

Image, Authenticity and the Cult of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, 1897-1959

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List of Abbreviations

References to *Histoire d'une âme* give the manuscript, leaf number and recto or verso, followed by the page number of the definitive English translation (Thérèse of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux* (Washington, 1996), trans. John Clarke OCD, 3rd edition), e.g. HA, Ms. A, 71r°, p. 152.

ACL	Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux
CAC	<i>Histoire d'une «Petite âme» qui a traversé une fournaise</i> (Cahier autobiographique de Céline)
HA	<i>Histoire d'une âme</i>
Ms. A	Manuscript A of <i>Histoire d'une âme</i> , dedicated to Mère Agnès, 1895
Ms. B	Manuscript B of <i>Histoire d'une âme</i> , dedicated to Sœur Marie du Sacré-Cœur, 1896
Ms. C	Manuscript C of <i>Histoire d'une âme</i> , dedicated to Mère Marie de Gonzague, 1897
OCL	Office Central de Lisieux
RTAG	Recueil Travaux Artistiques Geneviève

Cast of Characters Cited in Correspondence

References to correspondence use the initials of the correspondents (if they are referred to more than once in the thesis) followed by the date of the letter, e.g. MA/FTh 16/05/1926. Where the correspondence is taken from the original archival source, this is followed by the archive catalogue number and ACL or, where it is taken from typed copies held at the Archives or letters that are not accessioned into the catalogue, just ACL.

A	Léon-Adolphe Amette, Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, 1898-1906
AC	Abbé André Combes, theologian and author
AP	Arnold Pataky, university professor in Budapest
B	Fr. Brocardus, Provincial of the Hungarian Carmelites
BF	Boumard fils, publisher
C	Céline Martin (Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte-Face), nun, artist and sister of Thérèse
CdeL	Carmel de Lisieux (no particular member of the community specified)
D	Canon Théophile Dubosq, Promoter of the Faith of the cause
DB	Raymond de Bercegol, Director of the Office Central de Lisieux, 1917-44
FR	Franz Reimeringer, Theresian devotee
FTh	Sœur Françoise-Thérèse (Léonie Martin)
H	Paul Herembrood, founder of the Diorama Sainte-Thérèse
IG	Isidore Guérin, uncle of the Martin sisters
ISC	Mère Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur (Yvonne Daurelle), sub-prioress of the Carmel of Lisieux
J	Charles Jouvenot, artist
K	Korda, devotional products manufacturer
L	Thomas Lemonnier, Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, 1906-27
MA	Mère Agnès (Pauline Martin), sister of Thérèse and prioress of the Carmel of Lisieux, 1902-08 and 1909-51
MB	Père Marie-Bernard (Louis Richomme), Trappist monk and sculptor
ML	Maître Leger, solicitor in Brussels
MMA	Mère Marie-Ange de l'Enfant-Jésus (Jeanne Mélanie Burban), prioress of the Carmel of Lisieux, 1908-09
MSC	Sœur Marie du Sacré-Cœur (Marie Martin), nun and sister of Thérèse
MSE	Sœur Marie du Sainte Esprit (Marie Elisabeth Marthe Madeleine de Couffon de Kerdellec'h), nun and artist
OCL	Office Central de Lisieux, commercial arm of the Carmel of Lisieux
PHJ	Provincial of Hungarian Jesuits
PR	Palais du Rosaire, Lourdes, devotional products manufacturer
R	Ferdinand Roybet, artist
T	Mgr. Roger de Teil, Vice-Postulator of the cause
Th	Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus (Thérèse Martin) – Saint Thérèse of Lisieux
VS	Verlag der Schulbrüder, Office Central de Lisieux's agent in Germany
WF	Weisz Frigyes, Office Central de Lisieux's agent in Hungary

Sophia Lucia Deboick, *Image, Authenticity and the Cult of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, 1897-1959*,
PhD, University of Liverpool, January 2011

Abstract

This thesis examines the representations of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux produced by the Carmel of Lisieux in the years between the saint's death in 1897, and that of her sister Céline Martin (Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte-Face) in 1959. It examines the construction of an iconographical foundation for the saint's cult, the commercial distribution of this iconography, the debate about its authenticity that emerged in the 1920s, and the efforts by the originators of the image to maintain legal control of it. It explores the process of cultural legitimization of these images by the Carmel of Lisieux and, through these, of the cult itself, through a variety of methods, from the articulation of ideas of spiritual and artistic authority, to presence in the mass market, to apologetic, and the use of legislation.

The thesis begins by examining the work of the Carmel of Lisieux to visually reshape Thérèse Martin and recast her as a saint through their posthumous representations of her, giving her a new face to fit the existing devotional landscape. Particular emphasis is placed on Céline Martin, as the director of the visual elements of the cult and author of the canonical images of Saint Thérèse, and her personal conceptions of the authentic holy image. The dissemination of the Carmel's representations of the saint through a programme of popular publications and consumer products is then examined, exploring how the saint was promoted to the Catholic faithful in the religious marketplace, and how the market was used to establish Céline's images in the economy of popular devotion, giving Thérèse a foothold as a saint who could be believed in.

The thesis then turns to the reaction to the Carmel's visual recasting of Saint Thérèse, examining a group of popular biographies of the saint that appeared in the early twentieth century. Here a body of literature is identified where anxieties over the authentic representation of holy figures are played out, and the emergence of a new paradigm for the representation of the saint is traced. The Carmel is shown to have responded to this with a series of apologetics, where they again articulated the alleged authenticity of their images. Finally, the series of legal cases launched by the convent against producers of unauthorised images of the saint is examined. Here it is shown that the Carmel sought to define Céline Martin as the sole authentic Theresian iconographer through recourse to ideas of religious and artistic authority, using the law of the secular state to make claims to religious authenticity.

The first substantial piece of research placing Saint Thérèse in the context of the history of modern French popular religious culture, this thesis provides an insight into the creation of a commercial, devotional cult at the beginning of the twentieth century and the nature of Catholic visual culture in France in the years between the Dreyfus Affair and the Second Vatican Council. In examining the production and dissemination of a cult's images, the intellectual and legal controversies that followed, and the use of these processes by the originators of the image to legitimate their representations, it also sheds light on prevalent ideas of religious and artistic authenticity in France in the early twentieth century and the search for the 'true' face of the saint during that period.

Introduction

Sœurs de la Sainte: The Image and the Posthumous Life of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

Lisieux, in the Calvados *département* of Basse-Normandie, is at first sight an unremarkable town, the loss of almost all its distinctively Norman half-timbered architecture during the heavy bombing of 1944 having destroyed much of its character. However, the natural beauty of the surrounding valleys and farmland remains in this particularly verdant region, and it is not entirely bereft of the visual signs of its history. The town's impressive religious heritage, in particular, is still strongly in evidence. The gothic cathedral of Saint Pierre, as well as the adjacent seventeenth-century bishop's palace, are reminders of Lisieux's former status as a bishopric, and it has the dubious fame of having had Pierre Cauchon, the supreme judge at the trial of Joan of Arc, as bishop between 1432 and 1442, and he lies buried in the cathedral. But this rich religious heritage has been overshadowed by more recent events in the town. These are boldly represented by the neo-Byzantine basilica, built between 1929 and 1954, which stands on a high elevation on the south-east side of Lisieux, dominating the town. The basilica is dedicated to Saint Thérèse of Lisieux (Thérèse Martin, later Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus), a nun who died in the town's Carmelite convent at the end of the nineteenth century, aged just twenty-four, and who was canonised in 1925. In the years since that canonisation, Lisieux has become the second largest pilgrimage site in France, second only to Lourdes.

The images of Thérèse that can be found at Lisieux indicate the core concerns of this thesis. At the real spiritual centre of the pilgrimage site, the place known as the *chapelle de la Châsse* at the convent where Thérèse lived for the last nine years of her life, the relics of the saint may be found. Most of these relics are kept in a casket in the vault directly beneath the shrine, but others, including Thérèse's ribcage, are inside the marble effigy of the saint (referred to simply as the *gisant*), life-size, dressed in full Carmelite habit and crowned with roses, which lies in a golden case behind a grating (see figure 8). Eerily convincing, this most lifelike of the many representations of the saint is an appropriate one for the place pilgrims go to be physically close to her, and it has a high spiritual charge. Conversely, in shop windows throughout the town, the standard image of Thérèse, holding her saint's attribute of a crucifix covered with roses (a representation known as 'Thérèse *aux roses*'), is used on souvenirs, from statues to ashtrays and snowglobes (see figure 1). Here the image is turned into a consumer commodity and is as far from the rarified presentation of the *gisant* as can be imagined. Despite their very different perceived

cultural value, both these representations point to the issues explored in this thesis – the representation of the saint, the retailing of the religious and concepts of the authentic image. This thesis examines the development of a Theresian iconography by the Carmel of Lisieux in the years after Thérèse’s death, its commercial promotion, popular reactions to it, and the attempts of its creators to maintain control of it. It explores the process of cultural legitimation of the images of the saint produced by the convent in the above contexts, revealing the notions of authenticity that underpinned the Carmel’s approach to the representation of Saint Thérèse, and that were played out in the subsequent debates and controversies surrounding their images. What emerges is the early history of the construction of the visual elements of a cult, highlighting the efforts of its creators to make these images successful. By focussing on the images, authored and disseminated by the Carmel of Lisieux, the rise of the cult from its grassroots can be examined, rather than giving a simply institutional account of Thérèse’s recognition by the Church.¹ By doing so, this thesis places Saint Thérèse in the wider context of the history of modern French religious culture, uncovering something of her significance to the devotional lives of millions.



Figure 1. ‘Thérèse aux roses’ on souvenirs in a shop window on avenue Sainte-Thérèse, Lisieux, 2009.
Source: taken by author.

¹ The steps of Thérèse’s official recognition by the Church are included in Appendix 1, alongside the other events of her posthumous life.

The *chapelle de la Châsse* is not only the location of the remains of Saint Thérèse, but also those of her three older sisters – the creators of the Theresian cult, and the main protagonists of this thesis. Marie (Sœur Marie du Sacré-Cœur, 1860-1940), Pauline (Mère Agnès de Jésus, 1861-1951) and Céline Martin (Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, 1869-1959), all also nuns of the Carmel of Lisieux, are commemorated by a large plaque on the outside wall of the chapel, which indicates that they are interred in the crypt, beneath Thérèse’s recumbent effigy (see figure 2). The placing of their remains in this position of subjugation has considerable symbolic power, since they are entirely overshadowed in the popular imagination by the stratospheric fame of their little sister. Although they have been the subject of some hagiographical biographies,² in the written history of Saint Thérèse they still remain the supporting cast to Thérèse’s *prima donna*. While at the time of a visit in May 2005, there was evidence that one pilgrim had stopped to think about these women who grew up with Thérèse and lived alongside her as nuns, leaving an offering wedged behind the plaque, the fact that this took the form of a postcard reproduction of a photograph of Thérèse as a child meant that, like the effigy itself, the dominance of Thérèse’s persona over that of her sisters was again asserted, the engaging and characterful photograph³ eclipsing the sisters’ presence, represented in contrast by characterless names carved in granite.

² See: Albert H. Dolan, *The Living Sisters of the Little Flower* (Chicago, 1926); Stéphane-Joseph Piat OFM, *Céline. Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face. Sœur et témoin de sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus* (Lisieux, 1961); *Idem.*, *Une Ame libre, Marie Martin, sœur aînée et marraine de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus* (Lisieux, 1967); Jean Vinatier, *Mère Agnès de Jésus. Pauline Martin, sœur aînée et “Petite Mère” de Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus* (Paris, 1993).

³ Photograph 2, Appendix 2.



Figure 2. The memorial to the sisters of Saint Thérèse, May 2005. Source: taken by author.

That the Martin sisters are such sidelined figures at the *chapelle de la Châsse* carries considerable irony, as without the sisters of the saint, no-one would visit the chapel to honour the relics of this woman who died there over a century ago, and her remains would lie forgotten in the cemetery of Lisieux where they were buried in 1897. These women were responsible for making this young nun, dead at just twenty-four, known beyond the walls of the convent in which she spent her whole adult life. Outliving Thérèse by between four and six decades, they dedicated their lives to developing devotion to her, positioning themselves as the executors of her legacy, and reshaping her into a saint for the twentieth century. Sisters in both blood and religion, they created the cult of Saint Thérèse in a remarkably centralised process, exercising a great deal of control over the character of the cult and involving themselves in the smallest details of its production and promotion. With the help of a small band of contributors both inside and outside the convent, they built up a brand in the saint and a commercial empire to go with it, creating original images of Thérèse, producing devotional books about her, and promoting these products in the religious goods market. They also positioned themselves as protectors of Thérèse's legacy, involving themselves in controversies over the representation of the saint, and taking legal action

to protect the images of her they had authored. The creativity, dedication and tenacious work of the Martin sisters saw the Carmel become the hub of an industry focussed on the exposure of Saint Thérèse's message and personality during the first decades of the twentieth century, seeing devotion to the saint disseminated across the world. In doing this, they raised their sister from a point of complete obscurity to the very pinnacle of saintly achievement, seeing her become Patroness of the Missions, co-Patroness of France and a Doctor of the Church. These women – bourgeois provincials of scant education – were the architects of a cult of unprecedented popularity, and their mark on history has been far more significant than that of the saint herself, who achieved little in life and was passively remoulded in death. The Martin sisters (figure 3) gave Thérèse a posthumous life – a second existence as a saint – and this unknown nun of Normandy became a prominent feature of the French popular religious landscape in the last century.



Figure 3. The Martin sisters and their cousin (also a nun of the Carmel of Lisieux), 1896. From left to right: Marie, Pauline, Céline, Marie Guérin (Sœur Marie de l'Eucharistie), and Thérèse. Source: OCL.

Thérèse Martin: A Very Brief Biography

While this thesis begins from the point of Thérèse's decease, and is not the story of Thérèse Martin but of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, the biography of the former must be briefly reprised before continuing. Marie-Françoise-Thérèse Martin (see figure 4) was born in January 1873 in Alençon, Normandy, the ninth child of Louis Martin, a jeweller, and Zélie Martin, owner of a lace-making business. Highly pious Catholics, both parents had been frustrated in their attempts to enter religious orders in their youth. Zélie's sister, Sœur Marie-Dosithée, was a Visitandine nun and was held up as a role model within the family. Four of the Martin children had died in infancy before Thérèse's birth, and she was brought up with four doting older sisters – Marie, Pauline, Léonie and Céline. After their mother's death from breast cancer when Thérèse was only four, the family moved to Lisieux, where Zélie's brother and his family lived, moving into a house they called *Les Buissonnets*. Louis retired and the family enjoyed a financially comfortable life, their Catholic devotion at the centre of their routine and the children displaying extreme piety. When Thérèse was nine Pauline, who had become her 'second mother' after Zélie's death, entered the Carmel of Lisieux. Aggrieved by this loss, Thérèse was afflicted by a hysterical illness, from which she was cured by a vision of the Virgin – a statue of Mary in the sick room seemed to smile upon her, from which moment she was restored to full health. Four years later Marie, the eldest Martin girl, also entered the Carmel. This, along with Thérèse's 'Christmas Conversion' after midnight mass on 24 December 1886, when she felt sudden spiritual confidence and maturity, meant that Thérèse's own destiny was certain. She went to great lengths to enter the Carmel earlier than the usual age, personally petitioning Pope Leo XIII during an audience with him on a pilgrimage to Rome, and wrangling with the Bishop of Bayeux over the issue. She finally joined her sisters behind the walls of the convent in April 1888, at the age of fifteen years and three months. She took the name of Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus, later adding to this, 'et de la Sainte Face' ('Sister Thérèse of the Infant Jesus and of the Holy Face'). The Martin faction within the convent grew after Louis' death with the entry of Céline, and Léonie's later profession as a Visitandine meant that all the Martin daughters dedicated their lives to God. During one of her terms as prioress of the Carmel, Pauline (Mère Agnès) ordered Thérèse to write down her recollections of their childhood, and under the later prioresship of Mère Marie de Gonzague she wrote two more manuscripts to add to the first, explaining her personal spirituality and reflecting

on her life as a nun. Thérèse also gained some authority in the convent, becoming assistant novice mistress and sacristan, and was considered by many of the community to be a model religious.



Figure 4. Thérèse Martin, April 1888 (aged fifteen). Source: OCL.

In April 1896 Thérèse suffered the first symptoms of tuberculosis. She carried on with her duties for over a year, despite her rapidly deteriorating health, and experienced a period of extreme religious doubt, which was not fully resolved by the time of her death. She finally entered the infirmary in July 1897, where she suffered for nearly three months, dying at the end of September, aged twenty-four. There is little remarkable in this brief biography, but although she died in obscurity, Thérèse has enjoyed a glittering career as a saint. Her autobiographical manuscripts, heavily edited and glossed by Mère Agnès, were published by the Carmel in 1898 as *Histoire d'une âme* ('Story of a Soul') and were an instant success, going on to be translated into over sixty languages and becoming a classic of Catholic spirituality. Romantic in tone and steeped in nineteenth-century French Catholic devotionism, the book was grist to the mill of traditionalist Catholics. Thérèse's spiritual doctrine of the 'little way' – small, everyday acts of self-sacrifice as a path to spiritual perfection – became an inspiration to millions through the book.

Apocryphally, it is said that Pope Pius X called her ‘the greatest saint of modern times’ over a decade before her actual canonisation, and she was proclaimed a saint less than twenty-eight years after her death due to huge popular pressure, the quickest canonisation since 1588 at the time.⁴ Shortly after her canonisation Pius XI referred to her rapid rise to fame as a ‘storm of glory’.⁵ She was made Patroness of the Missions, along with Saint Francis Xavier, in 1927, and in 1944, immediately after the liberation of France, Pius XII named her joint Patroness of her homeland, alongside Joan of Arc. In 1997 Thérèse reached the peak of her career as a saint when John Paul II named her a Doctor of the Church. Only the third woman to earn this title (thirty male saints currently hold it), she was placed alongside the legendary names of Teresa of Ávila and Catherine of Siena, and her status as one of the most popular saints of contemporary Catholicism was confirmed. Since 1995 her relics have been on an almost constant world tour, travelling across Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia, and in September 2009 she visited the United Kingdom for the first time, garnering a huge amount of media attention.⁶ The Pèlerinage Sainte Thérèse receives around 150 letters a day, some addressed to Thérèse herself as if she is still a living inhabitant of Lisieux, and this is testimony to the highly personal nature of devotion to her. Yet her significance is not purely religious, and on naming Thérèse a *Doctor Ecclesiae*, John Paul II emphasised that Thérèse is ‘known in every part of the world, even outside the Catholic Church’.⁷ Such is her success, it appears to be infectious, and in October 2008 Zélie and Louis Martin were jointly beatified, having already gained a strong foothold in contemporary Catholic devotional culture. Having been recast as a superstar-saint and French icon, Thérèse has come a long way from the provincial Carmelite that she once was.

⁴ See Kenneth L. Woodward, *Making Saints. Inside the Vatican: Who Become Saints, Who Do Not, and Why* (London, 1991), p. 107. She was later outdone by Josemaría Escrivá, founder of Opus Dei, who beat her record by over four months when he was canonised in 2002.

⁵ Address of Pius XI to the pilgrims of Bayeux and Lisieux, 18 May 1925 (the day after Thérèse’s canonisation), reproduced in Fr. J. Linus Ryan O. Carm (ed.), *80th Anniversary of the Canonisation of St. Thérèse* (Dublin, 2005), pp. 12-3.

