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Response to Philippe Poirrier's review of **Philip Whalen**, *Gaston Roupnel, âme paysanne et sciences humaines*. Review [in English] Review [en français]

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Historical *Oubliettes*, Gaston Roupnel's Reputation, and other Historiographical Considerations: a Response to Philippe Poirrier, Pierre Cornu, and Edouard Lynch.

[L]ongtemps l'historien a passé pour une manière de jugé des Enfers, chargé de distribuer aux héros morts l'éloge ou le blâme.... Pour séparer, dans la troupe de nos pères, les justes des damnés, sommes-nous donc si sûrs de nous-mêmes et de notre temps? Marc Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire...* (1949)

L'insistance avec laquelle son *Histoire de la campagne française*, paru à l'origine en 1932, à été utilisé par le gouvernement de Vichy en faveur de son programme de retour à la terre "qui ne ment pas," a contribué à le disqualifier dans les cercles savants.... Mais on peut se demander quelle sera la postérité réelle de celui qui n'aura peut-être été que le plus quêté des conférenciers dijonnais, aux temps bourgeois de Gaston Gérard. Jacques Marseille, ed., *Journal de Bourgogne* (2002)

One should never blame people for what their views may one day be thought to lead to. Isaiah Berlin, "The Birth of Modern Politics" (1993)

David Lindenberg previously interpreted Gaston Roupnel's *Histoire et Destin* (1943) to illustrate the passivity and crypto-fascist sympathy of many French intellectuals between 1937 and 1946.[1] Because I discuss Roupnel outside the paradigm of Vichy sympathy and, instead, present him as "one of the founding fathers of twentieth-century French social history" and "one of the most innovative, emblematic, and transitional thinkers of the French inter-war years," my work challenges received orthodoxy and has elicited heated responses.[2] Accordingly, Pierre Cornu, Philippe Poirrier, and Edouard Lynch focus on Roupnel's philosophical[3] rather than empirical works,[4] his presumed political sympathies, and/or my "anti-Cartesianism" in order to challenge my gambit. In response, I will address the main problems concerning the politics surrounding Roupnel's reputation and several arguments advanced concerning his and my methodologies.

My central contention in *Gaston Roupnel: âme paysanne et sciences humaines* is that Gaston Roupnel's reputation has suffered in the *oubliette* of neglect, misunderstanding, and the politics of reputation building within the French historical profession.[5] I situate his work in terms of the reorganization of the social and human sciences that occurred between the periods of late nineteenth-century historical positivism and trends that would shortly coalesce around the *Annales*. [6] I describe Roupnel's contributions to various disciplines, their convergences, and how they were received among intellectuals interested in interdisciplinary pursuits. I examine how he anchored his spiritual and existential interests in fields ranging from academic history to regional folklore and from theoretical geography to modern epistemology. My opening paragraph considers Roupnel's multidisciplinary talents, innovative departures, and transitional theories as follows: "[w]ith one foot in nineteenth-century philosophical

traditions and the other in the social and natural sciences of the 1920s and 1930s, Roupnel stands out as one of the most innovative, emblematic, and transitional thinkers of the French inter-war years. His syncretic approach to contemporary social, philosophical, and historical problems has the impressive merit of simultaneously engaging developments in a number of different disciplines. His interventions engaged Paul Vidal de La Blache's emphasis on unity and region; reflected Henri Berr's call for synthesis in the French social and human sciences; directly influenced the tradition of philosophical vitalism between Henri Bergson and Gaston Bachelard; promoted and extended the application of long historical perspective practiced by French human geographers such as André Allix and Jules Sion; anticipated the methodological practices of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre's *Annales* project; and informed the political construction of Burgundian cultural identity."

Roupnel's intellectual odyssey allows us to entertain a number of questions concerning the relationship between politics and scholarship during the inter-war period and how we view them from our vantage point. Does scholarship that does not conform to a set of professional criteria eradicate the merits of earlier work previously deemed representative? Do Roupnel's detractors provide sound and valid arguments for using a test of [alleged] political sympathies to expunge his membership from the ranks of the French historical profession? If his political sympathies were to have influenced his later works, how, if at all, might this alter what we think of his earlier contributions? Are Roupnel's political allegiances clear? Are criteria useful for making determinations in one sphere applicable to the other? Are the conclusions in one reducible to the other? Does my work offer legitimate reasons for considering Roupnel's influence beyond the regionalist paradigm to which historians like Lynch would relegate him? Do the facts and arguments presented in my work substantiate my claims concerning Roupnel's reputation or do they amount to what Philippe Poirrier would consider "hagiographic?" Are critiques of my argument, such as Pierre Cornu's, *a priori* committed to maintaining Daniel Lindenberg's reading of Roupnel? [7]

The five following modules will, I hope, illustrate the contours of my project, reiterate where I stand, and do justice to Roupnel's reputation:

(1) I discuss Roupnel's contributions to French social history in my chapter entitled "L'Histoire totale du Dijonnais" where I invoke his *La ville et la campagne au XVIIe siècle: études sur les populations du pays Dijonnais* (1922). [8] *La ville et la campagne* examines the Burgundian nobility of the robe's seigniorial investments following the ravages of the Thirty Years War and its impact on the development of the seventeenth-century Dijonnais. Noteworthy is Roupnel's emphasis on the interrelations between urban and rural areas and the influence of geographical limits on demographic opportunities. He argues that Dijon's robinocracy consolidated its ascendancy not, as previously believed, by acquiring offices (which it did) but primarily by investing its energies and finances in the Burgundian countryside. This consanguinary "social class" established its power and authority by exploiting the economic opportunities generated by a ravaged and depopulated countryside. Roupnel's analysis also includes significant discussions of Dijon's lower orders such as ordinary citizens, passing vagrants, and corporate organizations. By eschewing the traditional political/diplomatic narrative and, instead, identifying *conjunctures* (economic, sociological, land-holding, and demographic) that profoundly impacted seventeenth-century Burgundian society, *La ville et la campagne* precociously anticipated methods of the "new social history" privileged by the *Annales*.

