight Turkey*, 20.3 (2018), pp. 131-156; Jonathan Laurence and Gabriel Goodliffe, ‘The French Debate on National Identity and the Sarkozy Presidency: A Retrospective’, *The International Spectator,* 48.1 (2013), pp. 34-47; Eloin Daly, ‘*Laïcité* and Republicanism during the Sarkozy presidency’, *French Politics*, 11.2 (2013), pp.182-203; Yvan Gastaut, ‘The “Immigration Question”: Mainspring of Sarkozy's Presidency’, *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, 16.3 (2012), pp. 333-346. [↑](#footnote-ref-686)
686. See Malika Zeghal, ‘La Constitution Du Conseil Français Du Culte Musulman: Reconnaissance Politique D'un Islam Français?”, *Archives De Sciences Sociales Des Religions*, 50.129 (2005), pp. 97-113. [↑](#footnote-ref-687)
687. Loi du 20 novembre 2007 relative à la maîtrise de l'immigration, à l'intégration et à l'asile, Loi du 24 juillet 2006 relative à l'immigration et à l'intégration, Loi du 10 décembre 2003 relative au droit d'asile, Loi du 26 novembre 2003 relative à la maîtrise de l'immigration, au séjour des étrangers en France et à la nationalité. [↑](#footnote-ref-688)
688. Halde’s last report in 2011 stated that origins was the first motif of discrimination in France with 39.6% of cases in 2006 and 29% in 2010 (before handicap/health, sexual orientation, and age) ‘Halde: Rapport 2010, Louis Schweitzer, La Haute Autorité De Lutte Contre Les Discriminations Et Pour L'égalité, Discrimination. En Bref - Actualités - Vie-Publique.Fr’, *Vie-Publique*, 2018 <http://www.vie-publique.fr/actualite/alaune/halde-bilan-5-ans-existence.html> [accessed 1 December 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-689)
689. ‘UN Body Calls Attention To Growing Problem Of Racism In France - France 24’, *France 24*, 2010 <https://www.france24.com/en/20100812-un-discrimination-body-france-racim-report-government> [Accessed 1 December 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-690)
690. Circulaire IMIK0900089C, Ministre de L’Immigration, De l’intégration, de l’identité nationale, et de solidarite social 2 November 2009 <<http://circulaire.legifrance.gouv.fr/pdf/2009/11/cir_29805.pdf>> [accessed 1 December 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-691)
691. *Charlie Hebdo*, 22 September 2010. Original quote: ‘si mon ministères peut être une machine à fabriquer de ‘bons Français’, je serai très heureux’. See also Pascal Riché, ‘Eric Besson, mais qu'est-ce donc qu'un «bon Français»?’, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 28 September 2010. <https://www.nouvelobs.com/rue89/rue89-mon-oeil/20100928.RUE0089/eric-besson-mais-qu-est-ce-donc-qu-un-bon-francais.html> [accessed 12 December 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-692)
692. *Charlie Hebdo*, 22 September 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-693)
693. *Charlie Hebdo*, 9 December 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-694)
694. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-695)
695. *Charlie Hebdo*, 10 February 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-696)
696. En 5 February 2010 the Comité pour la mesure de la diversité et des discriminations (Comedd) handed its report to the commissaire à l'Égalité des chances Yazid Sabeg. *Charlie Hebdo* ’s interview with SOS Racism was a commentary on that. [↑](#footnote-ref-697)
697. *Charlie Hebdo*, 20 January 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-698)
698. *Charlie Hebdo*, 20 September 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-699)
699. Legifrance.Gouv.Fr, ‘Loi N° 2004-228 Du 15 Mars 2004 Encadrant, En Application Du Principe De *laïcité*, Le Port De Signes Ou De Tenues Manifestant Une Appartenance Religieuse Dans Les Écoles, Collèges Et Lycées Publics’, 2018. <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=69CDCE50C875D694CF24B8384E84E9B1.tplgfr31s\_2?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000417977&dateTexte=20181107> [accessed 7 November 2018]. Article 1: ‘Dans les écoles, les collèges et les lycées publics, le port de signes ou tenues par lesquels les élèves manifestent ostensiblement une appartenance religieuse est interdit. Le règlement intérieur rappelle que la mise en œuvre d'une procédure disciplinaire est précédée d'un dialogue avec l'élève’. [↑](#footnote-ref-700)
700. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-701)
701. Alain Gresh, ‘La commission Stasi et la loi contre le foulard: retour sur une manipulation’, *Le Monde*, 5 April 2013. <https://blog.mondediplo.net/2013-04-05-La-commission-Stasi-et-la-loi-contre-le-foulard> [accessed 08 April 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-702)
702. Legifrance.Gouv.Fr, ‘Loi N° 2004-228 Du 15 Mars 2004 Encadrant, En Application Du Principe De *laïcité*, Le Port De Signes Ou De Tenues Manifestant Une Appartenance Religieuse Dans Les Écoles, Collèges Et Lycées Publics’, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-703)
703. Marlière, *After Charlie*, p. 54. See also Cécile Laborde, *Français, Encore un effort pour être Républicains* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2010); Joan Scott, *Politics of the Veil* (New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-704)
704. *Charlie Hebdo,* 21 January 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-705)
705. *Charlie Hebdo*, 13 January 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-706)
706. Joan W. Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-707)
707. *Charlie Hebdo*, 13 January 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-708)
708. I highly doubt the dessinateur had any idea why the afghani dress is in blue, which has a cultural significant as lapis lazuli is a semi-precious stone found in north of Afghanistan, so it is culturally specific. [↑](#footnote-ref-709)
709. *Charlie Hebdo*, 24 February 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-710)
710. *Charlie Hebdo*, 10 March 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-711)
711. *Charlie Hebdo*, 17 March 2010, p. 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-712)
712. *Charlie Hebdo*, 24 March 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-713)
713. *Charlie Hebdo*, 7 April 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-714)
714. *Charlie Hebdo*, 14 April 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-715)
715. *Charlie Hebdo*, 28 April 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-716)
716. *Charlie Hebdo*, 5 May 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-717)
717. *Charlie Hebdo*, 12 May 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-718)
718. *Charlie Hebdo*, 19 May 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-719)
719. *Charlie Hebdo*, 2 June 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-720)
720. *Charlie Hebdo*, 9 June 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-721)
721. *Charlie Hebdo*, 16 June 2010, p.12. [↑](#footnote-ref-722)
722. *Charlie Hebdo*, 23 June 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-723)
723. *Charlie Hebdo*, 30 June 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-724)
724. *Charlie Hebdo*, 7 July, 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-725)
725. *Charlie Hebdo*, 21 July 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-726)
726. *Charlie Hebdo*, 28 July 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-727)
727. *Charlie Hebdo*, 4 August 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-728)
728. *Charlie Hebdo*, 11 August 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-729)
729. *Charlie Hebdo*, 16 September 2010, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-730)
730. *Charlie Hebdo*, 23 September 2009, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-731)
731. *Charlie Hebdo*, Issue number 902, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-732)
732. *Charlie Hebdo*, 14 October 2009, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-733)
733. *Charlie Hebdo*, 28 October 2009, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-734)
734. *Charlie Hebdo*, 10 November 2009, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-735)
735. *Charlie Hebdo*, 25 November 2009, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-736)
736. *Charlie Hebdo*, 9 December 2009, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-737)
737. *Charlie Hebdo*, 23 December 2009, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-738)
738. *Charlie Hebdo*, 30 December 2009, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-739)