⁶ For an itinerary of the relics tour until 2001 see Don Mullan, *A Gift of Roses: Memories of the Visit to Ireland of the Relics of Saint Thérèse* (Dublin, 2001), Appendix 1, pp. 251-3. See also *The Relics of St. Thérèse of Lisieux: England and Wales 2009 Souvenir* (Buxton, 2009).

⁷ Pope John Paul II, ‘Apostolic Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, *Divini Amoris Scientia*’, *Vatican, The Holy See* <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19101997_divini-amoris_en.html> [accessed 13 July 2005], section 3.

Pauline and the Text, Céline and the Image

While all three Martin sisters were involved in making this transformation happen, it was Céline Martin (Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face) (see figure 5), creator of both the *gisant* figure and the standard ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ representation mentioned above, who was responsible for the iconography this thesis focuses on. Nearly four years Thérèse’s senior and the last surviving member of the Martin family after Mère Agnès’ death in 1951, Céline was an artist of meagre training and limited talent, but in her role as director of the Carmel’s iconographical project she was key to the cult, remoulding Thérèse’s visual representation over a period of sixty years. Céline’s role in the cult has long been neglected, with Mère Agnès commonly being seen as the dominant force in the creation of the cult (see ‘Pauline the Architect, Céline the Artist’, chapter 1). Prioress for three years during Thérèse’s time in the convent, and named prioress for life by Pope Pius XI in 1923, Mère Agnès held this office for a total of forty-eight of the sixty-two years this thesis covers. Her role as head of the community for such a long period has resulted in an understandable focus on her over her other sisters, and over Céline in particular (Marie Martin was the least involved of the sisters in the work on the cult). Mère Agnès’ position as executor of Thérèse’s literary legacy, a body of work that is now the focus of serious academic attention, has also resulted in a great deal of interest in her, her editing of *Histoire d’une âme* and apparent ‘engineering’ of a corpus of texts for her being the focus of this interest.⁸ But while there has been research into the writings of Thérèse and how these were edited and promoted by Mère Agnès, the images have never been subject to a sustained academic examination. The controversy over the history of Thérèse’s texts has overshadowed a parallel history of the creation of a coherent public visual representation for Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, perhaps betraying a privileging of the text above the image as a proper object of study.

In sixty years of work on the cult, Céline produced twenty-six original portraits of Thérèse (see Appendix 2), but commissioned many more from artists outside the convent. A keen amateur photographer, Céline took her 13x18 box camera with her when she entered the Carmel in 1894,⁹ and she would later also retouch and rework the photographs she had captured of Thérèse inside the cloister. Through a combination of these approaches, Céline developed a homogenous iconography for Thérèse in the first decades of the twentieth century. Her classic

⁸ See, for example, Jean-François Six, *Lumière de la nuit. Les dix-huit derniers mois de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1995) and Claude Langlois, *Les dernières paroles de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 2000).

⁹ See Piat, *Céline*, p. 69.

portrait ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ (see figure 2.24), completed in 1912, became the best-known representation of Thérèse, and the crucifix and roses that featured in the image became her iconographical attributes – a visual shorthand for the saint and her cult. A unique iconography, which was at the same time typical, Céline’s prototype images, disseminated on a massive scale, dominated Thérèse’s visual representation across the last century, becoming an integral part of French popular religious culture. The focus of this thesis is what Alain Cavalier, director of a Cannes Jury Prize-winning film about Thérèse, has called ‘the virgin of the stained glass window, sweet, crowned with roses – the Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus that has been portrayed after her death’.¹⁰ We will call this the ‘Celinian’ Thérèse, as we will discover that this image was wholly of Céline’s creation. Paul Claudel, the Catholic poet and dramatist, recognised the value of Céline’s artworks as early as 1935, stating that ‘Céline’s portraits merit our respect. They will always belong to the religious folklore of mankind and will continue to arouse interest in future ages’.¹¹ Here the role of the images in the ‘religious folklore’ of modern France is examined for the first time, placing the Theresian iconography that Céline created in the context of popular devotion and commercial religion in France at the beginning of the last century.

¹⁰ Jean-Luc Douin, ‘La caméra explore Thérèse’, *Notre Histoire*, 27 (October, 1986), p. 51. Translation and all following translations from French-language sources, author’s own.

¹¹ Paul Claudel, *Positions et propositions* (Paris, 1935), p. 203.

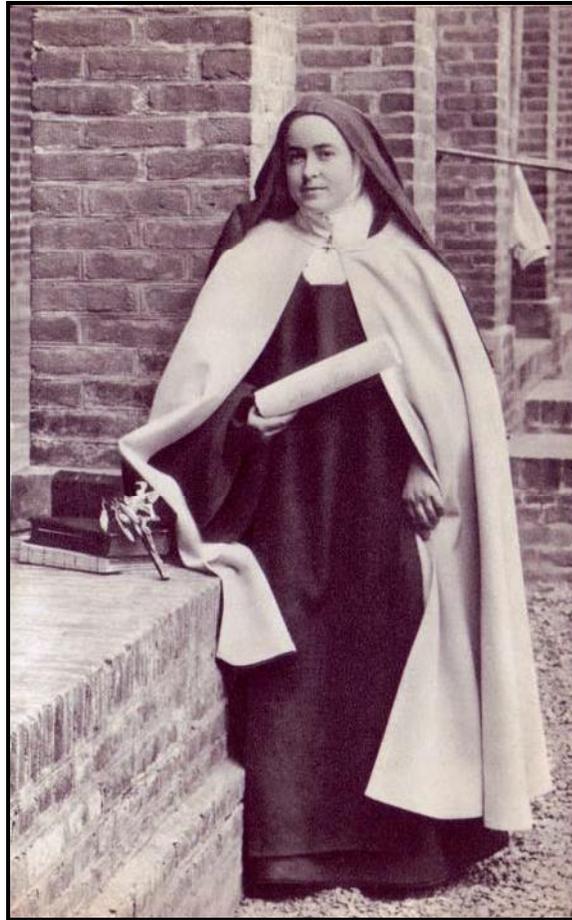


Figure 5. Céline Martin (Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face), 1896. Source: ACL.

The Thesis

This thesis begins by exploring the existing literature on Thérèse, outlining the lack of research that has been carried out on the saint, as opposed to the historical personality, and pointing to the range of literatures that the thesis makes use of, including a small but intriguing body of work on the representation of Saint Thérèse. In chapter 2 the history of the creation of the original Theresian iconography is outlined in detail for the first time and a whole cast of hidden characters begins to be revealed: the artists, clerics and enterprising devotees of the saint who populate this history. Using Céline's personal papers, held at the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux, her concepts of the authentic image of the holy person and of the role of the artist are explored, and it is shown how she used these to counter challenges to the perceived authenticity of her images. She is shown to have visually reshaped Thérèse to fit the existing landscape of popular Catholic culture, giving her sister new face that fitted the devotional fashions of the times, but that

was also heavily influenced by ideas of the genuine religious image in the Christian tradition. In chapter 3, the thesis moves on to examine the life this ‘new face’ had in the world of commercial religion in early twentieth-century France, making use of the collection of monthly commercial catalogues issued by the Carmel and held by the Archives. Here it is argued that the images of Thérèse were given credibility through their large presence in the mass market, and that the constant repetition of a handful of images in the Carmel’s popular publications and devotional products made them appear foundational. It is shown that the Carmel extended the reshaping of Thérèse’s image that Céline had begun by reacting quickly to events such as the First World War, changing the prospective saint’s representation in their commercial offerings to reflect the times. In outlining the establishment of a popular religious brand here, the key role of particular businessmen and publishers outside the convent, as well as particular members of the community within it, is revealed for the first time. In chapter 4 the thesis turns to the reaction to Céline’s images in the wider world, specifically amongst the biographers of the saint. Here we find the Carmel seeking a legitimisation of the Theresian iconography through apologetic, engaging in a debate that raged from the 1920s on the issue of Thérèse’s popular representation. Anxieties about authentic religious practice are found here, and the Carmel is shown to have directly faced their critics, using a variety of rhetorical tools to mark themselves out as the originators and guardians of the only genuine representations of the saint. Changing fashions in devotional culture and opposing concepts of religious and artistic authenticity current in France in the early twentieth century are revealed here, and this rich debate, often referred to but never the subject of sustained study, is examined for the first time. Finally, in chapter 5, a parallel controversy to that of chapter 4 is examined – the legal cases the Carmel launched against the producers of unauthorised images of the saint. Here Céline’s ideas of artistic and spiritual authenticity were played out in public once again, and the law is demonstrated to have been an effective instrument for the establishment of cultural authority, even when the legal cases were not won. The Carmel is shown to have used the legal action as an occasion for self-fashioning, exploiting the codified and absolute concepts of authentic artistic production enshrined in the copyright law of the secular state to their own, often religious, ends. The proliferation of the image also, paradoxically, allowed Céline to be more powerfully figured as the ultimate Theresian iconographer. These legal cases are a previously wholly unexamined episode in the history of the cult, and the archival sources on it are used here for the first time.

Authenticity and the Search for the 'True Face'

The *gisant* with which this introduction began reveals something of the driving force behind the history this thesis tells – the search for the authentic representation of the holy person. This effigy, which resembles nothing so much as a waxwork in its attempt to be convincingly mimetic of its prototype, is a representation of the saint that tries to be as faithful as possible, the presence within it of the saint's relics also giving the representation something of the power of the saint herself. The *gisant* was Céline's work, but not directly. Commissioned by the Carmel in 1919, it was the work of the Trappist sculptor Père Marie-Bernard, who produced the maquette, and the sculptor Alliot, who produced the finished article (see chapter 2). It was a thoroughly collaborative work and was, characteristically, heavily directed by Céline. But it was in fact a representation for which she had directly provided the prototype. The effigy was a three-dimensional copy of a very large charcoal drawing of Thérèse lying on her deathbed that Céline had produced in 1905, known as 'Thérèse morte' (figure 7).¹² But even this was not the foundational image for the *gisant*, as the charcoal was itself a copy of a photograph Céline had taken of Thérèse lying dead in the infirmary on the day after her death (figure 6).¹³ Céline later commented on the very last photograph she took of Thérèse, three days after her death¹⁴ (see figure 4.12): 'this picture showed her features to be elongated and, curiously, her blond eyebrows were dark brown – almost black. She was still majestic but we could no longer recognise her.'¹⁵ There is sense of loss here – the picture did not evoke Thérèse's true spirit and thus could not keep her, in some sense, alive and present.¹⁶ Céline added of this photograph of Thérèse 'in order to make it presentable, some retouches had been necessary', and further 'At the insistence of the community... I painted a picture which all the Sisters who had been her contemporaries found to recapture perfectly Thérèse's facial expression immediately after death.'¹⁷ The *gisant*, as the final representation based on these photographs, does not only illustrate Céline's reuse and refashioning of images across a variety of media, characteristic of her approach to her artwork, but may also be seen as the final result of a laboured process of searching for the ideal, authentic representation of the subject. In Céline's case, this ideal representation was not only one that would show her

¹² See RTAG, p. 41-2 and Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Conseils et Souvenirs* (Lisieux, 1952), p. 202.

¹³ Photograph 46, Appendix 2.

¹⁴ Photograph 47, Appendix 2.

¹⁵ Sœur Geneviève, *Conseils et Souvenirs*, p. 202.

¹⁶ We are reminded of Roland Barthes' moving search for the quintessence of his recently deceased mother through photographs of her. See Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire: note sur la photographie* (Paris, 1980).

¹⁷ Sœur Geneviève, *Conseils et Souvenirs*, p. 202.

beloved sister as she had believed her to appear, but one which would transform the historical character into the accepted modes of representation of the saint. Richard D. E. Burton has written of the power of both the *gisant* and the photograph of Thérèse that was its root to make Thérèse Martin, an individual, appear in the sanitised, standardised mode of the saint. He writes of the first photograph:

This may not be the smiling Petite Fleur the world will revere, but she is already, within hours of her death, virtually a saint, abstracted from the flux and depredations of time, the ‘spiritualization’ begun by [tuberculosis] brought to perfection by the floral and cosmetic skills of her sisters and by the dematerializing agency of the camera lens.¹⁸

The *gisant*, over two decades later, ‘complet[ed] the Little Flower’s posthumous mineralization’, turning her into a ‘petrified, marmorealized woman’.¹⁹ In these representations we can trace the process of removing individuality and making Thérèse Martin a generalised icon through her visual representation, making her as static and objectified as the effigy itself. Céline’s pursuit of this objectification, and search for the ideal representation of her sister, is responsible for the history that this thesis explores.

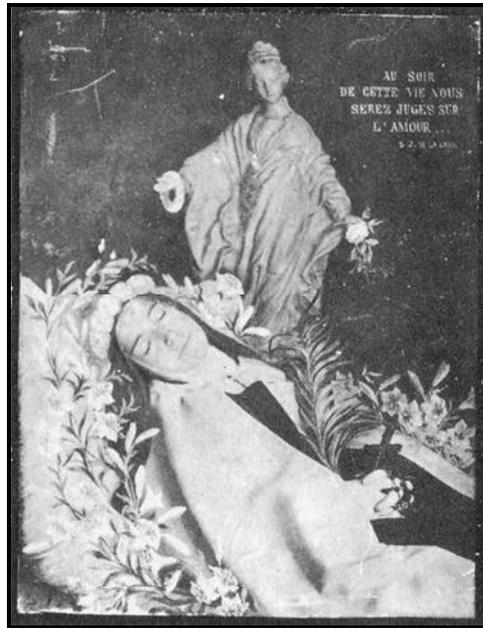


Figure 6. Thérèse lying dead in the choir, 3 October 1897. Source: OCL.

¹⁸ Richard D. E. Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood: Women, Catholicism, and the Culture of Suffering in France, 1840-1970* (Ithaca, 2004), pp. 199-200.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 200.



Figure 7. 'Thérèse morte', 1905. Source: ACL.



Figure 8. The effigy at the *chapelle de la Châsse*, Carmel of Lisieux, 2009. Source: taken by author.

Chapter 1

'I longed to be forgotten': Moving Towards a History of the Cult and Image of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

In this inquisitive age, when the Alps are crested, and seas fathomed, and mines ransacked, and sands sifted, and rocks cracked into specimens, and beasts caught and catalogued, as little is known by Englishmen of the religious sentiments, the religious usages, the religious motives, the religious ideas of two hundred millions of Christians poured to and fro, among them and around them, as if, I will not say, they were Tartars or Patagonians, but as if they inhabited the moon. Verily, were the Catholic Church on the moon, England would gaze on her with more patience, and delineate her with more accuracy, than England does now.

John Henry Newman, *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England* (1851).

Twenty years ago David Blackbourn identified the beginnings of a body of literature on Catholic popular piety in modern Europe, stating that there had been great progress from the days of the early eighties, when 'few outside the Catholic tradition were writing about popular cults and devotions, pilgrimages and apparitions'.¹ While historical scholarship in this area has now progressed further still, the excellent body of work on the Virgin Mary and her various miraculous appearances in nineteenth-century Europe perhaps being the best example,² research on Saint Thérèse of Lisieux is still at the embryonic stage Blackbourn described. Thérèse remains primarily the property of writers of the Catholic tradition, and the frequent appearance of 'OCD' (Order of Discalced Carmelites) in the references in this thesis indicates that most writing on her still comes from devotional writers in religious communities, rather than historians in universities. Popular biography and devotional books dominate the literature on the saint, and since she is principally known through her autobiography, there is great interest in Thérèse as a historical personality. This popular literature on Thérèse Martin is not without value. Many of the authors of these works are experts on the saint's life and have amassed an impressive body of research. These books are also indicative of the continued relevance Thérèse has for contemporary Catholic culture, and has value as a source that reveals the shaping of popular conceptions of the saint. Indeed, the telling of

¹ David Blackbourn, 'Review: The Catholic Church in Europe since the French Revolution', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 33, 4 (October, 1991), p. 788.

² See, for example: Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, 2000) [original publication 1976]; Thomas A. Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies in Nineteenth Century France* (New Brunswick, 1983); Michael P. Carroll, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary: Psychological Origins* (Oxford, 1986); Sandra L. Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary: Visions of Mary from La Salette to Medjugorje* (New York, 1992); David Blackbourn, *Marpingen. Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (Oxford, 1993); Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (London, 1999); Thérèse Taylor, *Bernadette of Lourdes: Her Life, Death and Visions* (London, 2003); Suzanne K. Kaufman, *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine* (Ithaca, 2005); Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (London, 2009).

her story has become standardised and riddled with the marks of hagiography through this literature, which rarely places in her wider historical context or considers the topic as part of the broader concerns of historians of modern French religion. Meanwhile, Thérèse's importance as the focus of a cult is yet to receive any serious attention at all. As will be shown in this chapter, only a small handful of studies focus on Thérèse of Lisieux, the saint, rather than Thérèse Martin, the native of Normandy, and the assessment of the cult in devotional works is informed by an idea of it having been divinely inspired, leaving little room for the consideration of more tangible factors. Religious historian Étienne Fouilloux remarked twenty years ago that 'It is a shame that the specialists, obsessed with her short earthly life and the vicissitudes of her work, had not yet taken the trouble to look into her posthumous destiny'.³ Two decades on, this work has still not been done. Fouilloux indicated the great importance of the cult to French religious history, suggesting that what has been called '*les trois choses blanches*' – the Virgin Mary, the Host and the Pope – should have Saint Thérèse added as a fourth defining symbol of Catholicism in modern France. Devotion to Saint Thérèse has been a highly significant phenomenon in the landscape of European popular religion in the last century and into the current one. It is high time that the focus turned to the cult and left the character herself behind.

The significance of the popular devotional phenomenon surrounding Saint Thérèse has in fact often been acknowledged by scholars of French religious culture, but while the brief mentions of the cult in works on popular religion in the twentieth century whet our appetite, when we turn to the references only *Histoire d'une âme* or a biography of the saint appears, for want of a study of the cult itself. For example, in her book on Lourdes, Ruth Harris points to Thérèse's importance for the wider popular devotional culture of twentieth-century France, calling her 'France's *princesse de Dieu*, the favourite of soldiers in the trenches and Edith Piaf's beloved intercessor', and even remarking on the fact that the Martin sisters 'actively constructed a religious image of their youngest sister' after her death.⁴ However, while Harris gives the impression that this is all well documented, she in fact gestures towards a body of literature that is simply not there. She references the section to two works by Jean-François Six and Jacques Maître,⁵ both biographical and wholly unconcerned with Thérèse's cult, while Richard D. E. Burton, although dedicating a

³ Étienne Fouilloux, 'Courants de pensée, piété, apostolat', in Jean-Marie Mayeur, Charles Pietri, André Vauchez and Marc Venard (eds), *Histoire du christianisme, 12: Guerres mondiales et totalitarismes (1914-1958)* (Paris, 1990), p. 198.

⁴ Harris, *Lourdes*, p. 161.