Because Poirrier overlooks the importance of *La ville et la campagne* and, instead, cites Lucien Febvre's dissatisfaction with Roupnel's *Histoire de la campagne française* (1932), readers will be surprised to find the favorable things Febvre and others said about *La ville et la campagne*. [9] In 1934, Febvre found *La ville et la campagne* to "revèl[e] brusquement un historien, un vrai historien," doing original work. He found it to be "en réalité un des très rares livres nourrissants d'histoire sociale à qui notre XVIIe siècle paysans et bourgeois ... a jusqu'à présent donné lieu chez nous ... un très beau livre ... un de ceux qui donnent faim et soif de savoir." [10] Marc Bloch called *La Ville et la campagne* in the first volume of the

Annales a “remarquable livre” concerning “une étude d’ensemble sur les classes dijonnaise” with special mention “en ce qui regarde la bourgeoisie, le contraste entre le XVI^e siècle, temps d’ascensions rapides, et la période suivante—surtout depuis 1660—caractérisée par la cristallisation du patriciat parlementaire” and again, in a review of later histories of Burgundy in the second volume of *Annales*, as an “ouvrage fondamental” from which other historians could still profit.[11] Henri Hauser hailed Roupnel’s work in the *Revue Historique* and said that (excepting Henri Sée’s comparative and very different *Esquisse d’une histoire du régime agraire en Europe aux XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles*) he knew of no other work “qui vaille, comme pénétration, cette histoire de l’asservissement progressif des campagnes par la bourgeoisie dijonnaise, aboutissant à une sorte de restauration féodale.” Despite some reservations, Hauser judged it to be a poetic work: “[1]ivre profond, suggestif et évocateur, riche de choses et d’idées, l’un de ceux qui nous font le plus avancer dans la connaissance intime de notre passé.”[12] Hauser also made a series of accurate criticisms of Roupnel’s work. While he praised it as “un travail écrit *con amore*, livre savoureux, d’un goût de terroir très prononcé,” he nonetheless evaluated the work as a whole as unbalanced, poorly organized, chronologically vague, and containing various lacunae in a bibliography which he otherwise praised as “aussi savoureuse que la thèse.”[13] The ruralist Emile Guillaumin (who considered himself to be “l’intellectuel de ce mouvement” [d’études rurales] [14]) deemed Roupnel’s book to be “une oeuvre qui, par la lumière qu’elle projette sur le passé, aide à comprendre le présent et apporte à l’esprit une véritable impression d’enrichissement.”[15] Pierre Goubert, a second generation Annalist and student of Marc Bloch whose *Beauvais et le Beauvaisis* remains one of the most ambitious and complete examples of a regional “histoire totale,” recognized Roupnel’s *La ville et la campagne*, as his only point of regional comparison and departure. Goubert’s endorsement came with the following reservation: “[c]’est ouvrage capital, qui nous donne le seul point de comparaison régional possible; cependant, de fortes réserves seraient apportées à ce travail plein d’intuitions, mais rapides; dans lequel seigneurie et propriété paraissent avoir été confondues, dans lequel les archives fiscales n’ont pas été suffisamment critiquées; qui voit mieux les parlementaires que les paysans.”[16] As late as 1963, the Burgundian historian Jean Richard commented that Roupnel’s *La ville et la campagne* long remained the only work “à envisager la vie de la société provinciale à l’époque du Grand Roi, de telle façon que ses conclusions gardent toute leur valeur. L’épreuve du temps se révèle ainsi décisive: Roupnel est, et demeure, l’un des maîtres de notre histoire.”[17] Most recently, Daniel Roche refers to Roupnel’s work in his *Enlightenment France* as simply “unsurpassable.”[18]

These sources—authoritative, informed, credible, and pertinent—establish Roupnel’s reputation as a historian among his peers during the 1920s. Furthermore, *La ville et la campagne*’s “Préface” announced that subsequent volumes were to focus on the politics, literature, language, rhythms and practices of Burgundian private life.[19] From this, I demonstrate—through my reconstruction of Roupnel’s intellectual itinerary—that, taken together, his oeuvre may be read as a precocious *histoire totale* of the Dijonnais.[20] I argue that the cultural, existential, and spiritual dimensions of this project may be found in Roupnel’s geographical, philosophical, literary, and folkloric studies.

(2) Roupnel linked his early empirical interests and growing theoretical concerns in *L’Histoire de la campagne française* (1932). Here he navigates between the universal and emancipatory demands of Neo-Kantian humanism and the vectors of contemporary historical contingency to offer a neo-Romantic construction of French cultural identity.[21] *L’Histoire de la campagne française*’s publication influenced contemporary debates concerning French national identity and rural history. It engages multiple disciplines and proposes a ‘diffusionist’ theory of the history of French agrarian “civilization.”[22] *L’Histoire de la campagne française* depicts nature (both transcendent and immanent) as providing a symbolic location and physical manifestation of the cosmic synthesis between humankind and spirit.

Far from arguing that such meditations constitute Roupnel’s reputation as “one of the founding fathers of twentieth-century French social history,” I explicitly disassociate and organizationally separate my discussions of the historical merits of *La ville et la campagne* from the theoretical and epistemological merits of *L’Histoire de la campagne française* in order to argue that the latter represents Roupnel’s

departure from academic history and a rapprochement to contemporary anthropological theory. My point in “La Poésie des Champs” is not to argue, for example, that his use of the concept of “primitive mentalities” and “intuitive methodologies” to explain peasant behavior is correct but, rather, to understand these departures in terms of similar developments elsewhere in the contemporary human and social sciences.

