

## A paraître/Apparaître: Genet and His Press

by Brian Gordon Kennelly

[...] la publicité traque, truque, persécute tout  
ce qui n'est pas faux! . . .  
le goût de l'authentique est perdu!  
—Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Entretiens avec  
le professeur Y*

THE PAGES ANNOUNCING WORKS TO COME in Jean Genet's published texts from about the 1950s onwards warrant more than passing notice. Should one in 1954 have opened the Jean-Jacques Pauvert edition of *Les Bonnes* in which for the first time the two versions of the play appear side by side, one would have read "En préparation chez le même éditeur: *L'Enfer* (un volume)." Assuming a developing taste for Genet's works, in 1960 the curious Genet fan might have purchased the Barbezat editions of either *Le Balcon* or *Les Nègres* and, in the list of works announced "à paraître," have read: *Les Paravents*, "Elle,"<sup>1</sup> and *Les Fous*. No doubt having hurried out and purchased the Barbezat edition of *Les Paravents* as soon as it appeared in 1961, the same person might have felt comforted to notice that "Elle" and *Les Fous* are still announced as "à paraître." Compensating, perhaps, for Pauvert's failure to produce the promised one volume of *L'Enfer*, the addition in 1962 by Barbezat of another work by Genet might have been a consolation of sorts, for by this year the list has grown and includes: *Le Baigneur*, "Elle," and *Les Fous*. 1963 might be considered a slower year, but still the increasingly curious Genet reader might have smiled at the change in Barbezat's list of promised texts, for in Barbezat's edition of *Les Bonnes* that year the titles of "Elle" and *Les Fous* apparently have not changed, but that of *Le Baigneur* is suddenly followed by a parenthesis in which one reads *Santé Forlano*. Later that same year the addition of yet another play to the list announced by Barbezat increases the likelihood of this budding, albeit imagined, Genet enthusiast having to create, or at the very least clear, a separate shelf at home for the collected works of Genet; the 1963 edition of *Les Nègres* offers the promise of *Le Baigneur (Santé Forlano)*, *La Fée*, "Elle," and *Les Fous*. In 1966 Barbezat's edition of *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs* pledges *Le Baigneur* (now minus its

parenthesis), *La Fée*, "Elle," *Splendid's (La Rafale)*, and *Les Fous*. Much later, in 1988, with Barbezat's publication of Genet's *Lettres à Olga et Marc Barbezat*, *Splendid's* loses its parenthesis, as did *Le Baigne* in 1966; the list reads: *Le Baigne*, *La Fée*, "Elle," *Splendid's*, and *Les Fous*. With the posthumous publication by Barbezat in 1989 of Genet's "Elle," and in 1993 of the long-awaited *Splendid's* the list shortens a bit, and it has since September of 1993 read: *Les Fous*, *Le Baigne*, and *La Fée*.

Whether such a Genet reader existed and whether or not he or she read the texts in the order they appeared, or even the announced works in each text, is open to speculation or even irrelevant. What is worth further attention, however, is the curiously evolving and devolving nature of Genet's announced works and will, therefore, be the subject of this article. The history of the "stories" (by Genet himself, by his editors, acquaintances, critics, and press) surrounding his "other" plays (those either announced by L'Arbalète or reported as in the works and/or destroyed) and accounts of their evolution (title/s, reported content/s, length/s, and fate/s) reveals a stage for rumor, inaccuracies, and inauthenticity. In separating fact (or facts) from fiction (or fictions), it is possible to demonstrate the full extent to which, like Genet himself, the press and critics have succeeded in constructing such a stage for rumor, how the myth of Genet and his published plays operated as motors for such rumor and shaped the history and/or stories of Genet's theater. Through the reappraisal of the context of his creations, it is possible to construct a renovated, more stable stage from which to judge the history of the creation of Genet's complete dramatic works.

### *Publicity or duplicity?*

#### I. Genet

The complicated stage for rumor that Genet himself successfully constructs around his announced theater can be attributed to: (1) his out and out lying and/or deception and/or exaggeration, (2) his proposing the same text to several different editors simultaneously with the same or different titles, (3) his signing up illegally with other editors, (4) his uncertainty over his own intentions, and (5) the possibility that he became stifled by writing itself.