⁵ Jean-François Six, *La véritable enfance de Thérèse de Lisieux. Névrose et sainteté* (Paris, 1972), and Jacques Maître, '*L'Orpheline de la Bérésina*'. *Thérèse de Lisieux (1873 -1897). Essai de psychanalyse socio-historique* (Paris, 1995).

whole chapter to Thérèse in his study of suffering as a part of women's devotional culture in nineteenth- and twentieth-century France, turns to the same authors.⁶ While the cult of Saint Thérèse has begun to be written into the religious history of modern Europe through such references, this is backed up with only a tiny amount of research on her legacy. Thérèse once wrote of her feelings on entering the Carmel, expressing a characteristic wish for self-immolation: 'I desired that, like the Face of Jesus, "my face be truly hidden, that no one on earth would know me"... I longed to be forgotten.'⁷ While she is very much remembered in biography and devotional works, the saint that she became has indeed been all but forgotten by researchers, despite being the focus of one of the largest Catholic devotional cults of modern times. In focussing on the saint rather than her 'original', gathering together the few pieces of research on the cult and its images, and building on it through heavy use of archival sources, this thesis makes a contribution to achieving for Thérèse what has already been done for figures like Bernadette of Lourdes – moving beyond hagiography towards a fuller understanding of the cultural significance of her cult, examining the construction of a modern saint as a possible window onto the wider economy of religious culture in which she operated.

'Émigrés de l'intérieur': The Martin Family and French Religious History

The story of the cult of Saint Thérèse is of course situated in a wider political and religious history of modern France, but this context has all too often been left out of the existing accounts of the Martin family's lives, Thérèse's career as a nun and the brief extant assessments of her posthumous legacy.⁸ The enthusiasts of the saint have apparently been reluctant to relate the Martins to the history of French conservative Catholicism, with its associations with anti-Semitism and the extreme right, and the family have often been presented as if they existed in a historical and political vacuum, while Thérèse herself has always been suggested to have been wholly above the base struggles of politics. While Céline wrote of being rebuked by Thérèse for expressing a political opinion being reminded by her that, as a nun her 'only duty is to become united to God',⁹

⁶ Burton also uses Maître, *L'Orpheline de la Bérésina*, and Jean François Six, *Vie de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1975). See Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*, ch. 2 and pp. 258-64

⁷ HA, Ms. A, 71r^o, p. 152. Quoting Isaiah 53:3.

⁸ One exception is a recent article by Steffen Lösel, which gives a valuable account of Thérèse's political, social and cultural milieu. Steffen Lösel, 'Prayer, Pain, and Priestly Privilege: Claude Langlois's New Perspective on Thérèse of Lisieux', *The Journal of Religion*, 88, 3 (July, 2008), pp. 276-86. See also Barbara Corrado Pope, 'A Heroine without Heroics: The Little Flower of Jesus and Her Times', *Church History*, 57, 1 (March, 1988), pp. 46-60.

⁹ Sœur Geneviève, *Conseils et Souvenirs*, p. 73.

historian Raymond Jonas recently echoed this view by stating that ‘Thérèse focussed on individual acts of charity rather than on the high-stakes struggles of national politics.’¹⁰ But while Thérèse’s alleged passivity and lack of interest in the political made her ideal for canonisation, her sisters were far more tangible personalities, rooted in the controversies of their times. They lived to see the separation of Church and state that was the denouement of a battle that had been going on ever since the French Revolution, as well as the First World War, the rise of Action Française, Vichy and prelude to Vatican II. Since even the sisters have been subject to the rigours of hagiography, an uneasy and embarrassed silence remains on their politics and the political influences of their upbringing. Placing the story of Thérèse and the rise of her cult in its proper historical context reveals the political and devotional milieu in which the Martin sisters operated, and the changing landscape of Catholic devotion, ultimately helping to explain the influences on the cult they created.

The ‘Two Frances’ and the Development of the Catholic Fortress Mentality

The France of the Martin sisters’ upbringing is often described as being split in two, with left-wing, republican anti-clericals in bitter opposition to right-wing, monarchist Catholics. It may be suggested that there were two Frances: ‘the France of Notre-Dame, Chartres, and... La Salette’ and ‘the France of 1789 and the universalist republican tradition.’¹¹ The ideological war between these two factions shaped French religious life profoundly, and the Martin family were in fact directly touched by the series of political crises that fed Catholic discontentment and fuelled the polarisation of French society. The three eldest Martin sisters would have been able to remember the German soldiers billeted at their house in Alençon during the final stages of the Franco-Prussian War and Zélie Martin’s views of that conflict were typical of those of many Catholics – it was a punishment of their godless nation, which had been undergoing a seemingly relentless process of ‘*déchristianisation*’ ever since the Revolution.¹² The declaration of papal

¹⁰ Raymond Jonas, *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud and the Great War* (Berkeley, 2005), p. 156.

¹¹ Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*, p. 78. On this conflict see: Ralph Gibson, ‘Why Republicans and Catholics Couldn’t Stand Each Other in the Nineteenth Century’, in Nicholas Atkin and Frank Tallett (eds), *Religion, Society and Politics in France since 1789* (London, 1991), pp. 107-20; Adrien Dansette, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine, 2: Sous la IIIe République* (Paris, 1951); Gerard Cholvy and Yves-Marie Hilaire, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine, 2: 1880-1930* (Toulouse, 1985). Atkin and Tallett’s *Priests, Prelates and People: A History of European Catholicism since 1750* (London, 2003), ch. 4, provides a broader European perspective on this, while Kay Chadwick (ed.), *Catholicism, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century France* (Liverpool, 2000) adds an extra dimension by examining this conflict into the twentieth century.

¹² See Zélie Martin and Stéphane-Joseph Piat OFM (ed.), *Correspondance familiale, 1863-1877* (Lisieux, 1958), p. 110.

infallibility at the First Vatican Council of 1869-70, along with Pope Pius IX's self-imposed house arrest as the 'prisoner in the Vatican' following the seizure of the Papal States, had recently united European Catholics in a heightened ultramontanism, contributing to the estrangement of French Catholics from their national identity.¹³ The sense of being '*émigrés de l'intérieur*' was compounded with the founding of the anti-clerical Third Republic in 1870 and the establishment of the Paris Commune in March 1871, both suggesting the movement of the French nation away from political conservatism and religious faithfulness.¹⁴ The Jules Ferry laws of the early 1880s, which laicised education, were a further blow, and while the reactionary politician Georges Ernest Boulanger briefly provided a rallying point for monarchist, conservative Catholics, his success was short-lived. Embattled and paranoid in their position as citizens of an increasingly secularising state, a fortress mentality developed amongst many Catholics. The Martin family were among them, cutting themselves off from non-Catholic society, their faith dictating everything from the schools they sent their children to, to the newspapers they read and the social activities they took part in. The development their own 'Martin family romance',¹⁵ focussing on the four children who had died in infancy as the family's personal 'saints', shows how this insularity was lived out by the family. Ruth Harris has summed up the family's politics and suspicious attitude towards the outside world, stating that 'Of right-wing, legitimist convictions, the parents taught the children to accept without question the perceived conspiratorial links between Freemasonry, Jews and the devil'.¹⁶

The Dreyfus Affair and Léo Taxil's Hoax

In the month after Céline's entry into the Carmel of Lisieux, the event that marked the final end to the Martin family's existence outside the cloister, the Dreyfus Affair began, and it was still raging when Thérèse died in September 1897. The Affair ruptured French society more completely into two political factions, with the persecution of the Jewish army captain being stimulated by the Assumptionists and their mouthpiece, the French Catholic daily *La Croix*. The

¹³ Céline would later write that 'It was with sadness that we often heard at home of the misfortunes of the Church, of the imprisonment of the Roman Pontiff, of the rumblings of persecution in France and in the whole world'. Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Le père de Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, 1823-1894* (Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1953), p. 20.

¹⁴ Later, the Sacré-Cœur was built on the site of the Communards last stand, funded by subscriptions from Catholics all over France, in expiation for their country's perceived offences against God. See Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (Berkeley, 2000).

¹⁵ Corrado Pope, 'A Heroine without Heroics', p. 56.

¹⁶ Harris, *Lourdes*, p. 161.

sisters' maternal uncle, Isidore Guérin, a wealthy retired pharmacist, carried out promotional activities for *La Croix*, and is alleged to have been a 'disciple' of Edouard Drumont, founder of the Ligue antisémite de France and anti-Dreyfusard agitator.¹⁷ Isidore was an important outside contact in the early years of the cult and, despite the cloister, the sisters were well-aware of the dominant Catholic view of the Affair. Indeed, the ongoing war between Catholics and anti-clericals was not a distant conflict for those living behind the walls of the Carmel – in some cases it affected the community directly. In May 1895 the story of Diana Vaughan, a young American escapee from a Masonic, devil-worshipping cult, emerged in the Catholic press. *La Croix* leapt upon the story as proof of the evils of Freemasonry and published extracts of her book, *Mémoires d'un ex-palladiste*.¹⁸ Thérèse was much affected by the story and wrote a play inspired by it,¹⁹ as well as sending Diana a letter, enclosing a photograph of herself and Céline playing the roles of Joan of Arc and Saint Margaret in another play she had written, which had been performed inside the convent in early 1895 (see figure 2.11).²⁰ Diana was a mysterious figure, and was yet to be seen in public. All her affairs were handled by her agent, Léo Taxil, a former seminarian who had turned against the Church and written several blasphemous books, before converting back to Catholicism in 1885. On Easter Monday 1897, Taxil held a press conference, revealing that Diana did not exist and that the whole story had been an elaborate hoax, intended to expose the foolishness of Catholic France.²¹ As he made the announcement of his fraud, Taxil stood before a projection of the photograph of Thérèse and Céline that had been sent to 'Diana'. Thérèse was mortified by this sudden exposure to the world and Céline wrote to Isidore shortly afterwards that 'One sees so many contemptible things, so many defections in the world, that disgust fills one's soul.'²² For many Catholics, the affair did nothing more than prove the extent of the anti-clerical threat – the enemies of God were organised and committed to perpetrating evil deeds against the Catholic faith wherever they could.

¹⁷ See Six, *La véritable enfance*, pp. 160-7, and *Idem.*, 'Thérèse contre Lisieux', *Le Monde*, 25 December 1992.

¹⁸ See *La Croix*, 21 June 1895, pp. 2-3.

¹⁹ 'Le Triomphe de l'Humilité', in Thérèse of Lisieux, *Théâtre au Carmel. 'Récréations pieuses'* (Paris, 1985), pp. 379-95.

²⁰ Photograph 14, Appendix 2.

²¹ For details of the Diana Vaughan Affair see Eugen Weber, *Satan Franc-Maçon: La mystification de Léo Taxil* (Mesnil-sur-l'Estrée, 1964) and Atkin and Tallett, *Priests, Prelates and People*, p. 166. For Thérèse's connection to the hoax see Six, *Lumière de la nuit*, pp. 49-62.

²² Quoted in Six, *Lumière de la nuit*, pp. 40-1.

The Third Republic and the Persecution of Religious Communities

Pope Leo XIII's attempted *ralliement* of the 1890s, seeking to improve the relationship between French Catholics and the governing regime, was unlikely to succeed in light of the Third Republic's continued implementation of anti-clerical legislative measures, including the 1901 voluntary association law. This stipulated that religious communities must request authorisation to exist from the government,²³ and the Carmel was one of the communities that lived under sporadic threat of dissolution for decades afterwards. The convent was investigated under this law in 1901, 1903, 1908, 1910, 1914 and 1923.²⁴ Although the community survived the Municipal Council's inquiries, led by the radically left-wing government minister Henry Chéron, mayor of Lisieux between 1894 and 1936, many of the active religious communities in Lisieux were dissolved. The Carmel certainly felt that there was a very real threat to them – in her personal papers Céline mentions that some of the community's more precious belongings were sent to Belgium 'during the persecution',²⁵ and decades later she wrote in her memoirs that she had been 'enflamed with indignation against the communities who complied with the unjust laws ranged against them', saying that she 'would prefer to be cut into a thousand pieces than to hand over so much as a carrot!'²⁶ The strongly anti-clerical Emile Combes, who had succeeded to the French Premiership in 1902, prohibited religious congregations from teaching in 1904 – a further blow against religious organisations, which set the scene for the final separation of Church and state in 1905.

Action Française and the Carmel of Lisieux

The First World War was seen by many Catholics as another bout of divine punishment for irreligious France, and the resurgence in popularity of the right-wing, monarchist, anti-Semitic movement Action Française, originally founded in 1898, may be linked to this. The group's calls for the return of Catholicism as the state religion found sympathies with many Catholics, but the extremist nature of the movement led to it being condemned by Pius XI in 1926. The prohibition of Action Française was a setback for conservative Catholics, later compounded by the victory of

²³ See Patrick Cabanel and Jean-Dominique Durand (eds), *Le Grand exil des congrégations religieuses françaises, 1901-1914* (Paris, 2005).

²⁴ See Matthew James Dowling, 'The Evolution of a Modern Pilgrimage: Lisieux, 1897-1939', unpublished PhD thesis, Yale University, 1995, pp. 76-90.

²⁵ RTAG, p. 70, 41-2.

²⁶ Sœur Geneviève, *Conseils et Souvenirs*, p. 73.

the radical Popular Front in the 1936 elections, and it was around this time that the Carmel itself became involved with Action Française. The mother of one of the members of the community, Sœur Marie du Saint-Sacrement, was acquainted with Charles Maurras, the founder of Action Française, and Sœur Marie had offered up her sufferings to God for the reconciliation of the movement with the Church as she lay dying in July 1935. Mère Agnès contacted Maurras to tell him of Sœur Marie's sacrifice, and during his imprisonment from October 1936 to July 1937 for having made a death threat against Léon Blum, the leader of the Popular Front, she corresponded further with him.²⁷ Mère Agnès had long been in correspondence with the Popes, and took the opportunity on this occasion to also write to Pius XI to ask him to reconsider the matter of the excommunication of Action Française. Just a week after his release from prison, Maurras made a pilgrimage to Lisieux and met Mère Agnès, and she later reported on this meeting to the Pope in favorable tones. The day before Maurras' visit, the Papal Legate, Cardinal Pacelli, had also visited the Carmel, having conducted the inauguration and benediction of the Basilique Sainte-Thérèse. Céline later recounted her meeting with the Cardinal with pride, explaining how she took his photograph and told him she was sure he would be the next Pope,²⁸ while it has been alleged that Mère Agnès spoke with him directly about reinstating Action Française.²⁹ In March 1939 Pacelli became Pius XII and the very next month, in one of the first acts of his pontificate, he lifted the ban on the group. The degree of influence the Carmel had here can only be guessed at, but Pius XII was no less devoted to Saint Thérèse than his predecessor, who is popularly believed to have called her 'the star of my pontificate'. Mère Agnès remained a close friend and correspondent of Maurras until her death.

Pétain, Vichy and Beyond

The Second World War, and the establishment of the Vichy regime, saw the Carmel again express support for right-wing politics. While the Catholic sympathies of the Vichy regime, and Pius XII's attitude to that regime, have been the subject of much controversy, it is undeniable that many Catholics, both at the grassroots and members of the Church hierarchy in France, supported the rolling back of some of the anti-religious measures of the Third Republic under the regime.

²⁷ On the Carmel's involvement with Maurras see: Dansette, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine*, 2, pp. 607-9; Vinatier, *Mère Agnès de Jésus*, pp. 195-9; Aristide Cormier, *Mes entretiens de prêtre avec Charles Maurras, suivis de La vie intérieure de Charles Maurras* (Paris, 1955), pp. 130-62

²⁸ Piat, *Céline*, pp. 135-6. See the 38th edition of *Histoire d'une âme* (1940) for this photograph.

²⁹ René Laurentin and Jean-François Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux. Verse et Controverse* (Paris, 1973), pp. 102-3.

The Marin sisters appear to also have been supporters. In 1942 Mère Agnès commissioned a bronze relief of Saint Thérèse, showing the saint scattering roses on the coat of arms of Marshal Pétain. This gift to the leader of the government at Vichy, described in the entry in the convent's *chronique* that mentions the gift as 'the admirable old man',³⁰ seemed to confer Thérèse's divine approval on the regime. The Second World War was also to see the onset of the break-up of the French colonial empire, which had provided economic strength and national prestige, but had been of particular value to French Catholics as territory for missionary work. With the establishment of the Fourth Republic and the Fifth, which Céline Martin just lived to see instituted, anti-clericalism in the French government gradually declined as secularism became an accepted principle of western government. Pope Pius XII's death in 1958 marked the beginning of a period of change within the Catholic Church, and the Second Vatican Council of 1962-65 would see a greater reconciliation of the Church with the social and political realities of the modern world.

Popular Religious Culture, Devotional Consumerism and Images

These political battles are paralleled by a history of popular Catholic culture that is no less dramatic or contested. The unique social and political experience of French Catholics profoundly shaped the nature of popular piety in the late nineteenth century, and even before the 'terrible year' of 1870-71, a distinctive religious culture had begun to develop which was strongly sentimental, Eucharistic and Marian, and the Martin family subscribed to this culture with enthusiasm.³¹ Devotion to the Virgin Mary dominated the landscape of popular religion, and the Martins displayed a very strong attachment to the Virgin. When Zélie Martin was dying of cancer, she visited the shrine at Lourdes with her older daughters in the hope of a cure, while Thérèse's childhood vision of the Virgin is also indicative of the family's heavy investment in Marian devotion.³² The visions of the Virgin Mary experienced by Catherine Labouré at the motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity on *rue du Bac*, Paris (1830), by Mélanie Calvat and Maximin Giraud at La Salette (1846), and by Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes (1858), were foundational events in this newly-emerging religious culture, the latter being a corroboration of the hierarchy's approval

³⁰ Reproduced in Marie du Saint Esprit – circulaire inédite établie en 2007, ACL.

³¹ Ralph Gibson has asserted that the Martin family's piety was typical of the devotional culture of their times and has spoken of Thérèse as emblematic of the 'revolution... in the content of Catholicism in France in the nineteenth century.' Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789-1914* (London, 1989), p. 232, 245, 266-7, 272.

³² See HA, Ms. A, 27r° - 31r°, pp. 60-7.

of Marian piety through the proclamation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in 1854. The apparitions to five peasant children at Pontmain, occurring just days before the armistice of the Franco-Prussian War, showed the symbiosis between Marian devotion and French national fortunes at the beginning of this period, while the later visions of Lúcia Santos and her cousins, Jacinta and Francisco Marto, at Fátima in Portugal in 1917, almost three years into the First World War, demonstrated how devotion to the Virgin in Europe was often bound up with cataclysmic events beyond the ‘long nineteenth century’.³³

The ‘Feminisation’ of Religion

The growth in devotion to the Virgin has often been seen as a sign of a wider ‘feminisation’ of popular Catholicism in the late nineteenth century. While this term risks being reductive about the nature of gender,³⁴ it is certainly true that there was a growth in devotion to female saints, seen in the revival of the cult of Saint Philomena in France for example,³⁵ as well as an explosion in the number of women entering the cloister³⁶ or becoming third order members of religious communities (Zélie Martin was herself a third order Franciscan). It was also women who tended to invest in the doctrine of ‘vicarious suffering’ – seeking bodily mortification for the redemption of France, and seeing ‘the suffering body of Christ, the martyred body of the King, the wounded French nation... the humiliated body of the Church and of its earthly Father, the Pope... [as] equivalents of each other’.³⁷ This doctrine of suffering and sacrifice was linked to Eucharistic piety, and Thérèse’s account of her first communion in *Histoire d’une âme* is revealing of the degree to which the Eucharist was associated with this ‘feminised’ Catholic culture, her description of it as ‘that first kiss of Jesus’ showing how Christ came to be viewed as lover, rather than lord.³⁸ This period also saw the crystallisation of several pre-existing devotions into new forms and new iconographical modes. The Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of

³³ On the interplay between popular religious devotions and national politics see also Lucy Riall ‘Martyr Cults in Nineteenth-Century Italy’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 82, 2 (June, 2010), pp. 255-87.