(3) I attribute Roupnel’s position as “one of the most innovative, emblematic, and transitional thinkers of the French inter-war years” to his methodological range and the new horizons he investigated. Against historians such as Pierre Cornu, who would have the history of inter-war historiography focus primarily on the development and rise of “scientific” or “objective” history, it should be remembered that contemporary epistemological debates frequently focused on the use of intuitive methodologies and their potential impact on disciplines ranging from anthropology to philosophy and physics to history. Here, if we are to take Gaston Bachelard—a leading inter-war philosopher and authority on twentieth-century French philosophy—Roupnel made valuable contributions to the French vitalist and phenomenological traditions. He penned a comprehensive philosophical system in a dense work entitled *Siloë* (1927). Published five years before *l’Histoire de la campagne française*, *Siloë* addressed everything from the metaphysics of “l’Ordre suprême des Choses” and the ontological value of empirical evidence observable at the atomic and cellular levels to the origins, nature, and purpose of intuitive epistemology.[23] I argue that one must understand how time, space, memory, and causality function in *Siloë* to appreciate their relevance to *l’Histoire de la campagne française*.

Whereas Cornu claims an interest in interdisciplinarity, his horizons appear limited by “scientific history.” Ignoring the elements of *l’Histoire de la campagne française*’s field analysis that retained Febvre’s interest, Cornu repeats familiar objections to the role of metaphysical speculation in academic historical analysis. His discussion fails, for example, to appreciate the implications of Roupnel’s phenomenological analysis of the spatial and temporal dimensions of lived experience on modern landscape (*paysage*) theory. Roupnel’s work introduces a spatial corollary to Bergson’s temporal emphasis (or concept of *durée* as a subjectively experienced passage of time). Rejecting Bergson’s rationalist dualism, Roupnel anchors a monist ontology in atomic physics and bio-morphology to describe the phenomenology of time and space as continually recurring in the present “instant.” The subjective and psychological aspects of the construction of landscape are important elements of modern French geography.[24] Drawing on the works of Gaston Bachelard as well as Gaston Roupnel, Jean-Yves Luginbuhl, for instance, invites ecologists and environmentalists to include phenomena linked to psychological perceptions and the “comportement de l’individu vis-à-vis de l’espace” in their scholarship.[25] I also turn to Gaston Bachelard to provide important reflections on the links between history and philosophy in Roupnel’s works.

In 1931, Bachelard responded to Roupnel’s *Siloë* with a book-length reply entitled *l’Intuition de l’instant* and further invoked it as a point of departure in the “Introduction” of *La dialectique de la durée* (1950).[26] The “Introduction” to *La dialectique de la durée* notes that Roupnel’s philosophical meditations on “l’action réelle du temps.... a si vivement marqué notre pensée que nous devons le rappeler au seuil de ce nouveau travail.”[27] Elsewhere, he described Roupnel’s work as providing “la plus belles des récompenses philosophiques, celle de tourner l’âme et l’esprit vers une intuition originale” and applauded Roupnel’s intellectual courage in challenging established epistemological beliefs through the investigation of “la source sans cesse jaillissante de notre intuition.” Bachelard celebrated the Roupnelian “instant de la connaissance naissante” as allowing individuals to better grasp “à la fois les règles et la monotonie du Destin, le moment vraiment synthétique où l’échec décisif, en donnant la conscience de l’irrationnel, devient tout de même la réussite de la pensée.” Concerning Roupnel’s methodological rigour, Bachelard asserted “on sent la valeur de cohérence tout au long du livre.... Si l’auteur ne nous en montre pas la source première, on ne peut cependant se tromper sur l’unité et la profondeur de son intuition.”[28]

When Roupnel enjoined his readers to “listen to the voices of the ancestors,” he was invoking an intuitive method—however rejected today—that was familiar to contemporary thinkers.[29] Much as Roupnel guides his reader’s eye along a forest’s edge in order to better discern changes in vegetation and cultivation, (“les aspects et caractères analogues” of a “lisière que arrête un défrichement, et celle qui borde un reboisement”), similarly does Lévi-Strauss, (in what he describes as occurring in a “meaningless fashion,”) examine “a pale blurred line, or an almost imperceptible difference in the slope and consistency of rock fragments” in order to “recapture the master-meaning, which may be obscure but of which each of the other is a partial and historical transposition.”[30] Like Roupnel, Lévi-Strauss describes this moment of discovery—which he refers to as “when the miracle occurs”—by referring to both empirical evidence and an intuitive method while conflating them in practice. He describes his research as a process in which he “discovers,” for instance, “cheek-by-jowl two green plants of different species, each of which has chosen the most favorable soil” or when he observes that “two ammonites with unevenly intricate involutions can be glimpsed in the rock, thus testifying in their own way to a gap of several tens of thousands of years,” he exclaims, “suddenly space and time become one: the living diversity of the moment juxtaposes and perpetuates the ages.” Lévi-Strauss explains his methodology by comparing the practice of geology to psychology and invoking the researcher’s “sensitivity, intuition and taste.”[31]

A more rigorous use of “intuition” may be found in the phenomenological works of another contemporary, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938).[32] Husserl based his mathematical insights on his understanding of human psychology. His essay on “Philosophy as a Rigorous Science” (1911), for instance, argues that philosophy can be made more rigorous, not by imitating the empirical aspects of the natural sciences but by employing a mathematical way of “knowing” that incorporated intuitive methods to apprehend the “divine systems of relation.” The paramount articulation of the role of intuition in the formulation of mathematical knowledge was Kurt Gödel’s (1906-1978). Gödel adopted an Idealist and Platonist epistemological stance where he argued, among other things, that mathematical formulations exist both independently of human thought or language and that the mathematical knowledge that humans have is derived from axioms are only intuitively known. In addition, Gödel questioned “scientific” assumptions concerning mathematical knowledge in his Incompleteness Theorem. This theorem (which shook the foundations of the mathematical world and whose implications continue to profoundly affect mathematical and philosophical thinking) states that certain mathematical axioms cannot be proven within existing systems of mathematics. The consequence of this insight is that no known formal system of mathematics is internally provable. This was certainly revolutionary thinking at a time when social scientists and Neo-Kantians adopted the mantle of mathematical rigor to bolster their empirical and scientific credibility.[33]