That Genet lied and deceived during his life is certainly no secret, but the extent to which such action shaped the stage for the burgeoning misunderstanding of his theatrical *œuvre* by critics and acquaintances is worth noting. In his *Journal* entry of 18 August 1952, for example, Jean Cocteau writes that Genet had torn up and burned his last five years of work (318). If *Splendid's* was written in 1948, as Albert Dichy, who wrote the introduction to the play and who heads the Fonds Genet in Paris, reports (5 August 1991), Genet must have been lying or exaggerating. Gene Plunka notes

that Genet claimed to have destroyed *Frolic's* (an earlier version of *Splendid's*) in 1952 and *Le Baigne* soon thereafter (190). *Le Baigne* is still announced by Barbezat. Jean-Bernard Moraly describes how, in 1970, he had arranged to meet Genet in a hotel before Genet's departure for Brazil: "Là il m'avait affirmé (et convaincu tout à fait) que [*Elle, Les Fous, Football, Splendid's, La Fée*] n'étaient que des titres, vendus à des éditeurs pour obtenir des avances" ("Cinq" 44). But "*Elle*" was published in 1989, and, after much delay, *Splendid's* was finally published—in two acts—in the fall of 1993.<sup>2</sup> A few years after Genet's death, René de Ceccatty reports in *Le Monde* that Genet's longtime companion (and accomplice), Java, still marvels over the complicated scheme that he and Genet had effectuated for the "circulation" of false manuscripts.

Besides out and out lying and/or deception, Genet often proposed the same text to several different editors simultaneously with the same or different titles. As *Dimanche matin* of 25 September 1955 reports, Genet apparently avails himself of this method "pour arrondir son chiffre d'affaires" (9). When confronted with the law, Genet responds: "C'est bien de l'horreur pour un marchand de soupe que j'accepte de le voler quand on a mon talent et mon génie" (*Carrefour* 7). In addition, he signed up illegally with other editors, hence *Le Monde's* report in May and June of 1967 of Genet's trouble with the Editions le Trident "après qu'il a cédé illégalement les droits sur une dizaine de ses ouvrages à des tiers éditeurs [L'Arbalète et Gallimard]" (11, 11).

In addition to the intentional deception by Genet, the uncertainty that he apparently manifested with regard to his own intentions further complicates matters. A little over a month after *Paris-Presse-l'Intransigeant* announces in November of 1952 that Genet's return to the theater with *Frolic's* will take place in a theater of the *rive gauche* (6d), Pierre La Salle of the same publication reports that Genet has changed his mind: "il vient de déchirer sa dernière pièce que trois théâtres parisiens se disputaient. En revanche, il va faire ses débuts publics au cinéma avec un film à la gloire du baigne" (6c). A year later Genet announces in *Paris-Presse-l'Intransigeant* his intention to abandon theater completely as a means of expression ("L'Indiscret" 8). Yet the publications of *Le Balcon*, *Les Nègres*, *Les Paravents*, "*Elle*," and *Splendid's*<sup>3</sup> both postdate and contradict this announcement.

For Moraly, Genet quite simply became stifled by writing. He notes in his biography of the dramatist that Genet's intensely active periods (from 1943 to 1949 and from 1953 to 1961) were both followed by extended spells during which he apparently could not realize his creative intentions. Twice (in July 1952 and May 1967) Genet destroyed manuscripts and attempted suicide. Moraly hypothesizes that these suicide attempts were direct results not of the impossibility to write but of the very nature of what Genet was writing, which was impossible (*Jean Genet: la vie écrite* 103, 128). But Moraly's reliability as a source is uncertain. Having already been hoodwinked by Genet once in 1970, he consecrates more than half of his so-called bio-

graphy to what he terms "l'agenda *imaginaire* de Jean Genet: 1944-1980" ("Vie écrite" 151-338, emphasis added).