739. Sandrine Sanos, ‘The Sex and Race of Satire’, p.50. [↑](#footnote-ref-740)
740. Éric Fassin, ‘Sexual Democracy and the New Racialization of Europe, Journal of Civil Society’, 8:3 (2012), pp.285-288, p.288. [↑](#footnote-ref-741)
741. HALDE stands for The French Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination Commission, presided at the time by Jeannette Bougrab, who contends again the veil. She was at the same time a very close friend of Sarkozy, and the alleged partner of Charb. She is the author of *Lettre aux Femmes voilées et à ceux qui les Soutiennent* (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-742)
742. *Charlie Hebdo*, 22 Décembre 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-743)
743. See Pierre Tevanian, *La Mécanique Raciste* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008) which dissects the racist phenomena in France as a concept, a perception, and an affect. See also Pierre Tevanian, Ismahane Chouder and Malika Latrèche, *Les Filles voilées Parlent* (Paris: La Fabrique, 2008) contains interviews with veiled Muslim women in France and their experiences in school, work, and society as a whole. [↑](#footnote-ref-744)
744. *Charlie Hebdo*, 22 December 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-745)
745. *Charlie Hebdo*, 14 August 2012. Original quote: ‘pauvres femmes emmitouflées dans leurs voiles [...] même si l’on ne doit trouver que très rarement des paires de Louboutin dans cet amas de tongs et de babouches’ [↑](#footnote-ref-746)
746. *Charlie Hebdo*, 14 August 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-747)
747. *Charlie Hebdo*, 22 August 2012 ‘Un zoo féminin dans le désert saoudien’ [↑](#footnote-ref-748)
748. *Charlie Hebdo*, 19 May 2010, p. 14. ‘L’Islam a le droit d’exister en France, mais la République laïque n’a pas à chercher à en faire une ‘religion nationale’. [↑](#footnote-ref-749)
749. Nicolas Cori and Alain Auffray, ‘Nicolas Sarkozy s’enflamme sur l’Islam’, L*ibération*, 18 February 2011. <https://www.liberation.fr/france/2011/02/18/nicolas-sarkozy-s-enflamme-sur-l-islam\_715795> [accessed 08 April 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-750)
750. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-751)
751. *Charlie Hebdo*, 28 February 2011, p. 14. ‘Arrêtons de considérer les musulmans qui vivent en France comme des mômes caractériels et irresponsables. Qu’on leur applique les lois qu’on applique à tous les citoyens, sans discrimination. Ni positive, ni négative.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-752)
752. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-753)
753. *Charlie Hebdo*, 9 March 2011, p. 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-754)
754. *Charlie Hebdo*, 30 March 2011, p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-755)
755. *Charlie Hebdo*, 30 March 2011, p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-756)
756. *Charlie Hebdo,* 18 August 2010, p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-757)
757. *Charlie Hebdo*, 9 September 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-758)
758. *Charlie Hebdo*, 9 September 2009. Original quote: ‘l’image donnée par les membres de cette famille arabe, qui se jettent sur les lasagnes en conserve comme s’ils n’en avaient jamais vu de leur vie, rappelle furieusement les grandes heures du bon Nègre Banania’. [↑](#footnote-ref-759)
759. *Le Figaro*, 10 August 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-760)
760. See James McDougall, “Laïcité, Sociologie Et Histoire Contemporaine De l’Islam.” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-761)
761. Omar Ashour, ‘Between ISIS and a failed state: The saga of Libyan Islamists’, *Brookings Instution,* August 2015 <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Libya\_Ashour-FINALE.pdf> [accessed 23 May 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-762)
762. *Charlie Hebdo,* 9 November 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-763)
763. *Charlie Hebdo*, 26 March 2012. ‘Le terroriste qui ne représente que lui-même souhaite que la population voit un terroriste dans chaque musulman. Il fait le pari qu’a plus ou moins long terme le musulman persécuté rejoindra sa lutte [...] Sans notre trouille, sans notre haine, dont il se nourrit, le terroriste n’est rien.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-764)