(4) My “Génie de la Bourgogne” chapter examines Roupnel’s literary and civic activities at the height of his career to discuss his engagement as an “organic intellectual” during the 1920s and 1930s. He embraced regional issues publicly and raised regional consciousness through his scholarly efforts to “locate” the geographical, historical, and cultural roots of a Burgundian heritage. I examine how Roupnel worked with provincial intellectuals and leaders to fashion a recognizable Burgundian cultural identity liable to economic exploitation (especially with regard to viticulture and gastronomy).[34] Roupnel and his circle historicized local folk traditions, revived popular festivals, inaugurated provincial erudite societies, and defined the concept of Burgundian *terroir(s)* in order to promote regional cultural interests. I discuss how Roupnel’s *La Bourgogne, types et coutumes* (1936) contributed by linking human geography and applied folklore to depict rusticized *vignerons* and romanticized *vigneresses* to associate traditional viticultural practices with modern economic ambitions within an “authentic” Burgundian folk paradigm.[35] This (“blood and soil”) narrative, he believed, was the living repository of Burgundy’s accumulated agrarian history and future. It privileged local, localized, and localizing practices as the “natural” and “timeless” interplay between spirit and matter.[36] It depicted the history of Burgundy as driven by universal spirit and holistically manifesting an intimate, inter-subjective, indissoluble, and unitive relation between mankind and the natural world.[37]

As an expert on twentieth-century Burgundian cultural history, Philippe Poirrier is right to raise questions concerning the relationship between Gaston Roupnel's rural interests and Vichy.[38] Like contemporary folklorists whose auto-ethnographic work recorded and explained local proverbs, songs, legends, practices, customs, and anecdotes, Roupnel interpreted his culture for native and alien audiences alike.[39] I liken his studies on the *vignerons* of the Dijonnais region to Gabriel Jeanton's study of the folkways of the Mâconnais *vigneron*. [40] Both men sought to "(re)cover" an essentialized, rustic, and traditional cultural identity that could provide an alternative to the generic model of "modern," anonymous, urban, and bureaucratic national French identity.[41] Like Roupnel's studies on the *paysans* and *vignerons* of the Dijonnais, Jeanton's research rested on an analysis of the folkways of the Mâconnais *vigneron*. Jeanton's etiology of French "peasant civilization" paralleled Roupnel's pages on Celtic pre-history, the social and material organization of rural villages, the popular traditions of the Côte-d'Or, and the nature of the "peasant soul" found in *La Bourgogne, types et coutumes* and the final pages of *l'Histoire de la campagne française*. This work was recognized when the Académie des Sciences, Arts et Belles-Lettres de Dijon selected Roupnel (over Arnold van Gennep) as president of the newly formed Société de Folklore in 1929.[42]

Cultural historians, I note, must question the etiology, commodification, and politics of Roupnel's Burgundian agenda while recognizing its immediate relevancy to contemporaries.[43] His rural paradigm identified symbolic elements popularly used to organize notions of traditions and modernity (while claiming a privileged ontological status as "eternal") into provisionally stable social, cultural, and political phenomena. Folk representations like that of the *vigneron* provided templates through which contemporary Burgundians acquired self-understanding, fashioned self-identities, and scripted their own histories. While Roupnel's literary constructions may be perceived as exotic, they also served to articulate regional interests within a national agenda. His regional agenda proposed the model of the dynamic Burgundian *vigneron* (modern in his social and economic interests while reassuringly traditional in his cultural attitudes) while subtly recasting the continued relevance of a national model based on the solitary and desultory field peasant.[44] While *La Bourgogne, types et coutumes* may not contain proto-fascistic or reactionary elements, it does reveal Roupnel's profoundly conservative view of gender. Against Edouard Lynch's implication that feminist analysis only benefits American audiences, I use the role of the *vigneronne* as an acid test concerning the limits of progressive influences on Roupnel's model village and thereby critique the inter-war Burgundian cultural project as a form of conservative modernism.

(5) Roupnel's lifelong preoccupation with the history and morphology of French rural populations and institutions logically prompts one to ask where he stood on issues related to French collaboration with Germany. Recognizing the moral ambiguity surrounding political positions that may or may not have been taken during the German occupation of France (1940-45),[45] I maintain that interpretations of Roupnel's relation to Vichy must wrestle with the possibility--if not probability--that in contrast to other regionalists willing lead to cultural renaissances under German auspices, this respected Burgundian author belied the *Revolution Nationale's* propaganda by continuing to promote his own *retour à la terre*: [1]'histoire d'un peuple se détermine, non par des actes politiques ou militaires, mais au ras du sol, dans la vie terre à terre. La figure publique et sociale d'un pays dessine ses traits sur l'image matérielle des champs et de la terre.[46]

The existential themes addressed by Roupnel's phenomenological approach to agrarian regimes dovetailed with general concerns about the identity of France and its "rural crisis" throughout the early twentieth-century.[47] Roupnel's rural mystico-theology produces a panentheistic religion of the soil. Although inherently conservative, this romantic construct deserves to be distinguished from homologous "return to the land" movements--ranging from the radical-socialist to the right-nationalist varieties. However naïve, unrealistic, or far-fetched Roupnel's "retour à la terre" may sound today, it was really about maintaining contact with the rural sources of a primitive humanism--understood neo-Romantically as pre-political--that might still be pertinent to the problems at hand.[48] "[L]e véritable

humanisme,” asserts Roupnel, “est essentiellement nourri des émotions de la solitude et entretenu des influences de la nature.”[49] Rather than starting young *jacistes* marching to the tune of the Maréchal’s hierarchical and elitist regime, the metaphysical speculations, holistic organicism, and bucolic ruminations that filled Roupnel’s texts were intended to provide a non-discursive access to a repository of moral virtues consonant with the development of autonomous and authentic self-identities.