³⁴ For a critique of the term ‘feminisation’ and an analysis of its use in the existing literature see Caroline Ford, ‘Review: Religion and Popular Culture in Modern Europe’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 65, 1 (March, 1993), pp. 168-9.

³⁵ See Caroline Ford, ‘Female Martyrdom and the Politics of Sainthood in Nineteenth-Century France: The Cult of Sainte Philomène’, in Nicholas Atkin and Frank Tallett (eds), *Catholicism in Britain and France Since 1789* (London, 1996), pp. 115-34.

³⁶ See Claude Langlois, *Le Catholicisme au féminin. Les congrégations françaises à supérieure générale au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1984).

³⁷ Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*, pp. xvi-i.

³⁸ HA, Ms. A, 35r°, p.77.

Mary became central motifs of French popular religious culture, their romantic and sentimental visual representation, along with the androgynous portrayal of Jesus that typified the former devotion, being a key part of the alleged ‘feminisation’ of Catholic popular piety.

‘L’ “art” dit de Saint-Sulpice’ and Catholic Visual Culture

Religious images were an essential part of Catholic culture in France in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and an important aspect of the practice of popular devotions was engagement with their visual representation. A specific style of religious art was at issue here – the Saint-Sulpician style. Referring to the area around the church of Saint Sulpice in the sixth arrondissement of Paris, which had become a centre for the retailing of devotional products, Saint-Sulpician art has been identified as the dominant form of religious art in France between 1860 and 1930.³⁹ Mass produced by factories on the outskirts of Paris, manufacturers were able to react quickly to emerging new devotions, and Saint-Sulpician art was highly fashionable. Indeed, mass production defined the style, and its ephemeral nature (plaster statues instead of stone, postcards instead of framed prints) was as much an essential part of its character as its distinctively androgynous and romantic visual style. Becoming a byword for all that was to be despised about popular religious art, and seen as vulgar in both its commerciality and femininity, Saint-Sulpician art would be critiqued almost from its very inception (see chapter 4). Its popularity was certainly in decline before the Second World War, although it was not until 1952 that the Vatican expressed real disapproval of the style.⁴⁰ The Martin sisters had been brought up immersed in the Saint-Sulpician aesthetic, and championed it well after its popular decline. Enthusiastic consumers of mass-produced devotional ephemera even inside the cloister,⁴¹ the sisters had their favourite publishers of images and chose the items they bought according to these brands.⁴² Later, they would style their sister in the devotional style that they loved (see chapter 2). This is the political and cultural

³⁹ Claude Savart, ‘A la recherche de l’“art” dit de Saint-Sulpice’, *Revue d’histoire de la spiritualité*, 52 (1976), p. 276.

⁴⁰ See Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, ‘Instruction to Ordinaries on Sacred Art’, *The Furrow*, 3, 9 (September, 1952), pp. 473-7.

⁴¹ In a compendious publication, Pierre Descouvemont has reproduced much of the devotional ephemera that belonged to the Martin sisters, which is preserved in the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux. See Pierre Descouvemont and Helmuth Nils Loose, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux. La vie en images* (Paris, 1995).

⁴² *Ibid.* p. 10.

context against which this thesis may be read. We shall now turn to the existing literature on the saint and her legacy.⁴³

Thérèse: Her Historians, Biographers and Theologians

The first studies of Saint Thérèse were produced by the Carmel of Lisieux itself (the most significant of these are primary sources for this study and are examined in chapter 3), but in the twenties the Carmel began to work with authors in the outside world. Céline was always the principal contact for these collaborators,⁴⁴ giving them access to original documents, and heavily directing their work. The books produced by these authors were always apologist pieces, but they would influence Theresian historiography for decades. Mgr. August Pierre Laveille (1856-1928) published an official biography of Thérèse in 1925, which although packaged as an historical enquiry, was as much a standard hagiography as the productions of the Carmel itself.⁴⁵ In 1941 Père Stéphane-Joseph Piat (1899-1968), a Franciscan monk and ex-soldier, began to work with the convent.⁴⁶ Piat enjoyed a good working relationship with Céline, and he published a series of hagiographical books about Thérèse and her family, which critical commentators have called ‘true panegyrics’.⁴⁷ In the same decade, Abbé André Combes (1899-1969), a professor both at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, also began to work with the Carmel.⁴⁸ His critical approach to the Theresian corpus of works was groundbreaking, and he produced the first scholarly edition of Thérèse’s writings, publishing a

⁴³ The annual Carmelite bibliography published in *Carmelus* (1953–) provides a bibliography of works on Thérèse. Thomas Nevin’s annotated bibliography provides further information on secondary material on the saint, although the analysis is a highly personal one: Thomas R. Nevin, *Thérèse of Lisieux: God’s Gentle Warrior* (New York, 2006), pp. 371-90. Although it largely excludes popular and devotional literature, see also the very large bibliography in Loys de Saint-Chamas, *Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus, Dieu à l’œuvre* (Toulouse, 1998), pp. 501-616. A comprehensive, but now also very old bibliography is Rena Ercoli, ‘Bibliografia su Santa Teresa del Bambino Gesù’, *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum Discalceatorum* 19 (1947), pp. 271-348.

⁴⁴ See RTAG, pp. 99-100.

⁴⁵ August Pierre Laveille, *Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus (1873-1897). D’après les documents officiels du Carmel de Lisieux* (Lisieux, 1925). See also the other notable biographies of the mid-twenties, produced outside the convent: Baron J. Angot des Rotours, *La Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus (1873-1897)* (Paris, 1924); Gaëtan Bernoville, *Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus* (Paris, 1925); Henri Petitot OP, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux. Une Renaissance Spirituelle* (Paris, 1925).

⁴⁶ On Piat see Guy Gaucher, ‘Le Père Stéphane Piat (1899-1968)’, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, 866 (May, 2006), pp. 2-3, and Pierre Descouvemont, ‘Le Père Stéphane Piat: un franciscain à la découverte de Thérèse’, in Père Joseph Baudry OCD (ed.), *Thérèse et ses théologiens. Colloque sainte Thérèse, Institut Catholique de Toulouse - 17 au 19 Novembre 1997* (Versailles, 1998), pp. 161-80.

⁴⁷ Six’s remark: Laurentin and Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 66.

⁴⁸ See Claude Langlois, ‘L’abbé Combes, théologien et historien de Thérèse’, in Baudry, *Thérèse et ses théologiens*, pp. 133-60.

volume of her letters in 1948.⁴⁹ Whereas Piat had been a hagiographer, Combes ‘opened the way to scientific work’, although his access to the archives was not unrestricted.⁵⁰ This access was withdrawn altogether after Céline disapproved of some of his more probing attitudes.⁵¹ Père François de Sainte-Marie (1910-61) was the Carmel’s next chosen editor, and he oversaw the publication of the *Manuscrits autobiographiques* (1956) – Thérèse’s complete, unedited autobiographical manuscripts in facsimile, in three volumes.⁵² In 1961, the photographs of Thérèse were given the same treatment, and his *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* (1961) made all of the extant photographs of the saint available for the first time.

The Opening-up of the Field

The 1970s and 1980s marked an opening up of the field of Theresian studies, with a number of writers and researchers coming to dedicate themselves to study of the saint, and a more scholarly approach to her began to take hold. In the early 1970s, Carmelite priest and Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Bayeux and Lisieux Guy Gaucher (1930-) emerged as the leading figure in Theresian studies, producing many works on Thérèse’s life and spirituality,⁵³ as well as collaborating on the definitive, eight-volume edition of her writings, the *Nouvelle édition du centenaire*, published in 1992.⁵⁴ His 1982 biography, *Histoire d’une Vie*, has long been seen as the classic study of the saint, but this has recently been superseded by his new 690-page biography of

⁴⁹ André Combes (ed.), *Lettres de sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus* (Lisieux, 1948). See also *Idem.*, *Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus et la Souffrance* (Paris, 1948); *Idem.*, *Introduction à la spiritualité de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus* (Paris, 1948), 2nd edition [original publication 1946]; *Idem.*, *La Petite Sainte Thérèse de Maxence Van der Meersch devant la critique et devant les textes* (Paris, 1950).

⁵⁰ Laurentin and Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 129.

⁵¹ On Combes’ rupture with the Carmel, see Laurentin and Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, pp. 127-9 and Bernard Gouley, Rémi Mauger and Emmanuelle Chevalier, *Thérèse de Lisieux ou la grande saga d’une petite sœur (1897-1997)* (Paris, 1997), pp.197-203. Combes’ *Le problème de l’Histoire d’une âme et des œuvres complètes de sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1950) highlighted the continued lack of clarity on the content of Thérèse’s original writings.

⁵² On François de Sainte-Marie see the special issue: *Carmel*, 128: Le Père François de Sainte-Marie (June, 2008).

⁵³ Guy Gaucher, *La Passion de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1973); *Idem.*, *Histoire d’une Vie* (Paris, 1982); *Idem.*, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1992); *Idem.*, *Jean et Thérèse. L’influence de saint Jean de la Croix dans la vie et les écrits de sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1996); *Idem.*, *‘L’Histoire d’une âme’ de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 2000); *Idem.*, *‘Je voudrais parcourir la terre...’ Thérèse de Lisieux thaumaturge, docteur et missionnaire* (Paris, 2003).

⁵⁴ See also the single volume *Œuvres complètes* (Paris, 1992). Corresponding critical editions of Thérèse’s works in English have been produced by the Institute of Carmelite Studies, Washington. See Thérèse of Lisieux, *St. Thérèse of Lisieux: Her Last Conversations* (Washington, 1977), trans. John Clarke OCD; *Idem.*, *Letters of St. Thérèse of Lisieux: General Correspondence*, 2 vols (Washington, 1982/1988), trans. John Clarke OCD; *Idem.*, *Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux* (Washington, 1996), trans. John Clarke OCD, 3rd edition; *Idem.*, *The Poetry of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux* (Washington, 1996), trans. Donald Kinney OCD; *Idem.*, *The Prayers of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux* (Washington, 1997), trans. Aletheia Kane OCD; *Idem.*, *The Plays of St. Thérèse of Lisieux “Pious Recreations”* (Washington, 2008), trans. Susan Conroy and David J. Dwyer.

Thérèse, which is likely to be seen as definitive.⁵⁵ No less prolific is Pierre Descouvemont (1927-), a priest in the Cambrai diocese, who has produced everything from an in-depth guide to Thérèse's writings, to a guide book for tourists visiting 'Thérèse's Normandy',⁵⁶ as well as some important studies which look at Thérèse's representation (see 'Key Studies' below).⁵⁷ Gaucher and Descouvemont have to some extent taken up the mantle of the collaborators of the 1920s-1960s in producing the bulk of the studies on Thérèse, in close collaboration with the Carmel – but other writers have worked more independently.

Priest and professor of Theology René Laurentin (1917-) has written on the Marian visions of the nineteenth century and beyond, with a particular interest in Saint Bernadette and the more recent visions at Medjugorje. This has lent his work on Thérèse a wider perspective that is lacking in some other studies, and his *Thérèse de Lisieux. Mythes et Réalité* (1972) was a landmark reassessment of the saint and the writings on her. His conversations with Jean-François Six, published the following year, ranged widely over a raft of issues surrounding the saint, including the significance of Thérèse's cult. Priest Jean-François Six (1929-), Laurentin's sometime collaborator, is an extremely controversial figure in the field of Theresian studies. A friend of André Combes, Six took on something of his role as an enemy of the Carmel after Combes' death. His biographical studies, *La véritable enfance de Thérèse de Lisieux. Névrose et sainteté* (1972) and *Thérèse de Lisieux au Carmel* (1973)⁵⁸ took both a psychological and sociological approach to the saint and her family, and made a number of sensational allegations, depicting the Martin sisters' upbringing as one of repression, while Thérèse was shown as a victim of persecution inside the Carmel, even accusing Céline of neglecting her as she died.⁵⁹ Also a scholar of Thérèse's writings, Six produced a three volume edition, *Thérèse de Lisieux par elle-même* (1997), arranging her fragmentary writings chronologically. Most significantly for this study, Six was interested in the sisters' work on the cult (see 'Pauline the Architect, Céline the Artist' below), and has expressed a wish to write a 'posthumous life of Thérèse of Lisieux', but stated that 'this work has been judged too

⁵⁵ Guy Gaucher, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux (1873-1897)* (Paris, 2010).

⁵⁶ Pierre Descouvemont, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux, docteur de l'Église. Guide de lecture* (Paris, 1997); *Idem.*, *Sur les pas de Thérèse. Guide complet du Pèlerin* (Paris, 2001).

⁵⁷ Pierre Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l'âme. Un trappiste au service de Thérèse* (Wailly, 2000); *Idem.*, *La vie en images; Idem.*, *Thérèse et Lisieux* (Paris, 1991).

⁵⁸ These two books later appeared as an edited, one volume publication: Six, *Vie de Thérèse de Lisieux*.

⁵⁹ See Jean-François Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux au Carmel* (Paris, 1973), pp. 390-1.

revolutionary, and the archives have been closed to [me].'⁶⁰ Six's work is wilfully sensationalist and compromised by his lack of access to the primary sources, but he is perhaps the most original figure of Theresian historiography.

Landmark Studies and the Rehabilitative Impulse

Two academics deserve special mention here for their landmark studies on Thérèse. Claude Langlois (1937-), Emeritus Director of Studies of the Section des Sciences religieuses at the École pratique des hautes études, had already written a study of nineteenth-century female religious communities when he produced his first study of Thérèse.⁶¹ His *Les dernières paroles de Thérèse de Lisieux* (2000) focussed on unearthing the process of the formation of this text, and his interest in the intricacies of Thérèse's writings continued with several works which have been described as providing 'a veritable archaeology of the Carmelite's texts.'⁶² Between 2002 and 2009 he produced studies of each of the three autobiographical manuscripts, as well as a work on Thérèse's stated desire to be a priest, placing this in the wider context of nineteenth-century female spirituality.⁶³ While the posthumous creation of Thérèse as saint relied heavily on the stories and imagery found in her writings (she could also be said to have written herself into the genre of the saint's Life), Langlois' work, which studies the writings on their own merits, is not relevant to this thesis. However, he has also produced an article on the photographs of Thérèse, which begins to consider the cult, and that is an important work for this study (see 'Key Studies' below).⁶⁴ Langlois is in any case the leading figure in Theresian studies within an academic context, and in the study of her writings in particular.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, Jacques Maître (1925-),

⁶⁰ Jean-François Six, 'Thérèse, histoire d'une femme', *Notre Histoire*, 27 (October, 1986), p. 47. See also Laurentin and Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 145.

⁶¹ Langlois, *Le Catholicisme au féminin*.

⁶² 'L'Autobiographie de Thérèse de Lisieux, par Claude Langlois', *Éditions du Cerf* <http://www.editionsducerf.fr/html/fiche/fichelivre.asp?n_liv_cerf=8305> [accessed 4 October 2010].

⁶³ Langlois, *Les dernières paroles*; *Idem.*, *Le Poème de septembre. Lecture du manuscrit B de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 2002); *Idem.*, *Le Désir de sacerdoce chez Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 2002); *Idem.*, *Lettres à ma Mère bien aimée – Juin 1897. Lecture du manuscrit C de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 2007); *Idem.*, *L'Autobiographie de Thérèse de Lisieux: Édition critique du manuscrit A (1895)* (Paris, 2009).

⁶⁴ Claude Langlois, 'Photographier des Saintes: De Bernadette Soubirous à Thérèse de Lisieux', in Michèle Ménard and Annie Duprat (eds), *Histoire, Images, Imaginaires: Actes du Colloque International des 21-22-23 mars 1996, l'Université du Maine (Le Mans, 1998)*, pp. 261-72.

⁶⁵ This is an area of growing interest, as is demonstrated by the appearance of a 962-page index of all of Thérèse's writings, and the publication of all her extant writings, even down to her school exercise books. See Jacques Lonchamp, Sœur Geneviève de Clairefontaine and Sœur Cécile du Carmel de Lisieux, *Les Mots de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face* (Paris, 1996) and Thérèse of Lisieux, *Les Cahiers d'école de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 2008).

sociologist and Director of the Sociology of Religions at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, has produced a study of Thérèse that shares something of Jean-François Six's psychological approach. His *L'Orpheline de la Bérésina. Thérèse de Lisieux (1873 -1897). Essai de psychanalyse socio-historique* (1995) may be problematic for its posthumous psychoanalysis of the saint, but it is a complex and fascinating study which stands apart from others in its originality. It is apparent then that the two leading Theresian scholars are concerned only with Thérèse's writings and personality – the posthumous life is not yet a fully established part of the academic study of the saint.

The remaining studies to be mentioned here fall into two disparate genres, but with a binding thread. Both theological studies and a particular strain of secular, popular books on the saint are strongly rehabilitative in their tone, but in very different ways. Theologians have been recasting Thérèse as a theological genius since the 1950s,⁶⁶ with eminent Jesuit theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988) publishing his now classic *Thérèse von Lisieux: Geschichte einer Sendung* (1950) in that decade.⁶⁷ Bernard Bro (1925-), Dominican, broadcaster and former director of Éditions du Cerf, the publishing house that dominates the market for books on Thérèse, produced another significant theological work with his *La Gloire et le Mendiant* (1974), and more recently *Thérèse of Lisieux: Sa famille, son Dieu, son message* (1996). He is joined by Carmelite fathers Conrad de Meester (1936-) and Jean Clapier (1959-) as someone in religious orders who has completed significant theological study of the saint.⁶⁸ To these should be added Mary Frohlich and Joann Wolski Conn, both sisters of lay religious congregations and theologians currently working in Catholic universities.⁶⁹ While Thérèse's theological significance is not relevant to this thesis, it is

⁶⁶ For a survey of the theological material on the saint, see Baudry, *Thérèse et ses théologiens*.

⁶⁷ Available in English translation as Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Thérèse of Lisieux: The Story of a Mission* (London, 1953), trans. Donald Nicholl. See also *Idem.*, *Schwester in Geist: Thérèse von Lisieux und Elisabeth von Dijon* (Einsiedeln, 1970), available in English translation as *Idem.*, *Two Sisters in the Spirit: Thérèse of Lisieux and Elizabeth of the Trinity* (San Francisco, 1992), trans. Donald Nichols, Anne Englund Nash and Dennis Martin.

⁶⁸ Conrad de Meester OCD, *Dynamique de la confiance: genèse et structure de la "voie d'enfance spirituelle" chez Ste. Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1969); *Idem.*, *Les Mains vides. Le message de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1972). Jean Clapier, 'Aimer jusqu'à mourir d'amour'. *Thérèse de Lisieux et le mystère pascal* (Paris, 2003).