## II. Editors

Like Genet himself, his editors were soon embroiled in the complicated machinery of deception which surrounds his announced plays. Thus, in the summer of 1948, for example, les Editions Nagel announced in *Carrefour* Genet's *Héliogabale* for the following fall (7d-f). Originally written for and rejected by Jean Marais, this play had already appeared in a contract that Genet had signed in 1943 with Paul Morihien. Is it surprising that the play has never been published? Certainly the most troubling "stories" by Genet's editors, however, are those by Marc Barbezat of L'Arbalète, Genet's primary publishing house near Lyons. Michel Cressole's 1989 interview with Barbezat is extremely revealing. When pressed by Cressole regarding the true nature of Genet's *Les Fous*, Barbezat responds: "Là il m'a escroqué, une petite entourloupette. Cela a été fait gentiment. C'est pas grand chose. Il n'a rien donné, en fait." ("Versets"). But in a letter two years later Barbezat changes his story slightly; in it he describes *Les Fous* as too embryonic to be published: "Genet n'a pas pu réaliser ses intentions" (16 September 1991). Yet Barbezat continues to include *Les Fous* in the list of forthcoming works by Genet that he will publish.<sup>4</sup> As if this is not problematic enough, it would be reasonable to assume that a certain degree of communication exists between Barbezat, who published "*Elle*," and Dichy, who wrote the introduction to the play. This, however, appears not to be the case, for in an interview with Patrice Bougon after the publication of "*Elle*," Barbezat categorically states: "*Elle*, que je viens de publier, est une pièce de théâtre, en un acte, que Genet écrit en 1955, c'est-à-dire au moment de la rédaction du *Balcon*. Datée et signée, '*Elle*,' était achevée" (87). Yet in his introduction to "*Elle*," Dichy notes the blank left in the manuscript where the Pope's second *Chant* should have appeared and consequently accords the play a relative state of completion (12). Most certainly unwittingly, he further contradicts Barbezat in a letter of 1991 in which he writes: "Genet avait dit à plusieurs reprises à son éditeur qu'il lui restait encore à écrire une tirade" (5 August).<sup>5</sup>

Who should one believe: Dichy? Barbezat? Or Genet? In 1991, letters to this author from both Dichy and Barbezat suggest that the publication of *Splendid's* is imminent. Thus in August of that year Dichy writes: "Je vous signale que je prépare . . . l'édition d'une seconde pièce inédite de Genet qui devrait paraître vers le début de l'année 1992. Il s'agit de *Splendid's*." Barbezat echoes him a month later: "En ce qui concerne [les] pièces posthumes [de Genet] . . . [l]a première est *Splendid's* que je vais éditer au cours de l'hiver prochain . . . vous n'avez qu'à patienter quelques semaines encore." By the fall of 1992, *Splendid's* had yet to appear in print. Barbezat was asked about the delay. This time, its publication no longer a question of weeks, he

responds: "En ce qui concerne la parution de *Splendid's*, il ne m'est pas possible de vous fournir de plus amples renseignements pour l'instant. Dès que je serai en mesure de vous donner des précisions, je vous écrirai" (5 October).

### III. Critics

As a consequence of the deception by Genet and the misunderstanding or blatant inauthenticities by his editors surrounding Genet's announced drama, the critics of his theater soon became confused in turn. It would seem that their confusion over the existence, the title/s, the length/s, and the form/s of Genet's "other" plays continues today and thus further perpetuates much of the mythologization of Genet.

#### 1. *Existence of texts*

In 1982 Juan Goytisolo categorically refutes the existence of certain Genet texts: "su recurso habitual cuando se halla sin fondos consiste en vender a sus editores títulos de libros inexistentes: *Le Bagne*, *La Fée*, *Elle* [sic], *Splendid's* (*La Rafale*), *Les Fous*" (10). Four years later, in his *Le Monde* article, Michel Cournot again opens the door to their potential existence: "Genet avait annoncé naguère des titres de pièces à venir dont il existe peut-être les manuscrits ou au moins des ébauches: *Les Fous*, *La Fée*, *Le Bagne*. Jusqu'à présent, nous n'avons rien connu de ces pièces" (22a-c).

#### 2. *Title/s of plays*

In his checklist of Genet's plays, Richard Coe refers to *Splendid's*, *Le Bagne*, *Santé Forlano*, and *La Rafale* as the *same* play: "An elusive play with a mysterious history" (121). Cressole echoes Coe in his *Libération* article of 25 March 1989, when he treats *Le Bagne* and *Santé Forlano* (now minus the *accent aigu*) as one and the same play. Furthermore, the various spellings of a single announced title were in themselves enough to guarantee considerable confusion, thus *Splendid's* is referred to as *Splendid* on 14 June 1956 by the *Bulletin de Paris* (14), as *Splendide* on 21 May 1960 by *Paris-Presse-l'Intransigeant* (14e), and as *Splendid's* by Coe in 1969.

#### 3. *Length/s of plays*

Cited by Coe in his checklist of Genet's works is Barbezat's letter to Dr. R.W.F. Wilcocks of 7 May 1964 in which he indicates that Genet has only completed the *first* of three acts of *Splendid's*: "Malheureusement il n'en a écrit que le premier acte, les deux autres ont été abandonnés." Surprisingly, some 24 years later the play had somehow grown from one act to two; Barbezat thus proclaims: "Genet m'avait accordé . . . l'exclusivité de *Splendid's*, pièce en deux actes sur les gangsters" (254).