Popular and critical responses to Roupnel’s theoretical works—especially *Histoire et Destin*—varied widely both during and after the war. Reviews spanned the gamut ranging from finding it a “source of spiritual inspiration during trying times” to “irrelevant” or vacuous (and therefore easily exploited). A good number of authors recognized and supported *Histoire et Destin*’s endorsement of new social and structural history. By 1943, Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre’s *Annales* project was already well established, if not yet dominant, within the French historical profession. Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel remained supportive of Roupnel’s singular and iconoclastic historical project despite his poetic exuberances. Daniel Halévy quite properly read it as a sequel to *Siloë*. [50] Despite its textual difficulties, Halévy claimed, in obviously very flattering terms, that: “[d]epuis la mort de Sorel, je n’ai plus senti au dessus de moi cette supériorité de pensée, d’expérience, que le mot ‘maître’ implique. Et cela m’a beaucoup manqué. Vous le dirai-je? Votre *Histoire et Destin* m’a rendu un service de maîtrise. Et si je réserve le mot, je ne réserve pas le sentiments qu’il implique. J’y ai trouvé les accents qui ne vibraient pas dans mes *Trois Epreuves* et cette vibration retrouvée m’a fait du bien.”[51] Like *Siloë* before, *Histoire et Destin*’s metaphysical, spiritual, and poetic dimensions left many secular humanists unconvinced: “il faut regretter que l’éloquence littéraire de M. Roupnel [ait] détourner [l’histoire] d’un examen plus précis, en l’engageant dans un agréable cache-cache entre la philosophie, la science historique et l’art du pamphlet.”[52] Similarly, Ferdinand Lot, who believed that “l’historien complet a des raisons d’espérer en un meilleur avenir,” wrote a sixteen-page review suggesting that Roupnel be retired to the Collège de France for “ce livre touffu, riche d’aperçus, en apparence, [qui] est au fond, assez pauvre.”[53] Many, like the literary critic Ramon Fernandez, remained lukewarm and ambivalent: “La philosophie ici devient religion. Nous n’avons pas à prendre parti dans ces débats, mais signaler seulement un ouvrage fort intéressant, qui vaut d’être lu et qu’il est nourissant de discuter.”[54]

While Lindenberg provides many insights on how spiritual values led many to political passivity and defeatism, his reading of Roupnel is based on the supposition that Roupnel’s spiritual responses to military defeat necessarily equaled passivity and adherence to a collaborationist regime.[55] Beyond this and the rural preoccupations familiar to four decades of ruralists and Ministers of Agriculture, Lindenberg provides no evidence to indicate that Roupnel supported non-parliamentary political solutions, Pétain’s *Revolution Nationale*, a regime of collaboration, or [as he alleges] the *Action Française*. To whatever degree Roupnel could or might have sympathized with a regime that would restore France via her rural resources, I know of no evidence—letters, hearsay, colleagues, or otherwise—indicating that he saw such an opportunity in the *Revolution Nationale* or through Vichy. Not to skirt the issue, I provide evidence about Roupnel’s quotidian activities and political opinions concerning the “séniles vieux militaires”[56] administering France between 1938 and 1945: “C’est sur cette terre.... c’est là que recommencera l’histoire. Mais cette histoire nouvelle ne naîtra pas dans le Conseil des ministres. ... [La France] est assis sur rien du tout... Et quand c’est ‘rien’ il n’y a plus de gouvernement. Il n’y a plus qu’une administration. Et, tels les mourants, les Français ne sont plus que des administrés.”[57]

I also show how others “instrumentalized” Roupnel’s works for political purposes[58] and add what Henri Drouot said about his political opinions. Drouot wrote that Roupnel criticized Pétain and his policies from beginning to end: On 9 March 1942, “[Roupnel] voit la France complètement à bas, devenue la proie de tous les vautours, prise entre eux et leurs appétits rivaux... et mise en cette triste situation surtout par l’erreur de Pétain. ‘Le mensonge de la collaboration a trop troublé les honnêtes gens. Nous sommes fichus.’”

By 9 April 1944, Drouot noted Roupnel's optimism concerning the Russian advances on the Eastern Front and concerning the invincibility of an invading Anglo-American force and wrote, "pour [Roupnel] le seul homme de salut peut être de Gaulle. Pétain est un pauvre homme et les autres des traîtres." [59]

Rather than reducing my work to a series of responses to unsubstantiated allegations concerning Roupnel's relation to Vichy and the condescending attitude this has frequently engendered toward his work, I evaluate Roupnel's contributions to diverse disciplines and public projects, instead, from the perspective that "[c]haque science, pris isolément, ne figure jamais qu'un fragment de l'universel mouvement vers la connaissance." [60] My book, then, reconstructs the surprising career of an individual who claimed to speak for "l'antique et éternelle détermination" and whom contemporaries touted as "l'historien lyrique de la paysannerie française." [61]

NOTES

[1] Daniel Lindenberg, *Les années souterraines (1937-1946)* (Paris: Editions de la Découverte, 1990) and *Gaston Roupnel, Histoire et Destin* (Paris, Grasset, 1943).

[2] Pierre Cornu, "Sur l'âme des sciences humaines: Réponse au *Gaston Roupnel* de Philip Whalen," *Ruralia* 9 (2001): 189-196; Philippe Poirrier, "Whalen, Philip. Gaston Roupnel: âme paysanne et sciences humaines," *Vingtième Siècle, revue d'histoire* 74 (2002): 196-197; and Edourd Lynch, "Philip Whalen, *Gaston Roupnel...*," *Revue historique* 626 (2003): 455-57--which basically follows Cornu's critique--reproduces my discussion of Roupnel's philosophical itinerary (without citing sources) and finds my argument concerning Roupnel's reputation overstated. A less polemical review is provided in Antoine Cardi, "Philip Whalen, *Gaston Roupnel: âme paysanne et sciences humaines*," *Histoire et Sociétés Rurales* 18 (2002): 239-242.

[3] Gaston Roupnel, *Siloë* (Paris: Grasset, 1927); *Histoire de la campagne française* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1981 [1932]); *La Bourgogne, types et coutumes* (Paris: Horizons, 1936); *Histoire et Destin* (Paris: Grasset, 1943); and *La Nouvelle Siloë* (Paris: Grasset, 1945).