⁶⁹ Mary Frohlich, 'Thérèse of Lisieux: Doctor for the Third Millennium?', *New Theology Review*, 12, 2 (May, 1999), pp. 27-38; *Idem.*, 'Desolation and Doctrine in Thérèse of Lisieux', *Theological Studies*, 61, 2 (June 2000), pp. 261- 80; *Idem.*, "'Your Face Is My Only Homeland': A Psychological Perspective on Thérèse of Lisieux and Devotion to the Holy Face," in David M. Hammond (ed.), *Theology and Lived Christianity* (Mystic, 2000), pp. 177-205; *Idem.*, 'Thérèse of Lisieux and Jeanne d'Arc: History, Memory, and Interiority in the Experience of Vocation', *Spiritus*, 6, 2 (Fall, 2006), pp. 173-94; *Idem.*, *St. Thérèse of Lisieux: Essential Writings* (New York, 2003). Joann Wolski Conn, 'Thérèse of Lisieux from a Feminist Perspective', *Spiritual Life*, 28, 4 (Winter, 1982), pp. 233-9; *Idem.*, 'Conversion as Self-Transcendence Exemplified in the Life of St. Thérèse of Lisieux', *Spirituality Today*, 34, 4 (Winter, 1982), pp. 303-

important to note that some of the best-known Theresian scholars are theologians. The modern popular biographies of Thérèse are the almost polar opposite of these theological works. Written by those outside the Catholic faith, anti-hagiographical, and professing a desire to find a relevance in Thérèse for a new age, these books are often informed by feminist, or proto-feminist approaches. The first of these works was *The Eagle and the Dove. A Study in Contrasts: St. Teresa of Avila, St. Thérèse of Lisieux* (1943) by Vita Sackville-West (1892-1962), which acknowledged the attraction of the Spanish noblewoman over this French, bourgeois girl, but saw relevance in Thérèse's message for a world experiencing a devastating war. *Das verborgene Antlitz* (1944), the classic study by Ida Friederike Görres (1901-71),⁷⁰ as well as social reformer Dorothy Day's 1960 study of the saint, were also in this mould, and both of these studies are examined as primary sources in chapter 4.⁷¹ Monica Furlong (1930-2003), the journalist, mystic and campaigner for reform in the Church of England, produced a biography in 1987 which sought to rehabilitate Thérèse from accusations of passivity.⁷² Furlong's approach was also informed by psychology, and this was picked up by Kathryn Harrison (1961-) in her book of 2003, where she used Freudian theories to explain Thérèse's inner life, producing a widely-read popular biography.⁷³

Pauline the Architect, Céline the Artist

The Martin sisters' involvement in building the cult of Saint Thérèse has been a familiar issue in the secondary literature since as early as the mid-1920s. Between the twenties and the fifties many polemical biographies of Thérèse appeared which attacked the sisters' 'reshaping' of the saint, and the story of their behind-the-scenes work became a well-known one through these 'ouvrages de controverse' (these are explored as primary sources in chapter 4).⁷⁴ The issue of Mère Agnès' editing of the autobiography caused controversy for the first fifty years of the Theresian cult, with whole passages being lost, other statements having their meanings completely subverted and the more candid snapshots of conventual life being erased. Etienne Robo's book, *Two Portraits*

11; *Idem.*, 'Thérèse of Lisieux: Far from Spiritual Childhood', *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, 6, 1 (Spring, 2006), pp. 68-89.

⁷⁰ Available in English translation as: Ida Friederike Görres, *The Hidden Face: A Study of St. Thérèse of Lisieux* (San Francisco, 2003) 8th edition [original publication 1959], trans. Richard and Clara Winston.

⁷¹ Dorothy Day, *Thérèse* (Springfield, Illinois, 1991) [original publication 1960].

⁷² Monica Furlong, *Thérèse of Lisieux* (New York, 1987).

⁷³ Kathryn Harrison, *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux* (London, 2003).

⁷⁴ See, for example: Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1926); Maurice Privat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1932); Henri Ghéon, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1934); Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, *La Petite Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1937); Pierre Mabille, *Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1996), 3rd edition [original publication 1937]; Maxence Van der Meersch, *La Petite sainte Thérèse* (Paris, 1947).

of *St Teresa of Lisieux* (1955) made the story popularly known in the English-speaking world, although like all the works of this genre, it sensationalised the issue and was based on poor quality secondary sources. When the role of the sisters in the creation of the cult has been discussed in more recent studies, it is usually only briefly gestured to, and the discussion is rarely based on any original research. Mère Agnès is usually simply assumed to have been responsible for everything due to her position of authority both in the family, as Thérèse's 'second mother', and in the convent, as prioress. For example, Claude Langlois sees her as the undisputed director of the cult, responsible not only for Thérèse's autobiography, which she commissioned and edited, but also ascribing the authorship of the photographs of Thérèse to her, since it was she who permitted Céline to bring her camera into the convent. He asserts:

Céline entered the Carmel in August 1894 with her camera and Thérèse began writing her autobiography (manuscript A) in 1895: therefore the two initiatives were the work of her older sister, becoming prioress – the same who, after the death of Thérèse, and for close to a half century, orchestrated the Theresian success (publication of *Histoire d'une âme*, the dissemination of images, the beatification and canonisation of Thérèse, the construction of the Basilica of Lisieux).⁷⁵

In the most sustained study of the cult, Bernard Gouley's *Thérèse de Lisieux ou la grande saga d'une petite sœur (1897-1997)* (1997) (see 'Key Studies' below), Mère Agnès is shown at the helm of the cult throughout her life, with the emphasis placed on the 'crucial role that Pauline played in the earthly life of her sister, and in her posthumous adventure', calling her the 'linchpin' of the cult.⁷⁶ It is certainly true that Mère Agnès was vitally important for the cult, but Céline's role, while less public-facing, was of at least equal value, and is still severely misunderstood. Such is the lack of appreciation of Céline's role that in a recent English-language study we even hear of 'Pauline's rosewatery image-making',⁷⁷ not Céline's, despite the fact that she was responsible for all the images of Thérèse issued by the Carmel.

Six, Langlois and Mère Agnès

There are just two scholars who have looked in-depth at the work of sisters, and although both are preoccupied with Mère Agnès' role, they make very different assessments of it. In his most recent work, *Lumière de la Nuit. Les dix-huit derniers mois de Thérèse de Lisieux* (1995) Jean

⁷⁵ Langlois, 'Photographier des Saintes', p. 267.

⁷⁶ Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 120, 186.

⁷⁷ Nevin, *Thérèse of Lisieux*, p. 372.

François-Six sought to highlight the degree to which Mère Agnès reshaped Thérèse textually, claiming that she ‘stag[ed] Thérèse’s spirituality’ through her heavy editing of the autobiography and wholesale fabrication of the *derniers entretiens* (Thérèse’s statements from her death bed).⁷⁸ Six has played a large part in keeping the sole focus on Mère Agnès, with his presence in the popular media also ensuring that she has dominated the public conception of the cult’s success.⁷⁹ His work provides an important counterpoint to this thesis’ examination of the creation of a new face for the saint, but his view of the sisters’ work as fundamentally negative, rather than culturally productive, is one that is rejected here. Five years later, Claude Langlois rehabilitated the *derniers entretiens* from Six’s dismissal of them in his *Les dernières paroles de Thérèse de Lisieux* (2000), where he disavowed any interest in taking sides with the ‘pro- or anti-agnèsiens’,⁸⁰ but took a great interest in Mère Agnès’ role as editor of Thérèse’s writings. Ultimately, he exonerated her of fabricating the text in the way Six asserted. While Mère Agnès, so heavily associated with Thérèse’s textual legacy, is subject to such in-depth analysis, the published sources that focus on Céline’s work are meagre. The only existing biography of her, by Stéphane-Joseph Piat, is limited as a hagiographical portrait of a woman the author was personally close to,⁸¹ while her published memoirs, *Conseils et Souvenirs* (1952) are focussed on her spiritual interactions with Thérèse, not her posthumous relationship with her.

The ‘thèse de la manipulation’

The idea of the sisters as enthusiastic promoters of the cult, spending their lives safeguarding their sister’s public image, is often dismissed as nothing more than a conspiracy theory in the secondary literature, the first public outing of the notion in the sensationalist books of the 1920s lending it little credibility. For example, Antoinette Guise, who has produced both an MA and PhD thesis on aspects of Thérèse’s posthumous life,⁸² has dismissed the investigation of

⁷⁸ Six, *Lumière de la nuit*, p. 8.

⁷⁹ See Michel Cool, ‘Sainte Thérèse trahie par sa sœur’, *L’Express*, 26 December 1996 and Six, ‘Thérèse contre Lisieux’.

⁸⁰ Langlois, *Les dernières paroles*, p. 9.

⁸¹ Piat, *Céline*.

⁸² Antoinette Guise, ‘Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus entre 1898 et 1926. Genèse d’un culte’, unpublished MA thesis, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sorbonne, Paris, 2000 and *Idem.*, ‘Thérèse de Lisieux et ses miracles. Recompositions du surnaturel (1898-1928)’, unpublished PhD thesis, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sorbonne, Paris, 2006.

the sisters' work on Thérèse's image by Marion Lavabre (see 'Key Studies' below),⁸³ using the sisters' own original arguments about the inadequacy of the photographic process at the end of the nineteenth century and the need for both retouching and original portraits to obtain a good likeness of her (see chapter 2).⁸⁴ Guise bemoans the fact that, despite the publication of all the existing photographs of the saint in *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* 'this thesis of manipulation valiantly endures'.⁸⁵ The alleged problems of photography in the late nineteenth century, and our possession of all the original photographs does not discredit study of the work the sisters did on Thérèse's image after her death, a rich story which uncovers the roots of an international cult, and which is rather more complex than either the detractors or supporters of the Martin sisters have admitted. By turning to the Archives, this thesis demonstrates that the sisters' work on the cult should be taken seriously, and that their actions should not be seen as inherently problematic. The sisters have long suffered for being seen only as nuns – spiritual athletes of a non-earthly milieu – and not as people with desires and ambitions. Here, both the dominant, hagiographical view of the Martin sisters, and the opposing idea of their actions being deleterious to devotion to Thérèse, is rejected. While their involvement in the negatively-viewed world of the cheap paperback, the postcard and the advertising flyer has been a source of embarrassment to some, here the creativity of their work is embraced, allowing the full relevance of the cult's images and commercial promotion to be understood.

The Creation of the Cult and the History of Theresian Iconography: Key Studies

The handful of studies which look at the cult of Saint Thérèse in general, or examine the more specific issue of her posthumous visual representation by the Carmel of Lisieux, are very diverse in nature and do not form a coherent body of scholarship. There is just a scattered handful of pieces of research, making no reference to each other, that engage with the cult of Thérèse as a facet of the history of modern French religious culture. The writers of these come from a range of disciplines and backgrounds, from priests to photographers, theologians to historians. Maurice Privat provided the first assessment of the cult as early as 1932, although this was in a sensationalist, polemical work, whose value as a secondary source is severely compromised (see

⁸³ Marion Lavabre, 'Sainte comme une image: Thérèse de Lisieux à travers ses représentations', *Terrain*, 24: La fabrication des saints (March, 1995), pp. 83-90.

⁸⁴ Guise, 'Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse', pp. 17-20.

⁸⁵ Guise, 'Thérèse de Lisieux et ses miracles', p. 9, n. 12.

chapter 4).⁸⁶ Only one book-length publication has appeared on the growth of the worldwide cult of Saint Thérèse. *Thérèse de Lisieux ou la grande saga d'une petite sœur (1897-1997)* appeared in 1997 and was produced to accompany the documentary *Thérèse superstar*, originally broadcast on France 3 in the same year, the hundredth anniversary of Thérèse's death and the year of her naming as a Doctor of the Church. The book makes some important observations about the early shaping of Theresian myth and the sisters' marketing of the saint, as well as providing a useful chronological account of the development of the cult. It remarks on Céline creating an image for Thérèse that 'corresponded with the idea that [she] had of the saint' and examines the retouching work she did on photographs.⁸⁷ The authors of this work are not historians (Bernard Gouley and Rémi Mauger are journalists and Emmanuelle Chevalier is a documentary maker), and the study is wholly unreferenced, limiting its usefulness. Its narrative is also principally hung off an account of the processes of beatification and canonisation, making for a falsely institutional account of the cult's progression. This thesis breaks away from this approach to look more closely at the activities of the Carmel, examining the hidden history of the cult's rise outside of the Holy See's institutional regulation.

Disparate elements of the cult have been examined by some academic researchers, principally in unpublished PhD theses, although the French tradition for regional historical studies has produced at least one study of Thérèse's cult in a particular locality.⁸⁸ Matthew James Dowling has examined the growth of the pilgrimage to Lisieux up until 1939, providing something of a parallel to studies of the growth of the Lourdes pilgrimage,⁸⁹ while Antoinette Guise's two theses on the saint, both completed under the supervision of Claude Langlois, examined the place of the miracles of Saint Thérèse in the life of the cult.⁹⁰ In their consideration of Thérèse's place in the landscape of popular devotion, the large amount of original archival research they have done, as well as their brief consideration of the promotion of the cult by the Carmel, this thesis is indebted to the work of both these scholars, who have raised important questions and made significant moves towards building a body of work on Thérèse's posthumous life. Since their work is yet to be published, the wider impact of this has been limited, however. Alana Harris, Darby Fellow in

⁸⁶ Privat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*.

⁸⁷ Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 207.

⁸⁸ Marcel Launay, 'Origines et développement du culte de Thérèse de Lisieux dans l'Ouest de la France: l'exemple nantais (1897-1947)', *Bulletin de la Société archéologique et historique de Nantes*, 132 (1997), pp. 239-53.

⁸⁹ Dowling 'The Evolution of a Modern Pilgrimage'.

⁹⁰ Guise, 'Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse'; *Idem.*, 'Thérèse de Lisieux et ses miracles'.

History at the University of Oxford, has looked at devotion to Thérèse in an English context in her PhD thesis, providing some important insights into the changing way Thérèse was viewed in the mid- to late twentieth century, while a forthcoming article considers devotion to her in Britain today, in light of the recent visit of the saint's relics to the UK.⁹¹ To these studies may be added the 2005 article “Je veux lutter comme un guerrier vaillant”, Thérèse of Lisieux in the Trenches of the Great War’, by Thomas Nevin, author of the most recent major biography of the saint in English.⁹² Nevin, professor at a Jesuit university, gives some idea of the relevance of Thérèse for popular devotional culture in the trenches in this article, but it is lacking in original research, and dismisses Céline’s work as ‘standard and mawkish iconographies’.⁹³ In the late eighties, in an article that has become a staple of Theresian studies, scholar of women’s studies Barbara Corrado Pope offered an assessment of Thérèse’s posthumous success and sought to place her in her proper historical context.⁹⁴ In the absence of more substantial studies, both these articles are important first steps in the published history of the cult of Thérèse. However, interest in Thérèse’s posthumous life is growing. In September 2010 a colloquium was held in Bayeux and Lisieux on the process of beatification of Saint Thérèse, but we still await a scholarly monograph on the cult in twentieth-century France and, indeed, the rest of the Catholic world.⁹⁵

The Saint and Her Image

The studies that touch on the cult are joined by a small amount of work dealing directly with Thérèse’s representation. Four articles, two by academic historians, one by a Carmelite father and one by an anthropologist and photographer, form the heart of the secondary literature here. Their engagement with the manipulation of Thérèse’s image by the Carmel and

⁹¹ See Alana Harris, ‘Transformations in English Catholic Spirituality and Popular Religion, 1945-1980’, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 2008 (to be published as *Faith in the Family: Transformations in English Catholic Spirituality and Popular Religion, 1945-82* (Manchester, 2012)). See also *Idem.*, ‘Bone Idol? British Catholics and Devotion to St. Thérèse of Lisieux’, in Nancy Christie, Michael Gauveau and Stephen Heathorn (eds), *The Sixties and Beyond: Dechristianization as History in North America and Western Europe, 1945-2000* (Toronto, 2011) (forthcoming). I am grateful to Dr Harris for allowing me to see a copy of this chapter in advance of its publication.

⁹² Tom Nevin, “Je veux lutter comme un guerrier vaillant”, Thérèse of Lisieux in the Trenches of the Great War’, in Françoise Le Jeune (ed.), *Paroles de Femmes dans la Guerre (1914-1918)* (Nantes, 2005), pp. 141-51. *Idem.*, *Thérèse of Lisieux*.

⁹³ Nevin, ‘Je veux lutter’, p. 144.

⁹⁴ Corrado Pope, ‘A Heroine without Heroics’. See also Laura J. May, ‘Gender, Sanctity and Sainthood: Official and Alternative Saints as Female Exemplars in Roman Catholicism, 1939-1978’, unpublished MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1992.

⁹⁵ ‘De Bayeux à Lisieux: Thérèse au tribunal 1910. Colloque d’Histoire pour le centenaire du procès de béatification de Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus’, 3-5 September 2010, Bayeux and Lisieux (organised by the Sanctuaire Sainte-Thérèse de Lisieux).

problematisation of her representation, including their consideration of how concepts of authentic representation are at stake in the history of the visual depiction of the saint, make them important precursors to this thesis. They make the first moves towards a history of Thérèse's representation, but there are inevitably huge gaps in this tiny body of literature. Claude Langlois' 1998 article 'Photographier des Saintes: De Bernadette Soubirous à Thérèse de Lisieux' compares the photographs of the two saints, asking some pertinent questions about what makes an authentic image, and recognising the tension in the claim of photography to be the ultimate medium of accurate representation. He discusses the manipulation of both saints' representation, remarking briefly on Céline's artistic endeavours. Seven years later, Australian academic Thérèse Taylor undertook much the same project in an article published in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, apparently without knowledge of Langlois' earlier effort.⁹⁶ However, her comments on the early creation of a popular image for Thérèse here, as well as in her book-length study of Bernadette of Lourdes, are useful contributions.⁹⁷ In 1995 Marion Lavabre, a photographer and anthropologist, looked at the manipulation of Thérèse's image by her sisters, both in the figurative sense and in terms of the retouching, cropping and sanitising of photographs of her for dissemination. Her position on this, that it is the study of the sisters' representation of Thérèse, rather than the unearthing of any 'true' image, that is valuable – is an important step away from a dialogue of praise and blame that surrounds the sisters' work, even today, towards recognising the cultural historical interest of the story. An even earlier article, 'La rose effeuillée. Notes sur l'iconographie de Thérèse de Lisieux', supplements these three, discussing Céline's work, the controversy over the retouching of photographs and the Carmel's explanations of their activities, but also providing 106 representations of the saint in a range of media, from all over the world.⁹⁸ This gives some idea of the rich history that is still to be written about Theresian iconography after the period of the Carmel's control of it – almost forty years after this article was published, that work has only just begun to be done.⁹⁹ Written by a Carmelite father, this article is preoccupied with showing the

⁹⁶ Thérèse Taylor, 'Images of Sanctity: Photography of Saint Bernadette of Lourdes and Saint Thérèse of Lisieux', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 27, 3 (September, 2005), pp. 269-92.

⁹⁷ Taylor, *Bernadette of Lourdes*.

⁹⁸ Jean de la Croix OCD, 'La rose effeuillée. Notes sur l'iconographie de Thérèse de Lisieux', *Carmelus*, 20 (1973), pp. 212-45.