#### 4. *Form/s of the plays*

*Le Bagne* is referred to by Gene Plunka as an unpublished play (29), in the biographies of Genet by Maurice Chevaly as a scenario (227), and by White as a "récit narratif," a play, and a scenario (391, 442-43), by Pierre LaSalle in *Paris-Presse-l'Intransigeant* as a film (6c), and by Barbezat on different occa-

sions as an opera ("Comment" 255), a play (16 September 1991), and a filmscript (Lamy 10).

The all too misleading titles of Genet's published and announced plays and associated works might more accurately be grouped as follows:

#### Published Theater

*Pour la belle*  
*Préséances*  
*Haute surveillance*

*Le Pape*  
*Elle*  
*"Elle"*

*La Tragédie des confidentes*  
*Mesdemoiselles Lemercier*  
*Les Bonnes*

*Frolic's*  
*La Rafale*  
*La Raphale*  
*Leur Toupet était célèbre*  
*Splendid*  
*Splendide*  
*Splendid's*

*L'Espagne*  
*Le Balcon*

*Foot-ball*  
*Football<sup>6</sup>*  
*Les Nègres*

*Ça bouge encore*  
*La Mère*  
*Les Mères*  
*Saïd*  
*Les Paravents* (the first in a cycle of seven plays grouped as *La Mort II*)<sup>7</sup>

#### Manuscripts Mentioned as in Barbezat's Possession

*Jeanne la folle*

*Les Fous*<sup>11</sup>

*Les Hommes*

*La Fée*  
*Les Fées*<sup>12</sup>

*L'Œil de Gabès*<sup>8</sup>

*Santé Forlano*  
*Sante Forlano*<sup>9</sup>  
*Le Bagne*<sup>10</sup>

#### Lost, Untraceable, or Non-Existent Manuscripts

*Journée castillane*  
*Journée castillanne*

*Le Guerrier nu*  
*Les Guerriers nus*<sup>14</sup>

*Héliogabale*<sup>13</sup>*Don Juan*<sup>15</sup>*Persée**Pensée*

## Other

*Le Prisonnier**Le Révolte des anges noirs* (filmscript)"Préface" to Cocteau's *La Machine infernale**Le Langage de la muraille: cent ans jour après jour* (filmscript)*La Nuit venue* (filmscript)<sup>16</sup>*Les Rêves interdits ou L'Autre versant du rêve* (filmscript)<sup>17</sup>*Concentric or eccentric authenticities? Genet at play*

Having reappraised the problematic context of Genet's creations and attempted to schematize, by logical groupings, his works of theater, it becomes incumbent to move from the *how* of the "stories" to the more pressing *why*. In *The Vision of Jean Genet*, Coe describes the void at the very center of Genet's being and attributes it to Genet's troubled and troublesome early childhood: "Hence the haunting sense of imperfection and incompleteness which pervades every line that Genet has written" (5). Indeed, this is all very well for what Genet *has* written, but could the so-called "imperfection" and "incompleteness" also extend beyond it and pervade, moreover, every line that Genet has *not* written, that he, or others, claim that he did or would write? Like many of his contemporaries, Genet inscribes himself as autofictional characters in his novels. Whether such a rewriting of the self is absent in his theater and to what degree invites inquiry. Rather than totally abandon his self-revelatory prose for the relative shelter of the theater, it appears that Genet had reached the limits of his "création romanesque" and consequently sought, as Serge Dominique Ménager underlines, new creative avenues. His move to the theater,<sup>18</sup> with *Haute surveillance* (and possibly *Splendid's*) represents a new investment of his creative energy, one which compensates the gradually crumbling autofictional myths of his novels, the direct consequence of his having abandoned novels as a means of expression. For Ménager at least, it is in "*Elle*" that Genet retrospectively and posthumously reveals his new project; he believes that the reason Genet only wanted "*Elle*" published after his death<sup>19</sup> is cunning, for couched in the discourse of the Pope's first *Chant* Genet apparently outlines his new strategy of subversion: "J'avais atteint la définitive image! Vers laquelle tendre, il n'en est plus? Eh bien, mes amis, je vous écoute? Il me resterait donc à détruire cette image. . . . Détruire l'image par le refus de la perpétuer—en moi d'abord, de la reproduire hors de moi ensuite. . . . J'usai de ruses" (61–62).