[4] Gaston Roupnel, "Le régime féodal dans le bourg de Chatillon-sur-Seine," *Revue bouguignonne de l'enseignement supérieur* 6 (1896): 167-94; *La ville et la campagne au XVIIe siècle: études sur les populations du pays Dijonnais* (Paris: Éditions Ernest Leroux, 1922); and *Bibliographie Critique: La ville et la campagne au XVIIe siècle: études sur les populations du pays Dijonnais* (Paris: Editions Ernest Leroux, 1922).

[5] Philip Whalen, *Gaston Roupnel: âme paysanne et sciences humaines* (Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Dijon, 2001).

[6] I discuss how different intellectual traditions converged to address shared concerns during the inter-war period. A new generation of historians gathered around Henri Berr's *Revue de Synthèse* in order to broaden the field's purview and to develop methodologies that could compete with and benefit from the social scientific practices of the Durkheimian *Revue française de sociologie* and the "possibilism" of human geographers under the tutelage of Paul Vidal de la Blache. On organizational and curriculum changes within educational institutions in France, see William Keylor, *Academy and Community* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975); Fritz Ringer, *Fields of Knowledge French academic culture in comparative perspective, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Pim Den Boer, *History as Profession, the Study of History in France, 1818-1914* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988).

[7] The same reveals Roupnel's alienation from Vichy and a pessimism Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel evidently accepted when they published Roupnel's reflections on the 1940-1943 period in the *Annales* during the *épuration*: "du dedans la physionomie intellectuelle et morale de Gaston Roupnel. Il nous a paru qu'en la publiant nous rendions un dernier hommage à son auteur. Discret comme lui, et intime." In, Lucien Febvre, "Les morts de l'histoire vivante--Gaston Roupnel," *Annales SEC* 2(1947): 480. For other discussions of Roupnel during this period also see: Jean Niellon "Le feu qui reprend mal," *Gazette de Lausanne* April 1946; Henri Villemot, "Gaston Roupnel, romancier et historien bourguignon," *Gazette Littéraire* 22 June 1946; and Lucien Boitouzet "Le pire des métiers c'est celui de vigneron," *Dépêche de Franche-Comté* 23 April 1946: 2.

[8] Roupnel, *La ville et la campagne au XVIIe siècle: études sur les populations du pays Dijonnais*.

[9] Poirrier's selective methodology studiously ignores the remainder of the passage which reveals that Febvre held the empirical, theoretical, anthropo-mystical portions of *l'Histoire de la campagne française* in different esteem. See, Bertrand Müller, ed., *Marc Bloch et Lucien Febvre Correspondance (1928-1933)*, vol. 1 (Paris: Fayard, 1994): 411, 415.

[10] Lucien Febvre, "Une physiologie de la campagne française," *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale* 6 (1934): 76-79.

[11] Marc Bloch, *Annales S. O. C.* 1: 300-301; 2: 115 (1939).

[12] Henri Sée, *Esquisse* (Paris: Marcel Giard, 1921). Henri Hauser, "Bulletin Historique," *Revue historique* 111 (1923): 253-56, 255.

[13] Henri Hauser, "Bulletin Historique," 255, 253.

[14] Daniel Halévy, *Visites aux paysans du Centre*, (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1978 [1934]): 73.

[15] Emile Guillaumin, "Notre campagne française," *Courrier de l'Allier* 11 August 1933: 2.

[16] Pierre Goubert, *Beauvais et le Beauvaisis de 1600 à 1730, contribution à l'histoire sociale de la France du xviii^e siècle* (S. E. V. P. E. N., 1960): lvi; Carole Fink, *Marc Bloch: A Life in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 192.

[17] Jean Richard, "Gaston Roupnel, historian," *Pays de Bourgogne* 11 (1963): 754.

[18] Daniel Roche, *Enlightenment France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998 [1993]): 411.

[19] Roupnel originally intended to dedicate his "thèse supplémentaire" to seventeenth-century popular culture and literature. It was to have been entitled "La Société de l'Infanterie dijonnaise." Roupnel's students are not unanimous in their belief that the substance of these promised volumes already existed in the form of notes. See Jean Richard, "Gaston Roupnel historien," *Mémoires de l'Académie de sciences, arts et belles-lettres de Dijon* 120 (1973): 51.

[20] "Quand notre investigation sera terminée, quand nous aurons reconstitué l'ancienne carte routière du pays, il nous sera loisible d'en dégager une interprétation d'ensemble, d'en faire surgir, riche de valeurs humaines, une explication totale des lieux." Roupnel, *Histoire de la campagne française*, (Paris: Grasset, 1932): 89.

[21] Among others: “[s]avoir associer ainsi tant de disciplines souvent encore embryonnaires,” he wrote, “dans un œuvre que ses qualités littéraires font œuvre d’art, que la force d’une méditation fait œuvre de penseur, que la prescience rend œuvre de poète, c’est, il faut le dire, la marque d’un très grand historien.” Jean Richard, “Gaston Roupnel historien,” *Mémoires de l’Académie de sciences, arts et belles-lettres de Dijon* 120 (1973): 54, 55.

[22] See, for instance, Ernest Campeaux, “Gaston Roupnel—Histoire de la campagne française,” *Revue historique de droit* 12 (1933): 553.

[23] Gaston Roupnel, *Siloë*.

[24] See, for instance, Augustin Berque, *Médiance de milieux en paysages* (Paris: Reclus, 1990): 69-70; Robert Dulau and Jean-Robert Pitte, *Géographie des odeurs* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1988); and Charles Avocat, “Essai de mise au point d’une méthode d’études des paysages,” *Lire le paysage, lires les paysages* (Saint-Étienne: CIEREC, 1984): 21.

[25] Jean-Yves Lughinbuhl, *Sens et sensibilités du paysage* (Thèse du doctorat: Université de Paris-I, Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1981): 61-62.

[26] Gaston Bachelard, *L’Intuition et instant* (Paris: Stock: 1931).

[27] Gaston Bachelard, *La dialectique de la durée* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950): 3.