⁹⁹ Sophia Lucia Deboick, "My mission is about to begin": Myth, Image and the Posthumous Life of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux', unpublished MA thesis, Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2005 examined representations of Thérèse in a range of media in French and British popular culture. See also Mary Bryden, 'Saints and Stereotypes: The Case of Thérèse of Lisieux', *Literature and Theology*, 13, 1 (March, 1999), pp. 1-16, examining the way the Church has depicted Thérèse, her own self-presentation and the representations of her that have appeared in the dramatic arts.

relevance of roses and the Holy Face in Thérèse's own writings, but it did benefit from access to the relevant archival sources at the Carmel of Lisieux. In contrast, Langlois, Taylor and Lavabre's articles relied on secondary sources, principally François de Sainte-Marie's *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* (1961).

'Visage' and Descouvemont's Studies

Although *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* was the first time all the photographs of Thérèse had been made available, and thus could be expected to have been the start of research into Thérèse's representation and the sisters' work on it, François de Sainte-Marie's commentary in the first of the two volumes remains the best source on the early history of Thérèse's representation, not only cataloguing the original photographs of Thérèse, but discussing their retouching, the creation of Céline's portraits of her sister and the involvement of the men of the Church. This has been an essential reference work for this thesis, although all its archival references have been returned to. A handful of works by some of the leading Theresian writers also shed light on images of the saint. Pierre Descouvemont has written a painstakingly researched study of Père Marie-Bernard, the sculptor Céline collaborated with at the height of the cult and maintained a correspondence with for over forty years.¹⁰⁰ His book *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux. La vie en images* (1995) has also been invaluable here. Although essentially a coffee table book, this work evokes the visual milieu of Thérèse and her sisters, examining the way that a range of specific devotions were visually articulated in their lives. In the last section Céline's work and that of the artists she collaborated with is discussed, her retouching work is examined and the popular publications are mentioned. This is merely an indication of the potential of this material, however, and the commentary on the images reproduced here is very brief. This book complements Descouvemont's less-useful visual biography of Thérèse, *Thérèse et Lisieux* (1991), which nevertheless provides some insights into the devotional culture the sisters were exposed to. Descouvemont's *Le pèlerinage de Lisieux hier et aujourd'hui* (1989) also contains a good account of the rise of the cult as a supplement to the pilgrimage guide that makes up the rest of the book. This is a significant contribution to the study of the posthumous life of the saint, also containing a section entitled 'Why have we hidden Thérèse's face?' which briefly examines the concealment of the original photographs of the saint,

For a consideration of Thérèse's posthumous representation in media as diverse as film, stained glass and opera, see Nicholas Madden, 'Images in Art', *The Way Supplement*, 89: Contemporary Carmelite Women (1997), pp. 126-35.

¹⁰⁰ Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l'âme*.

although in an apologist tone.¹⁰¹ The fragmentary nature of the existing work on images of Thérèse can clearly be seen, and they are certainly yet to be placed in the context of modern French popular Catholicism. This study hopes to begin to remedy this.

The Church and Its Cults: Histories of Modern Catholicism

There has been more written about modern Catholicism in a French context than for any other country, its status as the *fille aînée de l'Église* ('eldest daughter of the Church') meaning that its modern history has been perhaps more significant to the world-wide Catholic Church than any other European country. In the fifties and sixties major conspectuses of French religious history appeared, which are still classics of the field and have not been superseded. Adrien Dansette's two volume *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine* (1948-1951) and Henri Daniel-Rops' three volume *L'Église des Révolutions* (1960-65) had strongly institutional emphases, concerned largely with the 'official' history of the French Catholic hierarchy.¹⁰² These have since been built upon by a new generation of historians of French religion who, influenced by the Annales School's study of *mentalités*, as well as the growing interest amongst Anglo-American historians in 'history from below' during the 1960s and 70s, have moved the focus to popular devotion. The influence of the 'new cultural history', with its turn away from seeing culture simply as an expression or result of social or economic structures, but as something that creates and gives meaning to them, has also seen a rehabilitation of religion, often seen as an instrument of oppression, as a potentially subversive force that is more multivalent and malleable than previously understood.¹⁰³ Gérard Cholvy and Yves-Marie Hilaire's three volume *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine* (1985-88) was a key work here. While arguing against any artificial separation of 'high' and 'low' religious culture, Cholvy and Hilaire have examined the tenacity of popular religion, challenging the 'secularisation thesis', uncovering the changing nature of popular piety and articulating a view of the 'feminisation' of nineteenth-century piety.¹⁰⁴ This study remains the benchmark of modern French religious history, with Cholvy and Hilaire's more recent studies making for a very complete survey of religion in France in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both

¹⁰¹ Pierre Descouvemont, *Le pèlerinage de Lisieux hier et aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1989), pp. 227-32.

¹⁰² Each made brief mention of Saint Thérèse: Dansette, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine*, 2, pp. 558-9; Henri Daniel-Rops, *L'Église des Révolutions*, 2: *Un combat pour Dieu* (Paris, 1963), pp. 867-77.

¹⁰³ On this see Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, 1989).

¹⁰⁴ They mention Thérèse here briefly: Cholvy, and Hilaire, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine*, 2, pp. 150-1.

chronologically and thematically,¹⁰⁵ which are well-supplemented by several notable general surveys in English.¹⁰⁶

Consolidating the Turn to Popular Religion

The appearance of Ralph Gibson's *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789-1914* (1989) confirmed the general turn away from the rarefied, institutional focus of the historiography on European religion towards the popular and the devotional, and signalled the important place of sociological approaches to the latter concerns. Indeed, up until the 1980s the study of popular religion had mainly been confined to medieval and early modern contexts and to Protestantism, and was principally carried out by those working in other fields, such as anthropology and religious studies.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, the usual assessment of religion in general histories of modern Europe was one of progressive dechristianisation (informed by Max Weber's view of a progressive 'disenchantment of the world')¹⁰⁸ and of religion as an obscurantist force, trying in vain to survive the onslaughts of modernity. More recently, such a view has been directly challenged by studies that have problematised the idea of a steady onward decline of religion by defining religious adherence and religious practice much more broadly and looking at unconventional forms of religiosity. Callum Brown's reassessment of secularisation in a British context, rejecting the idea of a steady decline from the Industrial Revolution onwards, instead identifying a sudden drop-off in the 1960s, has reframed the debate for the whole of Europe,¹⁰⁹ while Michael Saler and Jay Winter have identified resurgences in religious sentiment, both in terms of the persistence of 'enchantment' (a general anti-scientific interest in wonders, marvels and spirituality) and the

¹⁰⁵ Gérard Cholvy, *Christianisme et société en France au XIXe siècle, 1790-1914* (Paris, 2001); *Idem.*, *Etre chrétien en France au XIXe siècle, 1790-1914* (Paris, 1997); *Idem.*, *La religion en France de la fin du XVIIIe à nos jours* (Paris, 1991). *Idem.* and Yves-Marie Hilaire, *Le fait religieux aujourd'hui en France: les trente dernières années (1974-2004)* (Paris, 2004); *Idem.* (eds), *La France religieuse: 1945-1975. Reconstruction et crises* (Toulouse, 2002).

¹⁰⁶ See Atkin and Tallett, *Religion, Society and Politics*; *Idem.*, *Catholicism in Britain and France*; *Idem.*, *Priests, Prelates and People*. See p. 171, 183-4 of the latter volume for their brief assessment of Thérèse's success. See also Chadwick, *Catholicism, Politics and Society*; *Idem.*, 'Catholicism', in Christopher John Murray (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Modern French Thought* (New York, 2004), pp. 124-8; *Idem.*, and Paul Cooke (eds), *Religion in Modern and Contemporary France* (Portsmouth, 1998).

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, 1987); *Idem.*, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982); Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789-1970* (Oxford, 1981); Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture. Anthropological Perspectives* (Oxford, 1978).

¹⁰⁸ Max Weber, 'Science as a Vocation', in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York, 1946), p. 155.

¹⁰⁹ Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (London, 2001); *Idem.*, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Harlow, 2006).

emergence of new popular cults, such as spiritualism.¹¹⁰ Indeed, the turn towards study of popular religion has meant an undoing of the secularisation thesis, with the exposure of the vibrancy and popularity of diverse cults and devotions in several monographs revealing a more complex picture of modern religious practice, and giving the lie to the idea of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a secular age.

Pilgrimages, Cults and the Cultural History of Popular Catholicism

Popular cults and pilgrimage have proved the most fertile terrain for scholars of popular Catholicism in recent decades. Material on the Virgin Mary and associated pilgrimage and visionary phenomena is at the heart of this body of work, with the fact that the Virgin has been such a malleable and enduring figure, often reflecting the concerns of the societies that have venerated her, making her a particularly rich topic of study.¹¹¹ Marina Warner's seminal study of the Virgin was a very early foray into the study of popular cults, appearing in 1976, although her reading of the figure of the Virgin as an instrument of female oppression limited the study's ability to encompass the multivalent nature of Mary.¹¹² Offering a feminist analysis of the Virgin's changing representation, the ripeness of this figure for such an approach resulted in further early study of her cult, with Barbara Corrado Pope's 1987 article on Mariolatry in the nineteenth century still being relevant as a succinct summary of popular devotion in France in that century.¹¹³ Closely aligned with the study of Mary as a cultural personality is research on the pilgrimages she has spawned, and early studies of Catholic pilgrimages came from anthropological perspectives, Victor and Edith Turner's *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978) being seminal in this regard, while Philippe Boutry and Michel Cinquin's study of the pilgrimages to Ars and Paray-le-Monial was a significant early contribution in French.¹¹⁴ In the early 1980s Thomas Kselman built on such studies to produce a more sophisticated, historical analysis of such popular devotional

¹¹⁰ Michael Saler, "'Clap if you believe in Sherlock Holmes": Mass Culture and the Re-enchantment of Modernity, c. 1890-c. 1940', *The Historical Journal*, 46, 3 (2003), pp. 599-622; *Idem.*, 'Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review', *The American Historical Review*, 111, 3 (June, 2006), pp. 692-716; Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995). See also Eugen Weber, 'Religion and Superstition in Nineteenth-Century France', *The Historical Journal*, 31, 2 (June, 1988), pp. 399-423.

¹¹¹ See n. 2 for this literature.

¹¹² Here, Warner called the Thérèse of the pre-1959 cult 'sweet, indeed glutinous' with 'her naive and simple mixture of excessive egoism and emotional self-sacrifice.' Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, p. 312.

¹¹³ Barbara Corrado Pope, 'Immaculate and Powerful: The Marian Revival in the Nineteenth Century', in Clarissa W. Atkinson, Constance H. Buchanan and Margaret R. Miles (eds), *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality* (London, 1987), pp. 173-200.

¹¹⁴ Philippe Boutry and Michel Cinquin, *Deux Pèlerines au XIXe siècle: Ars et Paray-le-Monial* (Paris, 1980).

phenomena. His *Miracles and Prophecies in Nineteenth Century France* (1983) was ground breaking in its description of an osmotic relationship between the institutional Church and popular religion, rather than a strict division between the two. It also provided a rebuttal to the secularisation thesis by suggesting that attendance at Mass was not the true marker of religious adherence, and revealing such sobering facts as that during the first decade of the twentieth century, more people in France went on pilgrimage to Lourdes than participated in strike action. David Blackbourn's *Marpingen. Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (1993), pointed to the suite of issues that were at stake for historians of popular religion in modern Europe: pilgrimage; modernity; commercialised religion; conflicts between Church and state; urbanisation; miracles and medicine.

Recent Studies of Popular Catholicism

It is the above issues that still hold the attention of the leading historians of modern Catholicism today. Ruth Harris' *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (1999) has become the definitive study of the evolution of the Lourdes pilgrimage, paying particularly attention to its use of modern technologies, its implications for the history of medicine and of psychoanalysis, and the relationship the pilgrimage had with the ecclesiastical authorities, as well as the civil state. The political context of such popular devotions has been a preoccupation in Raymond Jonas' recent studies of popular cults. Both his *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (2000) and *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud and the Great War* (2005) provide accounts of the rise of new devotional cults in modern France, underscoring the role of the image in the dominant devotional culture, and the importance of the interactions between grass-roots constituencies and the Church hierarchy.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, Richard D. E. Burton has explored a less concrete devotion – the culture of suffering amongst modern French Catholic women, suggesting the opportunities for other studies of such devotional tropes rather than devotional cults.¹¹⁶ Similarly, Caroline Ford's book *Divided Houses: Religion and Gender in Modern France* (2005) examined women's religious practice in the round through the lens of a series of microhistories. Meanwhile, in other geographical settings, the implications of other sociological contexts for popular religion have come to the fore in the work of Robert Orsi, his examination of lived religion in Italian Harlem making immigrant communities the focus of attention, and his edited volume, *Gods of the City*,

¹¹⁵ In the latter work Jonas compares the passive Thérèse to the rather more vigorous Claire, suggesting that the latter was too difficult a figure to be officially recognised by the Church. Jonas, *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud*, pp. 155-6.

¹¹⁶ Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*.

focussing on popular piety in the urban environment.¹¹⁷ Orsi's studies are rare in their twentieth-century focus, and it should be noted that study of European Catholicism and popular devotion has remained largely confined to the nineteenth century. The present study brings the chronological focus forward to the early twentieth century, which is still something of a historiographical wilderness. After the period of greatest controversy in the relationship between Church and state in France, but before the great changes of Vatican II, it offers few obvious footholds to the historian.¹¹⁸ This thesis builds profitably on the existing body of work, with its nineteenth-century focus, to make inroads into this period of French religious history.

Saints, Stars and the Uses of Hagiography

The literature on sainthood as a specific aspect of the religious worlds of modern Europe is an important context for this thesis, which hopes to make a contribution to this body of work in elucidating some aspects of the cult of Saint Thérèse. The best work in this area has been done in ancient and medieval contexts, and sociological approaches have informed the seminal studies of sainthood in the last thirty years. As Nancy Caciola explains, 'This trend in scholarship imagines the saint as a hazy mirror of her surrounding society', the saint being invested with a range of social ideals by their devotees, and thus providing a reflection of the societies that venerate them.¹¹⁹ Peter Brown has shown how 'the supernatural becomes the depository of the objectified values of the group'¹²⁰ and his *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (1981) made a similar point to David Blackbourn's *Marpingen* in opposing a 'two-tier' model of religious scholarship, where popular and elite piety is seen to be in opposition – the saint can be a mirror that is reflective of all levels of society. André Vauchez's *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (1987) played a key role in shaping the scholarship that followed by using hagiographical works as sources for the social history of western Christianity.¹²¹ Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell had already

¹¹⁷ Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950* (New Haven, 2002); *Idem.*, *Gods of the City: Religion and the American Urban Landscape* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1999). See also *Idem.*, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, 2005). On Orsi's work, see Suzanne K. Kaufman, 'Navigating Place and Community in the History of Popular Religion', *Journal of Urban History*, 27, 2 (January, 2001), p. 226, 231-5.

¹¹⁸ The First World War has become one focus of interest in this period for religious historians, however. See, for example, Annette Becker, *La Guerre et la foi. De la mort à la mémoire (1914-1930)* (Paris, 1994).

¹¹⁹ Nancy Caciola, 'Through a Glass, Darkly: Recent Work on Sanctity and Society. A Review Article', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 38, 2 (April, 1996), p. 301.

¹²⁰ Peter Brown, 'Society and the Supernatural: A Medieval Change', *Daedalus*, 104, 2 (Spring, 1975), p. 140.

¹²¹ Originally published as André Vauchez, *La Sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Age d'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques* (Rome, 1981).

taken a sociological approach to saints in their *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christianity, 1000-1700* (1982) and Stephen Wilson's edited volume *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History* (1985) added to this literature further. In that volume, Pierre Delooz's 'Towards a sociological study of canonized sainthood in the Catholic Church' suggested the possibilities for understanding societies through the saints they recognise and the criteria for sainthood that they apply.¹²² Wilson's own essay in the volume, 'Cults of saints in the churches of central Paris' revealed the incredible prevalence of Saint Thérèse in this context in the late 1970s, but was frustratingly light on cultural analysis.¹²³ Meanwhile, Kenneth L. Woodward's *Making Saints. Inside the Vatican: Who Become Saints, Who Do Not, and Why* (1991) has set the benchmark for the study of sainthood in an institutional context.

The Cultural History of the Saint

The sociological approach of the above works is important to note, but it is not the approach taken by this study, which does not assess Saint Thérèse's wider socio-religious impact, but her cultural creation and operation. The best studies of the cultural resonance of the saint have mostly appeared in a medieval context. Indeed, work on sainthood in the middle ages is undoubtedly further advanced than in a modern context, but the attention paid to the evolution of the saint's Life and the production of their posthumous representations in the work of contemporary medievalists can serve as an important model for modernists. Such work often makes heavy use of visual sources, advancing an in-depth analysis of images and using theoretical approaches largely unfamiliar to modern history. Marina Warner's *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (1981)¹²⁴ is a significant work in this regard, examining both Joan's 'living' roles (Maid of France, Prophet, Heretic, Ideal Androgyne, Knight) and her posthumous guises (Amazon, Personification of Virtue, Child of Nature, Saint, Patriot). Exploring the cultural meaning of these guises for the societies that have venerated Joan, Warner points out that 'Joan of Arc was an individual in history and real time, but she is also the protagonist of a famous story in the timeless dimension of myth, and the way that story has come to be told tells yet another story, one about

¹²² Pierre Delooz, 'Towards a sociological study of canonized sainthood in the Catholic Church', in Stephen Wilson (ed.), *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 189-216.

¹²³ Stephen Wilson, 'Cults of saints in the churches of central Paris', in Wilson, *Saints and Their Cults*, pp. 233-60.

¹²⁴ Here, Warner mentions the representation of Thérèse as child-like and a model of simplicity. Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (London, 2000) [original publication 1981], pp. 266-7.

our concept of the heroic, the good and the pure.’¹²⁵ This framing of the mythical dimension of the saint, and interest in their symbolic function, has been instructive for this thesis. Pamela Sheingorn and Kathleen M. Ashley did something similar in their 1990 edited volume on Saint Anne’s place in medieval culture, highlighting the diversity of cultural roles the saint played simultaneously for different social groups.¹²⁶ These explorations of the cultural history of medieval sainthood have been more formative for this thesis than some of the recent studies of modern sainthood, which have often been characterised by a distinct eccentricity and narrow focus on psychological and medical tropes in hagiography. Rudolph Bell’s *Holy Anorexia* (1985), an ahistorical attempt to make links between modern medical views of eating disorders and the ascetic practices of medieval Italian holy women, is such a study. Cristina Mazzoni’s, *Saint Hysteria: Neurosis, Mysticism, and Gender in European Culture* (1996), examining the turn-of-the-century link between medical definitions of hysteria and mysticism, but referring to figures as chronologically diverse as Angela of Foligno and Simone Weil makes similar mistakes. The relevance of such studies to Thérèse is that she has often been viewed through such lenses in popular biography, with ideas of hysteria, sexual repression and mental health disorders never far away,¹²⁷ and indeed study of female saints in general has often been clouded by such preoccupations. Bell and Mazzoni’s volume on Italian mystic Gemma Galgani falls into this very trap where Thérèse is concerned, outlining the many superficial similarities between the two saints, but ignoring that the sober Carmelite of Normandy had very little in common with the visionary and stigmatic of Tuscany.¹²⁸

The Modern Saint

Studies of saints in a modern context are still less concerned with the significance of the saint as a cultural agent than as a historical personality. Thérèse Taylor’s *Bernadette of Lourdes: Her Life, Death and Visions* (2003), for example, is principally an insightful biography, and only briefly assesses her posthumous cult, discussing the 1953 Hollywood film *Song of Bernadette* and the saint’s representation in popular biography. One of the best recent studies of a saint’s cult, which is

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹²⁶ Pamela Sheingorn and Kathleen M Ashley (eds), *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society* (Athens, 1990).