Genet salvaged the images of his prose and pushed them to the limit in an increasingly complicated legend of his life that he crafted before ultimately disappearing entirely underneath its weight. An essential component of the re-vesting of his creative energy that is represented by his turn to theater is the public space of the press, which Genet converts into a stage for his extra-theatrical theorizing of authenticity. At "play" in the creation (or creations) of his posthumous *œuvre*, he simultaneously uses the press as a mirror for the problems he raises in his plays and for his own self (and recreated selves). By forcing his public to ask essential questions about the nature of truth and reality (essentially questions which concern both theater and history too), Genet ingeniously provides a revealing context by which to receive, or anticipate, his plays.

As an afterword, or to further problematize this continually unfolding tale,<sup>20</sup> consider the following letter of 5 December 1956 from Genet to Barbezat:

Mon cher Marc,  
 Merci pour le papier.  
 Voilà un article espagnol qu'Olga vous lira.  
 Frechtman (mon traducteur anglais-américain) me dit que le bruit court que ce ne serait pas moi l'auteur de mes pièces ni de mes livres. Je trouve l'idée comique. Je suis plus Shakespeare que jamais. Néanmoins j'ai sérieusement corrigé *Les Nègres*.  
 J'espère que la dernière scène va coller.  
 A bientôt.  
 Jean Genet. (*Lettres* 163)

Genet's use of the adjective "comique" is surely no accident.<sup>21</sup>

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup>For the sake of simplicity, the title of this play will appear in inverted commas (following its published title) throughout this paper.

<sup>2</sup>Interestingly the publication of this long-awaited play is yet a further source for confusion. In *Le Progrès* of 16 September 1993, Jean-Philippe Mestre writes: "C'est ... chez Barbezat, à Décines, que l'on trouve notamment l'essentiel de l'œuvre théâtrale de Genet: *Les Bonnes*, *Le Balcon*, *Les Nègres*, *Elle [sic]*, *Les Paravents* et le moins connu *Splendid's*, qui vient d'être réédité, ainsi que *Miracle de la rose*, le dernier de ses écrits de prison" (emphasis added). *Le Républicain lorrain* reaffirms this "reedition" of *Splendid's* a little over a week later. En même temps [que la publication de la biographie de Genet écrite par Edmund White], paraît, dans la collection *Biblos* (Gallimard) un volume rassemblant le *Journal du voleur*, *La Querelle de Brest [sic]* et *Pompes funèbres*. Aux éditions de l'Arbalète (Décines - 69150), Marce [sic] Barbezat qui fut son ami réédite le *Miracle de la rose* et une pièce de théâtre, *Splendid's* ("Jean Genet par Edmund White," emphasis added).

<sup>3</sup>It can be argued, however, that *Splendid's* was written in 1948, although White notes the possibility of an even earlier creation: "Il semble que ce soit un sujet très ancien qu'il écrivit et récrivit à plusieurs reprises, peut-être dès 1942 ou 1943" (356).

<sup>4</sup>The very month that Genet's seventh play is published Bernard Dort writes in *Le Magazine littéraire*: "Le théâtre occupe la plus vaste partie [de l'œuvre de Genet] (six pièces publiées et encore, au moins, quatre à paraître)" (46). Overlooking the fact that Dort's words are already out of date at the time they are published—that indeed seven plays are published . . . this most certainly due to the long delay in the publication of *Splendid's* and the resulting confusion it caused—Dort still leads us to believe that *Le Baigne*, *Les Fous*, and *La Fée* will be published and furthermore as plays. See note 11.

<sup>5</sup>Perhaps this contradiction might have been averted if Barbezat had been more willing to show the manuscripts that he retains the rights to. To write the introductions to two plays for which he himself has been denied access to the manuscripts is certainly unfortunate for any critic—all the more so for the head of the Fonds Genet!

<sup>6</sup>In her *Jean Genet: entre mythe et réalité*, Véronique Bergen includes *Football* [sic] among the works announced by Barbezat (34; 408). *Foot-ball* appeared in the list of works, is announced "à paraître" in the 1956 edition of *Le Balcon*, and is mentioned in Genet's correspondence with Barbezat in a letter of 7 May 1956: "Je me mets aux Nègres dès lundi. Le titre sera *Foot-ball*. J'y tiens beaucoup. C'est ainsi qu'il faut l'annoncer. Je vous en dirai les raisons. Car je refais toute la fin" (*Lettres* 152).