[28] Gaston Bachelard, “Une étude de la Siloë,” *Le Miroir Dijonnais et de Bourgogne* 207 (1939): 176-77.

[29] Lévi-Strauss’ *Tristes Tropiques*, for instance, seeks to resolve the epistemological gap between the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of science, and the philosophy of language. His approach reveals a more rationalist than empirical epistemological proclivity where he asserts that “[k]nowledge is based neither on renunciation nor on barter; it consists rather in selecting true aspects, that is those coinciding with the properties of my thought.... being ‘of the world’ it partakes of the same nature as the world.” Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (New York: Penguin Books, 1973), 56. Discussions and debate concerning primitive mentalities may be found in Carl Jung, Emile Durkheim, Maurice Halbwachs and Claude Lévi-Strauss.

[30] Gaston Roupnel, *Histoire de la campagne française*, 72; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, 56.

[31] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, 57.

[32] Husserl demonstrates his commitment to the existence of external “truths” in his work on the mathematics of variation. In his *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (1891), he argues that “essence” may be attained by reducing “variants” until an “invariant” is reached.

[33] Combining the intuitive methods of Husserl and the logical constraints of Gödel’s theorem, contemporary intellectuals (not unlike Gaston Roupnel with his post-Kantian romanticism) could reasonably embrace a transcendental form of knowledge that was not empirically verifiable.

[34] Marion Carcano, “Mémoire et Ethnographie Folkloriste en Bourgogne,” (Mémoire de Maîtrise en Histoire Contemporaine: Université de Bourgogne, 1997): 27.

[35] Gaston Roupnel, *La Bourgogne, types et coutumes* (Paris: Horizons, 1936). The significance of 'folkloric studies' to the development of modern nationalist agendas figured prominently at the Centre d'Ethnologie Française's "Du Folklore à l'ethnologie... 1936 à 1945" conference in Paris in March of 2002. Christian Faure discusses how elements of related folkloric traditions and spiritual renaissances were appropriated by Vichy ideologues in "La renovation d'un cadre et mode de vie traditionnels," in *Le Projet culturel de Vichy; folklore et révolution nationale, 1940-1944* (Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1989), 93-134. The politics of the inter-war period are linked to fascist aesthetics period in David Carroll, *French Literary Fascism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995) and Mark Antliff, "Fascism, Modernism and Modernity," *The Art Bulletin* 84 (2002): 170-73. Similarly, Francine Muel-Dreyfus persuasively describes this "rhetoric of the culture of crisis" as both being "close to the *völkish* ideology evident in the rise of Nazi ideology and linking fifty years of the *Action Française* to Vichy. Francine Muel-Dreyfus, *Vichy and the Eternal Feminine* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001): 15 and 34-35.

[36] Roupnel, *La Bourgogne, types et coutumes*, 107.

[37] The immanent and transcendental connection between matter and spirit also gave rise to complementary and simultaneous relations between land and people. See, Roupnel's "Preface," to Camille Rodier, *Le Clos de Vougeot* (Dijon: Venot, 1931): 22.

[38] Many remain caught up in these difficulties. The University of Burgundy, among others, maintains a troubled if not ambivalent relationship to its former Professor of Burgundian History, Literature and Patois. The University has: named an amphitheatre but not a new building after Roupnel; hosted an international conference on 'Roupnel and the 1930s' without publishing the proceedings as scheduled; archived Roupnel's papers and unpublished manuscripts without (to my knowledge) exploiting them.

[39] Anne-Marie Thiesse notes that "regional folkloric studies were the work of enlightened amateurs--when romanticism was subordinated to realism--no line was drawn between fiction and documentation. A good number of regionalists, then, produced novels or short stories that compiled the fruits of their observations." She also cites the example of Arnold Van Gennep who "did not hesitate, as demonstrated by the annotations he made in the margins of works in his library, from mining material from regional novelists" in order to introduce a subjective dimension into his scholarship on Burgundian traditions. Anne-Marie Thiesse, "Le Mouvement littéraire régionaliste," *Ethnologie française* 18 (1988): 227-228. Also see, Antoine de Gaudemar, "Trésor public," *Libération-Livres* 3 December 1998: 1-2. On auto-ethnography see Deborah Reed-Danahay, "Leaving Home: Schooling Stories and the Ethnography of Autoethnography in Rural France," in Deborah Reed-Danahay, ed., *Auto/Ethnography; Rewriting the Self and the Social*, (Oxford: Berg, 1997): 123-143.

[40] Gabriel Jeanton, *Etude de géographie historique: Le Tournugeois* (Mâcon: Imp. de Protat frères, 1917); *Le folklore tournugeois* (Mâcon: Imp. de Protat frères, 1919); *Le Mâconnais traditionalist et populaire* (Mâcon: Imp. de Protat frères, 1920). Also consider his *L'Habitation rustique au pays mâconnais* (Mâcon: Imp. de Protat frères, 1932) and *Costumes bressans et mâconnais* (Mâcon: M. Renaudier, 1937). He depicted "[a] timeless peasant civilization, representing the repository of tradition... retaining the traces of French Celtic origins... and animated by costumed feasts, chants, and convivial dances." I am here relying on an excellent overview of the links between Burgundian regionalism and folklore by Marion Carcano, "Mémoire et Ethnographie Folkloriste en Bourgogne," 18.

[41] "Pour répondre aux contestations de certains groupes sociaux submergés par les difficultés économiques et sociales, il [Jeanton] dénonce le centralisme, la domination de la capitale, comme étant la cause de tous les maux. La région est ainsi désignée comme étant la seule garantie possible de paix

sociale. La diversité régionale, quant à elle, est énoncée comme étant le seul facteur de cohésion sociale, le gage de l'unité nationale. Le régionalisme, parce qu'il dépasse les conflits sociaux en les contournant, parce que son seul adversaire énoncé est le centralisme, va devenir la réponse officielle à la crise." Marion Carcano, "Mémoire et Ethnographie Folkloriste en Bourgogne," 74.