¹²⁷ See for example, Harrison, *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*. Mazzoni’s more recent book examines the relationship of holy women with food, dedicating a chapter to Thérèse. See Cristina Mazzoni, *The Women in God’s Kitchen: Cooking, Eating, and Spiritual Writing* (New York, 2005), ch. 12.

¹²⁸ Rudolph M. Bell and Cristina Mazzoni, *The Voices of Gemma Galgani: The Life and Afterlife of a Modern Saint* (Chicago, 2003), pp. 220-1, 262. On Gemma’s lack of posthumous success in comparison with Thérèse, see p. xiii.

wholly focussed on the posthumous life, is Robert A. Orsi's *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes* (1996). Looking at the renewal and dissemination of the cult of Saint Jude in twentieth-century America, Orsi explores issues that are central to this thesis – the creation of an iconography for the saint and the promotion of the cult using this iconography and a variety of commercial devotional ephemera. The book highlights the issues of image, material culture and consumerism in the cult of the modern saint, with careful attention paid to what Jude's image connoted, 'his eyes "loving and tender" and his hands "strong but gentle"'.¹²⁹ Here, the relationship between the image and the devotional products it appeared on is interrogated, with Orsi showing that 'The point of many of the practices associated with the material world of the devotion – the statues of various sizes sold by the Shrine, its holy cards, medals, stationery and greeting cards, dashboard medallions, and so on – [was] to focus Jude's caring and protective gaze'.¹³⁰ The carefully crafted nature of Saint Jude's representation and the harnessing of new technologies by the cult's promoters that Orsi describes has distinct parallels with Thérèse's case, and the centre of his interest is the cultural history of the cult and its life as the focus of grassroots religiosity. Orsi's study takes place in an American context and spans the changes of Vatican II, unlike the present study. It is also principally a study of reception amongst specific communities, with a large oral history element, but the complete focus on a cult and its genesis, away from any consideration of the saint as a historical entity, as well as the examination of the cult as part of an emerging consumer culture, has been formative for this thesis.

Secular Saints and Stars

Orsi has also made a connection that has been formative for this thesis, saying that 'The American Jude obviously resembled other Depression-era popular heroes, real and imaginary... Jude came suddenly on the scene... just when he was most needed – like... Superman [or] the Lone Ranger'.¹³¹ This issue of popular cultural peers and the secular saint is one that should be considered here. Approaches to such modern non-religious icons can be enlightening for the study of modern sainthood, where the literature is still limited, serving as a way of thinking about fame and the dissemination of 'cults' in the twentieth century, and shedding light on the re-use and re-

¹²⁹ Robert A. Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes* (New Haven, 1996), p. 7.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 97. For Orsi on religious iconography, see *Idem.*, 'The Many Names of the Mother of God', in Melissa R. Katz (ed.), *Divine Mirrors: The Virgin Mary in the Visual Arts* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 3-18.

¹³¹ Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude*, p. 101.

imagining of historical personalities as they become subject to the changing nature of the cultural worlds they belong to. Lucy Riall's study of the making of the cult of Garibaldi, a collaborative effort involving writers, artists, actors and publishers, has clear parallels for the history of the rise of the cult of Saint Thérèse.¹³² Richard Dyer's work on Hollywood stars provides some insights for understanding images of Thérèse and her public persona,¹³³ showing that 'Star images have histories, and histories that outlive the star's own lifetime'¹³⁴ – pointing to the existence of a public image that becomes malleable in popular culture, and is reshaped and owned by many different constituencies. With much in common with Roland Barthes' short essay 'Le visage de Garbo',¹³⁵ here we have a sophisticated reading of the making of the famous face and what it can connote when it takes on a cultural resonance that is created by its very familiarity and ubiquity. Greil Marcus' *Dead Elvis: A Chronicle of a Cultural Obsession* (1991) is similarly interested in the posthumous life of its subject, taking a collage approach, assembling and analysing diverse cultural references to Elvis Presley. The cult of Cassie Bernall, a victim of the Columbine shootings who allegedly refused to renounce her faith when confronted by her killers, is also relevant here, shedding light on popular understandings of the relationship between youth, femininity, conversion, religiosity and martyrdom.¹³⁶ Such a case provides a way of thinking about Thérèse by taking a step back from the Catholic context and looking at the wider cultural place of the tropes that feature in her story.¹³⁷ Thérèse has been likened to some of the great secular 'heroes' of modern times, and a number of book length comparative studies have appeared, devoted entirely to placing Thérèse alongside other legendary figures, both real and fictional, including Friedrich

¹³² Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven, 2007).

¹³³ Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London, 1979); *Idem.*, 'Entertainment and Utopia', in Bill Nichols, (ed.), *Movies and Methods: An Anthology* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 220-32; *Idem.*, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (Basingstoke, 1986); *Idem.*, *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representations* (London, 1993).

¹³⁴ Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies*, p. 3.

¹³⁵ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris, 1957), pp. 70-1.

¹³⁶ See: Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory. Early Christian Culture Making* (New York, 2004), ch. 6; Kristi L. Gerding, 'The conversion of Cassie Bernall: the power of narratives in transforming a school girl into a saint', unpublished MA thesis, Central Michigan University, 2001; Misty Bernall, *She Said Yes: The Unlikely Martyrdom of Cassie Bernall* (New York, 1999).

¹³⁷ See Richard North, 'Courage, martyrdom, sanctity, youth – and renunciation of a profligate past', *The Independent*, 18 October 1997 <<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/courage-martyrdom-sanctity-youth--and-renunciation-of-a-profligate-past-1236544.html>> [accessed 3 January 2011]. Here, North draws parallels between Thérèse, on the occasion of her being named a Doctor of the Church, and other 'stars', including James Dean, Jimi Hendrix, Princess Diana and Horatio Nelson, identifying the common characteristics shared by both Catholic and 'secular' saints.

Nietzsche, Edith Piaf, Blaise Pascal, Madame Bovary and Emmanuel Levinas.¹³⁸ The comparisons with Piaf and Nietzsche highlight that Thérèse is not unique in having had her legacy shaped by a sibling – Nietzsche’s sister, Elisabeth, took over the editing and publication of his works after his death, and Piaf’s half-sister Simone Berteaut published a biography of the singer six years after her death, which recast her character and rewrote her life story.¹³⁹ This varied body of literature can suggest the importance of Thérèse’s status as a general icon of the twentieth century, as well as a saint in the rigidly-defined sense. Indeed, the topic of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux deals in issues of historical memory, cultural identity, and ‘Frenchness’, her status as co-Patroness of France, alongside Joan of Arc, making her particularly culturally loaded, and classic studies of collective memory, French national memory, semiotics and cultural histories of France have also informed this thesis.¹⁴⁰ These provide important context for a cult that has had a crucial place in French visual culture and which was forged in the crucible of the formative events of modern French history.

Religion, Commerciality, Mass Culture and ‘Bad Taste’: New Approaches

A major preoccupation of current work on popular religion is the exploration of the intersection of the religious and the commercial, where images, material culture, mass production and ideas of ‘kitsch’ and bad taste are all at stake. Influenced by Émile Durkheim’s delineation of the sacred and profane as polar opposites in his work *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (1912), along with the negative views of mass culture espoused by Theodor Adorno and Max

¹³⁸ Noëlle Hausman, *Nietzsche, Thérèse de Lisieux, deux poétiques de la modernité* (Paris, 1984); Jacqueline Cartier and Hugues Vassal, *Edith et Thérèse: La sainte et la pécheresse* (Paris, 1999); Claude Tricot and Raymond Zambelli, *Pascal et Thérèse* (Paris, 1999); Micheline Hermine, *Destins de femmes, désir d’absolu. Essai sur Madame Bovary et Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1997); Ann W. Astell, ‘Facing Each Other: Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and Emmanuel Levinas’, *Spiritus* 4 (2004), pp. 24-43.

¹³⁹ See Carol Diethe, *Nietzsche’s Sister and the Will to Power: A Biography of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche* (Urbana, 2003), and Simone Berteaut, *Piaf* (Paris, 1969).

¹⁴⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago, 1992), trans. Lewis A. Coser; Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 3 vols (New York, 1996-98), trans. Arthur Goldhammer, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman; Barthes, *Mythologies*; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, 1984), trans. Richard Nice; Theodore Zeldin, *France, 1848-1945*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1973-77); Eugen Weber, *Peasants Into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1880-1914* (London, 1977); Graham Robb, *The Discovery of France* (London, 2007); Alain Corbin, *Le miasme et la jonquille: l’odorat et l’imaginaire social, 18e-19e siècles* (Paris, 1982); *Idem.*, *Les cloches de la terre: paysage sonore et culture sensible dans les campagnes au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1994). See also Hue-Tam Ho Tai, ‘Remembered Realms: Pierre Nora and French National Memory’, *The American Historical Review*, 106, 3 (June, 2001), pp. 906-22, and Alon Confino, ‘Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method’, *The American Historical Review*, 102, 5 (December, 1997), pp. 1386-403.

Horkheimer in the 1940s,¹⁴¹ scholars doing otherwise innovative work on popular religion have often not been fully alive to the significance of the commercial, seeing it as superficial or inauthentic, particularly where matters of aesthetic taste have been involved. For example, the otherwise pioneering Ralph Gibson dismissed the inherently commercial genre of Saint-Sulpician art as characterised by ‘statues, often painted in crude colours, with saccharine and mindless expressions’.¹⁴² The influence of Walter Benjamin and his seminal essay on the copy, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, with its famous assertion that ‘that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art’¹⁴³ can also be detected in such cynical assessments of commercial religion. Clement Greenberg’s famous reading of kitsch – commercial art with a strong association with popular religious culture in a modern French Catholic context – as ‘vicarious experience and faked sensations’, is also important here.¹⁴⁴ For Greenberg, kitsch is fundamentally inauthentic and derivative, the polar opposite of ‘true culture’, represented for him by avant-garde art, and, as in Adorno’s assessment, kitsch is a form of mass culture that is ultimately oppressive, undermining and homogenising. Indeed, Robert C. Solomon has suggested that for many commentators ‘kitsch is *dangerous*’.¹⁴⁵ But commercial religion is now being rehabilitated as a subject worthy of study. Colleen McDannell’s *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (1995) is a landmark study for research on commercial religion and religious material culture. Here she argues that ‘If we immediately assume that whenever money is exchanged religion is debased, then we will miss the subtle ways that people create and maintain spiritual ideals *through* the exchange of goods and the construction of spaces’, stating that material religious practices ‘have been ignored because scholars deem these practices less spiritual or authentic.’¹⁴⁶ McDannell’s exploration of religious art and devotional ephemera remains the best

¹⁴¹ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, ‘The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception’, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London, 1997), pp. 120-67, trans. John Cumming. See also Theodor W. Adorno, and J. M. Bernstein (ed.), *The Culture Industry: Selected essays on mass culture* (London, 1991); Theodor W. Adorno and Stephen Crook (ed.), *The Stars Down to Earth and other essays on the irrational in culture* (London, 1994).

¹⁴² Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism*, p. 154.

¹⁴³ Walter Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, in Hannah Arendt (ed.) *Illuminations* (London, 1999), trans. Harry Zorn, p. 215.

¹⁴⁴ Clement Greenberg, ‘Avant-Garde and Kitsch’, in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (eds), *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford, 1992), p. 534.

¹⁴⁵ See Robert C. Solomon, ‘On Kitsch and Sentimentality’, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 49, 1 (Winter, 1991), p. 3. See also J. M. Cameron, ‘Christian Kitsch’, *New York Review of Books*, 29 May 1986, p. 56.

¹⁴⁶ Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven, 1995), p. 6, 8. In an American context, two works appeared before McDannell’s which took such a view (although the latter more than the former): Malise Ruthven, *The Divine Supermarket: Travels in Search of the Soul of America* (London, 1989); R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (Oxford, 1994). For a more recent, cynical

extant examination of commerciality and material religion. Here the role of the visual elements of religion, from church interiors to holy cards and cheap prints, is elucidated and McDannell confronts the issue of kitsch head-on, rejecting Greenberg's assessment of it wholly. Frequently seen as associated with low brow, feminine culture, McDannell's confrontation of these attitudes in regard to commercial religion was an important turning point for the literature on the art and material culture of popular religion, and she provides important insights into the nature and uses of religious ephemera and images.

The Devotional Market

The most recent reassessment of commercial religion, heavily influenced by McDannell's work, is Suzanne Kaufman's 2005 work *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine*.¹⁴⁷ Picking up on Ruth Harris' incomplete assessment of the commercialisation of the Lourdes shrine, this study of the intersection of commercialism and pilgrimage explores the manifestation of concerns about the proper relationship between religion and commercial enterprise at the shrine, and argues that the meeting of traditional pilgrimage practices and new forms of mass culture there saw the birth of 'distinctly modern forms of popular religiosity' and 'fresh expressions of popular faith'.¹⁴⁸ Kaufman asserts that popular religious devotions were enriched by their contact with the commercial and should be recognised as valid cultural forms, which were used, and may be read, in many different ways. Kaufman argues here that commercialised religion has been a fundamental feature of modernity itself, outlining a 'discourse of religious debasement', where 'Catholic critics condemned the shrine's commercialism for debasing religious worship, while anticlerical republicans attacked the marketing of the pilgrimage for corrupting the health of the secular republic.'¹⁴⁹ Her work takes an important step forward in seeing commercial religion as positively productive and siting the commercial at the heart of modern spiritual practices. This thesis builds on Kaufman's work, not only by addressing the 'discourse of religious debasement' around a popular Catholic cult in chapter 4 in a twentieth-century, rather than a nineteenth-century context, but also by focussing explicitly on the role of the image in a fully commercialised

assessment of religion and commerciality, see Jeremy Carrette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (London, 2005).

¹⁴⁷ See also Suzanne K. Kaufman, 'Selling Lourdes: Pilgrimage, Tourism, and the Mass-Marketing of the Sacred in Nineteenth-Century France', in Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough (eds), *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe and North America* (Ann Arbor, 2001), pp. 63-88.

¹⁴⁸ Kaufman, *Consuming Visions*, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

cult. While Kaufmann was concerned with the pilgrimage as experience, and only the supplementary role of its commercial accoutrements, this thesis focuses on the quickly communicated, mass produced image as the lifeblood of the twentieth-century cult of Saint Thérèse. Kaufman's theorisation of ideas of authentic religious practice have been formative for this thesis and it owes much to her innovative research. Kaufman's work is well-complemented by Lisa Tiersten's examination of taste, consumerism, and the French bourgeoisie up to 1914 in her *Marianne in the Market: Envisioning Consumer Society in Fin-de-Siècle France* (2001). Examining many concerns that run in parallel to those of Kaufman, but in a secular context, it has provided a wider context for the commercial activities of the Carmel of Lisieux. In placing the cult of Saint Thérèse in the framework of this body of literature on commercial religion, we may begin to see its relevance as an industry, shaped by the market as much as by devotional impulses. In examining the Theresian industry, we uncover a history that goes far beyond the potentially narrow limits of the rise of a cult within the Church, opening the field of vision out to encompass mass consumerism, popular visual culture and, ultimately, collective identity.

Picturing the Holy: Studies of Religious Images

The negative connotations of kitsch, particularly in a religious context, remain and this may be partly responsible for the fact that devotional art deemed to be 'kitsch' has been largely ignored by academics since the publication of McDannell's book, which indicated so many possibilities for further study. Saint-Sulpician art is of course the major concern when we consider religious culture and kitsch in a modern European context (McDannell in fact offers a useful, if brief assessment of this),¹⁵⁰ but this area remains severely understudied. Religious historian Claude Savart's article 'A la recherche de l'"art" dit de Saint-Sulpice', dating from 1976, remains the only concentrated study of this phenomenon in popular religious culture. This was in any case limited, since Savart focussed on church art, surveying the statues present in twenty churches of the Haute-Marne between 1860 and 1930. Saint-Sulpician statuary has received some limited attention from other scholars,¹⁵¹ and elsewhere a handful of studies of the images used on religious ephemera, specifically holy cards, has appeared. Catherine Rosenbaum-Dondaine's *L'Image de Piété en France, 1814-1914* (1984), a catalogue for a Paris exhibition, and Alain Vircondelet's, *Le Monde Merveilleux de Images Pieuses* (1988), a popular picture book, both indicate that the study of such devotional

¹⁵⁰ McDannell, *Material Christianity*, ch. 6.

¹⁵¹ See Wilson, 'Cults of saints in the churches of central Paris'.

ephemera is still not wholly incorporated into the academic landscape. The incredible collection of devotional items from nineteenth- and twentieth-century convents at Dijon's Musée d'Art Sacré also gives a privileged insight into the visual devotional culture of French religious in this period.¹⁵² Despite the lack of a monograph on Saint-Sulpician art, historians such as Robert Orsi and Raymond Jonas have begun to incorporate serious study of Saint-Sulpician devotional art into their work, and it also seems to be the case that as the kitsch value of this style becomes fashionable in certain areas of contemporary popular culture, it is becoming a more popular topic of study.

Art History and Sacred Images

This thesis draws on a range of art historical perspectives to elucidate the history of the Celinian image, with a particular focus on concepts of the 'authentic' image, portraiture and methodologies of 'reading' images. David Morgan's work is of particular note here, and he has explored the role of religious images in identity making and 'the visual formation and practice of religious belief.'¹⁵³ Much like Suzanne Kaufman on commercial religion, Morgan made a plea in his 1998 book, *Visual Piety*, for more attention to be paid to religious images, a topic that has not received sufficient attention because 'the images simply have not been thought worthy of serious consideration', with 'taste exert[ing] a very restricting force on what many historians of art have considered worthy of attention.'¹⁵⁴ Although principally interested in studying the reception of images, and in examining them in an American Protestant context, Morgan attempts to offer a general theory of religious visual culture here. In his book *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (2005), Morgan is in particular seeking a theory of perception, the sacred gaze being 'a term that designates the particular configuration of ideas, attitudes, and customs that informs a religious act of seeing as it occurs within a given cultural and historical setting.'¹⁵⁵ Here Morgan was building on a growing interest in response amongst art historians, with David Freedberg's, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (1989) having asserted that images do not just have a 'magical' power in 'primitive' cultures, but that images in the history of western art also have a power derived from the idea that the image is, in some way, the very subject it depicts. The problem of the copy and the rigours of authentic representation are at

¹⁵² See Jean Marilier, *Dijon: Musée d'Art Sacré* (Dijon, 1987).

¹⁵³ David Morgan, *Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Popular Religious Images* (Berkeley, 1998), p. 1. See also *Idem.*, *Protestants and Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production* (New York, 1999).

¹⁵⁴ Morgan, *Visual Piety*, p. xii, xv.

¹⁵⁵ David Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley, 2005), p. 3.

issue here, as is the idea of the religious icon – at one with its prototype and in possession of the prototype’s power. This was an issue picked up by Hans Belting in his *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art* (1994), perhaps the definitive study of early Christian icons. Gilbert Dagron has also provided important art historical perspectives on the artist in the Christian tradition and the relationship between prototype and representation, which have informed chapter 2 of this thesis.¹⁵⁶ But Céline was also influenced by more recent ideas of the role of the artist and the production of the authentic portrait, and here the volume of essays edited by Joanna Woodall, *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* (1997), has provided many useful perspectives, also utilised in chapter 2.