<sup>7</sup>As part of *La Mort* (or *La Mort I*) might be grouped: *L'Enfer*, *Enfers*, *La Nuit*, *La Lettre à Decimo*, and *Fragments* . . . (first published in 1954).

<sup>8</sup>According to Pierre-Marie Héron, *L'Œil de Gabès*, *La Vie intérieure*, and *Le Spectre du cœur* are all different titles for *Pompes funèbres* (Gallimard, 1953). See also note 12.

<sup>9</sup>"Sante Forlano" (along with "Le directeur," "L'aumônier," "Le sous-directeur," "Le surveillant Marchetti," "Rocky," "Ferrand," and "Roger") is a character in *Le Baigne*.

<sup>10</sup>Of a contract with Marc Barbezat (31 April 1961). According to Albert Dichey, *Le Baigne* is a title given by Genet to two different texts but which are, however, linked. The first is a film scenario written around 1952 and reworked by Genet in light of an eventual publication. The second text was written between 1961 and 1964. It is a play that was supposed to follow *Les Paravents*. In his interview with Jean-Claude Lamy, Barbezat describes it as "à la fois un scénario et une pièce de théâtre." He admits that until recently he did not own the definitive version: "n'ayant pas la version définitive, je l'ai achetée lors d'une vente à Drouot." It is this auction that is captured on film at the beginning of Michel Dumoulin's *Jean Genet: le vagabond*.

<sup>11</sup>Of a contract with Marc Barbezat (10 March 1958). According to White, this is a novel (443). See note 4.

<sup>12</sup>Of a contract with Marc Barbezat (26 July 1963). Vincent Reniel inaccurately notes that *Santé Forlano*, *La Mort*, *La Rafale*, and *L'Œil de Gabès* were all working titles for this work possessed and announced as forthcoming by Barbezat (94). See also note 8.

<sup>13</sup>A play in three acts.

<sup>14</sup>White refers to this work both as a film scenario (216) and a play (258).

<sup>15</sup>Text proposed to Marc Barbezat in November 1945. Reniel further specifies that it is a film scenario written around 1942 (92).

<sup>16</sup>Throughout her book Bergen refers to this scenario as *La Nuit remue*.

<sup>17</sup>The filmscripts are on deposit at l'Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine, 25, rue de Lille, Paris. *Les Rêves interdits ou L'Autre versant du rêve* is the scenario on which Tony Richardson's *Mademoiselle ou Les Feux interdits* (1966) was based.

<sup>18</sup>In his "Le Théâtre: une féerie sans réplique" Bernard Dort argues that theater is at the very center of Genet's *œuvre*: "Mais il n'y est pas présent comme une certitude, mais une tâche ou un domaine à conquérir. Il l'y est l'objet d'essais multiples et le lieu même du défi d'une joyeuse destruction" (46). Dort would thus argue that there was never ever a move *to* the theater, rather a movement *around* it, one for which the stage was for Genet a constantly shifting center (*Magazine littéraire* 313: 46-50). White argues much the same thing: "Certains critiques imaginent, d'après l'ordre de publication de ses œuvres, que Genet évolua du monde comparativement posé de la poésie aux grands espaces du roman pour aboutir à la transparence et aux perspectives politiques de son théâtre. Mais en fait le théâtre est la forme

primordiale de toute l'œuvre de Genet; il avait déjà écrit plusieurs scénarios pour la scène et l'écran avant d'entreprendre ses premiers ouvrages publiés. Et même ses poèmes, si on les étudie d'un peu près, trahissent une origine théâtrale" (47-48).

<sup>19</sup>Barbezat attributes this to Genet's loss of interest in the theater: "En 1980, Genet a reconnu que j'avais encore différentes pièces sous contrat, dont *Elle [sic]* (publiée en 1988) [Barbezat published the play in 1989], que je pourrais éditer après sa mort avec l'accord de Gallimard. . . . Dans les années quatre-vingt, le théâtre n'était plus une préoccupation pour Genet; c'est pour cela qu'il ne tenait pas à l'édition de ses pièces" (Fabbri, "Marc Barbezat"). How would Barbezat explain Genet's rewriting in 1985 of *Haute surveillance*, the earlier "definitive" version of which he claims to have written out of "boredom" and "carelessness" ("Sur *Haute surveillance*")?

<sup>20</sup>Edmund White's monumental biography (*Jean Genet*, Gallimard; *Genet: A Biography*, Chatto & Windus; Knopf) is the latest contribution.

<sup>21</sup>A version of this paper was presented at the 1993 NEMLA conference in Philadelphia.

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