[42] See "Dernière Heure Régionale: Le Folklore bourguignon," *Le Bien Public*, 23 November 1929. Burgundian folklore was a subject that Roupnel frequently lectured on in his "cours publics." Again, for example, see the mention in "Université--Facultés des Lettres," *Progrès de la Côte d'Or*, 16 December 1926.

[43] Such as in the political consequences of local autonomy for the small proprietor/vintners supported by Roupnel. See letter from Roupnel to the Marquis d'Augerville dated 8 November 1936 in "Fonds Roupnel," MS 46.

[44] Roupnel, *Histoire de la campagne française*, 384-85.

[45] Pierre Laborie, *L'Opinion française sous Vichy* (Paris: Seuil, 1990) and Bernard Bruneteau, "*L'Europe nouvelle*" de Hitler: *Une illusion des intellectuels de la France de Vichy* (Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 2003).

[46] Gaston Roupnel, *Histoire et Destin*, 205. Roupnel registered his disapproval when presented the opportunity. His colleague, Henri Drouot, notes that they both refused invitations to deliver the inaugural lecture at the "école administrative régionale" on 4 October 1943. "Roupnel se dérobe. Je me dérobe. Le conseiller de préfecture Mante, chargé de l'organisation, semble bien comprendre que tout le monde ne soit pas particulièrement empressé à servir l'administration préfectorale actuelle. Mais il m'apprend que les professeurs du lycée y répugnent moins." Henri Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais pendant l'occupation allemande, 1940-1944* (Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Dijon, 1999): 791.

[47] Responding to *La Bourgogne, types et coutumes* in 1936, Lucien Maury wrote that: "[u]n livre de Gaston Roupnel est en nos temps inquiets et sombres une acte de foi, un hymne à la beauté de la terre, un éclatant péan à la gloire d'une immémoriale humanité, aux morts éternellement renaissants dans le printemps de la vie. Nul talent plus généreux, plus ardent, plus proche des sourdes germinations des champs de France, plus capable de dominer les horizons illimités de l'histoire et de la préhistoire et les ciels encore incertains de nos destins futurs." Undated [1936] draft of Lucien Maury's review in "Fonds Roupnel," MS 635.

[48] I also address his belief that rural agendas that served France following the Thirty-Years War were relevant to the twentieth-century situation: an important comparative miscalculation (overlooked by Roupnel's detractors) that inadequately addressed the singularity of Vichy's complicity with the Reich.

[49] Gaston Roupnel, "Préface," to *Paysannerie et humanisme*, J. A. C. (ed.), (Paris: SEDAP, 1944): 15. I thank Pierre Barral for this reference.

[50] "[R]entrer avec satisfaction dans les perspectives cosmique de *Siloë*. Je me suis aperçu... que votre *Histoire et Destin* avait cette base. Un livre difficile éclairé par un livre plus difficile encore! Cette accumulation de difficulté n'en diminue pas l'attrait, bien au contraire." Letter from Daniel Halévy to Gaston Roupnel dated 14 May 1943 in "Fonds Roupnel," MS 520.

[51] Letter from Daniel Halévy to Gaston Roupnel dated 12 September 1942 in "Fonds Roupnel," MS 520.

[52] Maurice Blanchot, "L'histoire et les chefs-d'oeuvre," *Journal des Débats* 20 October 1943.

[53] Ferdinand Lot, "Histoire et Destin, a propos d'un livre recent," *Hommage offert à Ferdinand Lot pour son quatre-vingtième anniversaire* (Paris: Droz, 1946): 10, 16, and 15.

[54] Ramon Fernandez, "Histoire et Destin de Gaston Roupnel," *Panorama* 22 juillet 1943.

[55] Daniel Lindenberg, *Les années souterraines (1937-1946)* (Paris: Editions de la Découverte, 1990). It is interesting to note that Robert Jardillier, the militant socialist and once mayor of Dijon (1936-1940), appreciated Roupnel's spiritual interests and saw nothing pessimistic in his philosophical monism. See, Robert Jardillier, "Siloë - Hé! Vivant!" *Le Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 30 July 1927: 4.

[56] "Mais, tel un vieux militaire en retraite, l'homme s'intéresse de tout ce qu'il fit ou faillit faire, et montre en brochure ses médiocres aventures de soldat ou de politicien. Sa sénile curiosité se complait dans les anecdotes et les souvenirs. Fier de n'avoir été qu'une amulette du Destin, une minute d'égarément de la création, un éphémère et stérile instant, il s'attache à ce qu'il fut pour mieux rester ce qu'il est, et il croit se prolonger de tout ce qui le vieillit, se grandir de tout ce qui le ruine et l'accable." See Roupnel, *Histoire et Destin*, 27.

[57] Gaston Roupnel, *Histoire et Destin*, 208-09, 217.

[58] I discuss when the Comité Régional des Notaires de Dijon--anxious, in 1942, to appear in step with the régime's new ruralism and eager to echo Vichy's emphasis on the discourse of the "Glory of Burgundy"--presented Pétain with extravagantly bound copies of Camille Rodier's *Le vin de Bourgogne* ("Préface" by Roupnel) and Roupnel's *La Bourgogne, types et coutumes*. In addition, see, for example, discussions relating to Roupnel's rural virtues in: Georges Blond, "Poètes et Paysans," *Je Suis Partout* 20 Aug. 1943; "La Renovation paysanne part la famille," *Alpes et Provence de Marseille* 14 May 1944; Jacques Bardoux, "Sur une phrase de G. Roupnel," *Le Temps* 19 May 1942; and Edmond Pilon, "Sur un livre de Roupnel," *La Gerbe* 25 Nov. 1943.

[59] Henri Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais pendant l'occupation allemande, 1940-1944* (Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Dijon, 1999): 425 and 628.

[60] Marc Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire...* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1974): 18.

[61] Roupnel, *Histoire de la campagne française*, 156 and Paul Adam, "Postface" in *Histoire de la campagne française* (Paris: Plon, 1974 [1932]): 371.

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