764. *Charlie Hebdo*, 4 April, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-765)
765. Peter Bradshaw, ‘Innocence of Muslims: A dark demonstration of the power of film’, *The* *Guardian*, 17 September 2012. <<https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2012/sep/17/innocence-of-muslims-demonstration-film>> [accessed 23 March 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-766)
766. *Charlie Hebdo,* 19 September 2012. Original quote : ‘Peins un Mahomet glorieux, tu meurs. Dessine un Mahomet rigolo, tu meurs. Gribouille un Mahomet ignoble, tu meurs. Réalise un film de merde sur Mahomet, tu meurs. Tu résistes à la terreur religieuse, tu meurs. Tu lèches le cul aux intégristes, tu meurs. Prends un obscurantiste pour un abruti, tu meurs. Essaie de débattre avec un obscurantiste, tu meurs. Il n’y a rien à négocier avec les fascistes. La liberté de nous marrer sans aucune retenue, la loi nous la donnait déjà, la violence systématique des extrémistes nous la donne aussi. Merci, bande de cons.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-767)
767. *Charlie Hebdo*, 26 September 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-768)
768. Ibid*.*. [↑](#footnote-ref-769)
769. *Charlie Hebdo*, 15 October 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-770)
770. Scott, *The Politics of the Veil.* See also Françoise Gaspard and Farad Khosrokhavar, *Le Foulard et la République* (Paris: La Découverte; 1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-771)
771. *Charlie Hebdo*, 2 April 1973. Original quote : ‘Nous ne sommes pas un « vrai » journal. « Charlie-Hebdo » comme son grand frère « Hara-Kiri » est un pari d'ivrognes, un tour de force sans cesse et sans cesse recommencé, un éléphant qui fait le beau sur la pointe d'une aiguille. Ça ne pouvait marcher que par le crevage intégral de tous et l'entente de tous’. [↑](#footnote-ref-772)
772. *Cavanna jusqu'à l'ultime seconde j'écrirai*, directed by Denis Robert. [↑](#footnote-ref-773)
773. DeGroot, *The Sixties Unplugged,* pp. 20-29. [↑](#footnote-ref-774)
774. Glenn Greenwald, ‘Growing Far-Right Nationalistic Movements Are Dangerously Anti-Muslim — and Pro-Israel’, *The Intercept*, 30 November 2016. <https://theintercept.com/2016/11/30/growing-far-right-nationalistic-movements-are-dangerously-anti-muslim-and-pro-israel/> [accessed 7 April 2019]. For an excellent analysis of this shift towards appealing to European Jews and Israel, see Zúquete, ‘The European Extreme-Right and Islam’, pp. 321-344. [↑](#footnote-ref-775)
775. For an overview of the history of the National Front See Peter Davies, *The National Front in France: Ideology, Discourse and Power* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 112-16. See also Daniel Stockemer, ‘Introduction to the Special Issue: Explaining the spike in electoral support for the Front National in France’, *French Politics*, 13.4 (2015), pp. 319-323. For a recent analysis of Marine Le Pen’s rebranding of the National Front to incorporate Jews see Itay Lotem, ‘In a bid to detoxify the far right, Marine Le Pen wants to appeal to French Jews’, *The Conversation*, 2017. <https://theconversation.com/in-a-bid-to-detoxify-the-far-right-marine-le-pen-wants-to-appeal-to-french-jews-73993> [accessed 06 April 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-776)
776. Sarah Wildman, ‘Dewinter’s tale’, *The New Republic*, 22 January 2007. <https://newrepublic.com/article/62330/guess-whos-coming-seder-dewinters-tale> [accessed 23 May 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-777)
777. ‘Manifeste « contre le nouvel antisémitisme»’, *Le Parisien*, 2 May 2018. <http://www.leparisien.fr/societe/manifeste-contre-le-nouvel-anti-Semitisme-21-04-2018-7676787.php> [accessed 13 January 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-778)
778. See Public Sénat, ‘Nouvel Antisémitisme: la pétition qui dérange, On va plus loin’, 23 April 2018 <https://youtu.be/VqMZU2qw4lM> [accessed 13 January 2019]. [↑](#footnote-ref-779)
779. Aurelien Mondon, *After Charlie,* p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-780)