From the Medieval Image to Photography

As in the case of the published work on saints, the best material on religious images remains that in a medieval context. The examination of the function of images and careful attention paid to medium and varieties of interaction with the image in studies such as Richard Marks’ *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (2004) provides a useful framework for thinking about the relationship that images of Thérèse had to the wider world of religious devotion.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, studies of other genres of religious art in other periods, such as the catalogue accompanying a recent National Gallery exhibition of Spanish seventeenth-century life-size religious effigies, raises questions about realism, the icon and the representation of the sacred person, as well as medium, the relationship between form and function, artistic expression, devotional uses and religious symbolism.¹⁵⁸ Investigations of the representation of other religious figures and female icons have also been informative, showing the degree to which Thérèse has been reshaped to incorporate modes of representation and visual signifiers with a long tradition.¹⁵⁹ Since this thesis encompasses photography as well as painting, drawing and sculpture, conceptualisations of photographic representation have also been examined. Barthes’ *La chambre claire* (1980) offers a framework for ‘reading’ photographs, as well as reflecting on the tensions

¹⁵⁶ Gilbert Dagron *Décrire et peindre: Essai sur le portrait iconique* (Paris, 2007). *Idem.*, ‘Holy Images and Likeness’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 45 (1991), pp. 23-33.

¹⁵⁷ See also Richard Deacon and Phillip Lindley, *Image and Idol: Medieval Sculpture* (London, 2001).

¹⁵⁸ Xavier Bray, Alfonso Rodríguez G. de Ceballos, Daphne Barbour and Judy Ozone, *The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture 1600-1700* (London, 2009).

¹⁵⁹ See, for example, Margaretta Salinger, ‘Representations of Saint Teresa’, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New Series, 8, 3 (November, 1949), pp. 97-108; Martin Warner, ‘The Image of Mary’, *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 4, 3 (October, 2004), pp. 207-19; Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (London, 1985).

surrounding the authenticity of the photograph. Writing in the late seventies, Susan Sontag argued that the photograph had become so culturally ubiquitous that it has lost its claim to be fully representative of the truth and ‘photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are’, also being ‘reduced, blown up, cropped, retouched, doctored, tricked out.’¹⁶⁰ Sontag provides a theorisation of the authenticity of photography which is usefully applied to Céline’s case, stating that ‘photographs make a claim to be true that paintings can never make. A fake painting (one whose attribution is false) falsifies the history of art. A fake photograph (one which has been retouched or tampered with, or whose caption is false) falsifies reality.’¹⁶¹ Since Sontag was writing, several studies have appeared which interrogate the claimed documentary value of the photograph or which give accounts of the changing cultural conception of photography.¹⁶² These provide a historical context to Céline’s work on her photographs, as well as to the reactions of outside constituencies.

The Concept of the Authentic

Ideas of authenticity surface frequently in this thesis. Informing the approach to the authentic here is a few specific approaches taken by scholars who have contributed to the sparsely-populated field of the study of the cultural conception of the authentic. Miles Orvell’s work *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940* (1989) has provided a historical framework for the changing workings of the authentic in the period this thesis covers. Although its focus is American, Orvell suggests that the changes he sketches out could equally apply to Europe too.¹⁶³ Here Orvell shows ‘that a major shift occurred within the arts and material culture from the late nineteenth century to the twentieth century, a shift from a culture in which the arts of imitation and illusion were valorized to a culture in which the notion of authenticity became of primary value.’¹⁶⁴ The understanding of the real in late nineteenth-century bourgeois culture, where the reproduction and the copy were unselfconsciously prized, was later attacked by

¹⁶⁰ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (Harmondsworth, 1979), pp. 6-7, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹⁶² See John Falconer and Louise Hide, *Points of View: Capturing the 19th Century in Photographs* (London, 2009); John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Basingstoke, 1988); Peter Hamilton and Roger Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned: The Creation of Identity in Nineteenth Century Photography* (Aldershot, 2001); Ann Thomas (ed.), *Beauty of Another Order: Photography in Science* (New Haven, 1997).

¹⁶³ Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill, 1989), pp. xxv-xxvi. For an examination of the operation of authenticity in a variety of geographical contexts, see Rune Graulund (ed.), *Desperately Seeking Authenticity: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (Copenhagen, 2010).

¹⁶⁴ Orvell, *The Real Thing*, p. xv. See also Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (Harmondsworth, 1971).

modernists. However, Orvell shows that modernist architects, designers, photographers, and writers no less hankered after ‘the real thing’ than their Victorian forebears, but substituted a culture of imitation for one of ‘authenticity’ – a search not for realism, but for reality itself. Umberto Eco’s essay ‘Travels in Hyperreality’, an examination of re-creations of the real in contemporary commercial culture has clearly been influential here.¹⁶⁵ Orvell stresses that ‘nothing so neat took place’ as the entire replacement of one culture for another, and in fact asserts that American mass culture remained interested in the illusory and the reproduced across the twentieth century. Even with the emergence of postmodernism, which went ‘beyond *worrying* about imitation and authenticity’,¹⁶⁶ Orvell asserts that ‘the pursuit of authenticity... would in other ways become democratized in the counterculture strain of popular culture that begins in the 1960s – in a taste for crafts, house plants, natural foods... and the other means whereby the factitiousness of the industrial world is at least partially mitigated.’¹⁶⁷ In showing how ‘so much of our aesthetic and material culture has been conditioned by the tension between imitation and authenticity’¹⁶⁸ Orvell provides a sense of the wider context in which the Carmel’s struggles with the authentic occurred.

The ‘Real’ in Modern France

Moving away from Orvell’s general assessment of the authentic, this thesis has turned to a small body of work on the notion of the real in nineteenth- and twentieth-century France. In her study of mass culture in *fin de siècle* Paris, Vanessa Schwartz has shown how a great cultural weight became attached to the presentation of the ‘real thing’, showing how panoramas, early cinema, and even the Paris morgues framed themselves as loci for genuine experiences and authentic representations.¹⁶⁹ This ‘study of the visuality of urban culture in late nineteenth-century Paris’¹⁷⁰ has shown how, in urban centres at least, the search for the real was a formative cultural impulse in France as the twentieth century approached. Schwartz also underscores the role of the print media in making the visual a key cultural mode of communication, and shows that ‘a culture that

¹⁶⁵ Umberto Eco, ‘Travels in Hyperreality’, in *Travels in Hyperreality. Essays* (San Diego, 1986), pp. 3-58, trans. William Weaver.

¹⁶⁶ Orvell, *The Real Thing*, p. xxiv.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

¹⁶⁹ Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley, 1998). See also *Idem.*, ‘Museums and Mass Spectacle: The Musée Grévin as a Monument to Modern Life’, *French Historical Studies*, 19, 1 (Spring, 1995), pp. 7-26.

¹⁷⁰ Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities*, p. 3.

became “more literate” also became more visual as word and image generated the spectacular realities described here’,¹⁷¹ underscoring the importance of intertextuality, from word, to image, to space, to three-dimensional representation – a significant relationship in the case of the cult of Saint Thérèse. Schwartz is also interested in ‘reconfigurations of public space and... the new publics that appeared freely to inhabit the glitzy, sparkling and seductive spaces of consumption.’¹⁷² Suzanne Kaufman has begun to show the relevance of public space in the context of pilgrimage and popular religious practices in late nineteenth-century France, and to show that this search for the real through the ‘spaces of consumption’ was not just a secular impulse. The commercially-run dioramas and panoramas of Lourdes ‘By claiming that visitors could “authentically” experience re-created moments from the Lourdes sacred past’, show that in religious contexts as well as secular ones ‘extraordinary value [was put] on viewing spectacles that recreated reality’ in France in this period.¹⁷³

The Copy and Copyright

The impact of the copy on authenticity is also at stake in this thesis, and it looks to a body of literature on copying and repetition, covering forms of visual culture from photographs to waxworks, and which is particularly important to the exploration of copyright infringement of artistic works in chapter 5. The tensions in the relationship between the original and the copy are well-explored in the edited volume *Retaining the Original: Multiple Originals, Copies, and Reproductions* (1989), looking at the issues of the pirated image, the copy, mirroring and repetition and the post-modernist interest in appropriation and ‘quotation’ of the established culture. Meanwhile, Hillel Schwartz has provided thought-provoking, although unfocussed, analysis of ‘how it has come to be that the most perplexing moral dilemmas of this era are dilemmas posed by our skill at the creation of likenesses of ourselves, our world, our times.’¹⁷⁴ Many of his examples, like ‘the executors of the Warhol estate announcing in 1988 that they will prosecute anyone stealing Andy’s images, when it was Andy who pioneered the transfer of others’ photographs to his silkscreen canvasses, Andy who “infringed the copyrights of everything and everybody”’,¹⁷⁵ highlight the changing nature of the perceived impact of the copy on authenticity and how

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁷³ Kaufman, ‘Selling Lourdes’, pp. 69-70, and *Consuming Visions*, p. 215, n. 57.

¹⁷⁴ Hillel Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles* (New York, 1996), p. 11.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 246. See also Chris Rodley (dir.), *Warhol: Denied* (BBC 1, UK, 24 January 2006).

different perceptions of this can exist simultaneously. Meanwhile, some examinations of specific ‘copies’, like Brigitte and Gilles Delluc’s study of Lascaux II, an exact copy of the caves containing the famous Paleolithic paintings, provides further perspectives on the cultural weight of the copy.¹⁷⁶ This thesis also makes a contribution to the emerging field of copyright history ‘the history of legal, particularly proprietary, mechanisms for the regulation of the reproduction and distribution of cultural products’,¹⁷⁷ chapter 5 being a case study of the operation of European copyright law in the early twentieth century.¹⁷⁸

Conclusion: Towards a History of the Theresian Iconography

Although writing as a Catholic in Protestant England in an age of continued anti-Catholic prejudice, Cardinal Newman’s statement that ‘were the Catholic Church on the moon, England would gaze on her with more patience, and delineate her with more accuracy, than England does now’¹⁷⁹ could well be applied to the hidden history of popular Catholicism in the last century, and particularly commercial religion and the iconography of cults, substituting ‘the historian’ for ‘England’. It certainly applies to the cult of Saint Thérèse, which, as we have seen remains very little-researched. In 1973, Jean-François Six asserted that ‘A history of the life of Thérèse from her death to that of her last sister must be written.’¹⁸⁰ Although this thesis takes that period (the era of the Carmel’s control over Thérèse’s representation, before its democratisation after Céline’s death) as its focus, it does not pretend to be the study Six envisaged. Indeed, in the absence of a monograph on the cult, and with abundant material for such a study still waiting to be explored at the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux, the scholar is spoilt for choice as to which aspects of the cult to research. This thesis examines a small, but significant part of the posthumous life Six wished to write about, beginning to write the history of the iconography of Saint Thérèse – the most immediate aspect of the cult for the popular religious landscape of twentieth-century France,

¹⁷⁶ Brigitte and Gilles Delluc, ‘Lascaux II: a faithful copy’, *Antiquity*, 58 (November, 1984), pp. 194-6.

¹⁷⁷ Martin Kretschmer, ‘Introduction. The History of Copyright History: Notes from an Emerging Discipline’, in Ronan Deazley, Martin Kretschmer and Lionel Bently (eds), *Privilege and Property. Essays on the History of Copyright* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 1.

¹⁷⁸ See Laurent Pfister, ‘L’auteur, propriétaire de son œuvre? La formation du droit d’auteur du XVI^e siècle à la loi de 1957’, unpublished PhD thesis, Université Robert Schuman, Strasbourg, 1999; Deazley et al., *Privilege and Property; Primary Sources on Copyright (1450-1900)* <<http://www.copyrighthistory.org>>; Sam Ricketson and Jane C. Ginsburg, *International Copyright and Neighbouring Rights: The Berne Convention and Beyond* (Oxford, 2006), 2nd edition; Paul Goldstein, *Copyright’s Highway: From Gutenberg to the Celestial Jukebox* (New York, 1994).

¹⁷⁹ John Henry Newman, *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England Addressed to the Brothers of the Oratory in the Summer of 1851* (London, 1908), p. 44.

¹⁸⁰ Laurentin and Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, pp. 145-6.

which can begin to reveal something about the wider relevance of Saint Thérèse for devotional culture in that time and place.

As a whole, this thesis examines the making of the prototype images of Saint Thérèse, their dissemination, the reaction to them and the counter-reaction, exploring how the Carmel undertook a process of cultural legitimation in each context. Chapter 2 examines Céline Martin's artworks and their production, situating the images in the wider histories of Christian iconography and popular devotional art discussed above. Chapter 3 looks at the promotion of this iconography in the Catholic world through a large commercial enterprise, examining the material culture of the cult and taking this commercial activity seriously, an approach inspired by the work of both Kaufman and McDannell. Chapter 4 examines the succession of biographies of Thérèse which commented on her popular image and the sisters' part in shaping it, exploring the cultural concepts of the authentic that arose and making a contribution to the small body of literature on the authentic examined above. Chapter 5 looks at the Carmel's attempts to control the image of Thérèse beyond the walls of the convent by launching a series of legal cases against makers of rival representations of the saint, exploring the cultural meaning of the copy and both legal and religious concepts of the authentic image. What emerges is the history of the legitimation of the visual representation of a new saint, and the building of a new cult through its images, situating this cult in the history of modern French Catholic culture. In examining the image, its commercial circulation and the range of responses and reactions to it, this thesis hopes to elucidate the most neglected aspects of the already much-neglected cult of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux.

Chapter 2

‘You are the reality while I am only your shadow’: Céline Martin’s Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image

The thing itself has been essentially objectified and made viable before the established authorities began to argue about it. Even before Zanuck acquired her, Saint Bernadette was regarded by her latter-day hagiographer as brilliant propaganda for all interested parties. That is what became of the emotions of the character.

Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception* (1947).

The history of Theresian iconography begins at the Carmel of Lisieux in early 1899. Thérèse had been dead for over eighteen months and the first edition of *Histoire d'une âme* had just gone out of print. While the initial run of two thousand copies had sold much faster than anyone expected, the presentation of the book had not been very successful. The frontispiece had been hastily arranged, with the photograph known as ‘Thérèse *au chapelet*’¹ being used and mistakenly printed back to front (see figure 3.9).² Something more polished was required for the planned second edition, and shortly after Easter 1899 Céline began work on a portrait of her sister. This was the beginning of sixty years of work on Thérèse’s image, and her portraits of the saint were to become the principal commodity of a cult without modern precedent. Making heavy use of the archival sources held at the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux, this chapter is divided into three parts, examining: the creation of Céline’s images; her attempted legitimation of them by inserting them into the wider context of religious art in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France; and the challenges to the perceived authenticity of her images. First the chapter outlines the history of the production of the images of Thérèse – those that would dominate the cult for over half a century – examining a cast of collaborators who, until now, have been hidden figures in the history of the cult. Céline’s understanding of artistic and spiritual authenticity as instruments of cultural authority is then explored, and it is demonstrated that she appealed both to contemporary ideas of artistic genius, as well as traditional Christian concepts of the authentic religious image, to present her work as ‘genuine’. It is argued here that Céline’s images enacted the reshaping of her sister as an archetype, closely modelling her representations of Thérèse on the

¹ Photograph 37, Appendix 2.

² See the frontispiece, Carmel of Lisieux, *Sœur Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face, religieuse carmélite, morte en odeur de sainteté au carmel de Lisieux à l’âge de 24 ans le 30 septembre 1897, Histoire d’une âme écrite par elle-même* (Bar-le-Duc, 1898).

Saint-Sulpician images of her milieu, and inserting her cult into dominant devotional fashions. The chapter then goes on to examine the challenges to the authenticity of Céline's images, arguing that the retouching and 'faking' of photographs and use of outside collaborators, along with the censure of some of her images by certain clerics, intensified the need to legitimate her work. Here, the images of Saint Thérèse are historicised, placed within a larger history of popular religious culture in the first half of the twentieth century, and origins of the iconography of Saint Thérèse are revealed.

Céline Martin/ Madame X/ Sœur Geneviève: Céline's Choice of Her Life's Path

As director of the iconographical project, and the architect of the visual elements of the cult, Céline's personality was formative on the essential character of her images of Thérèse, and it is appropriate to give a brief account of her life before her entry into the Carmel before proceeding. Céline (see figure 2.1) had witnessed the entry of two of her sisters to the Carmel of Lisieux and one to the Poor Clares by the time she was seventeen. When Thérèse also entered the Carmel in April 1888, Céline was left bereft without the sibling to whom she was closest, in age, temperament and emotional bond.³ Left with the emotionally troubled Léonie (who had failed at the religious life twice by this point) and an ailing father (Louis Martin had suffered a mild stroke the previous year and, at sixty-four, was showing alarming signs of declining mental alertness), to follow her sisters into the cloister after her father's clearly imminent death would have seemed the obvious path for Céline. However, she had real alternatives to the Carmel made available to her, and over just a few weeks in the spring of 1888 she faced a number of decisions about her life's path. First, she received a marriage proposal. She later wrote 'just in case, I responded that I was not willing, that I wanted to be left in peace for the time being, and that no one should wait for me.'⁴ Her cautious rejection was perhaps borne of the fact that until the age of twenty she was 'perfectly ignorant of the things of nature. The Lord had thrown a veil over them that I did not seek to pull aside.'⁵ Indeed, her attitude towards sex seems to have shaped her reaction when, in June 1888 Louis offered his daughter, seen as the artist of the family (see figure 2.2), the opportunity to go to Paris to pursue an artistic career. Céline later wrote that:

³ For their closeness see HA, Ms. A, 9r°-9v°, pp. 25-6.

⁴ CAC, p. 68.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 89.

Without taking time to think about it... I confided to him that I wanted to be a nun, I did not seek the glory of the world, and that if God needed my works later on, he could very well make up for my ignorance. I added that I preferred my innocence to all other advantages and that I did not want to risk it in artists' studios.⁶

With Céline not willing to 'risk' her chastity in what she saw as the bohemian and godless haunts of the Parisian art world, the Carmel was beckoning. However, she was not to enter for a further six years, as events overtook her again.



Figure 2.1. Céline Martin as a young woman, late 1880s. Source: Album famille Martin, ACL.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 71.



Figure 2.2. Céline painting a portrait of her sister Léonie, accompanied by her cousin Marie Guérin, c. 1890. Source: Album famille Martin, ACL.

In early 1889, Louis Martin became a serious cause for concern. In a distressed and paranoid state, he brandished a revolver in front of his two daughters and had to be disarmed by his brother-in-law, Isidore Guérin, who made immediate arrangements for him to be placed in an asylum in Caen. Céline and Léonie moved in with their uncle, aunt (after whom Céline was named) and two cousins, Jeanne and Marie, in June 1889 and this period saw Céline forced to participate in the active social life of her wealthy relatives, becoming the focus of the unwelcome attentions of various admirers. She took private vow of chastity in December 1889, and this was an attitude well-supported by Thérèse who, on hearing that Céline was attending a wedding ball, tearfully entreated her not to ‘imitate the folly of the times and worship the idol by giving yourself over to dangerous pleasures’.⁷ When Céline was swept onto the dance floor by a young man, both found themselves completely unable to dance, and Thérèse saw this as a result of her fervent prayers to that effect.⁸ For nearly three years Céline filled her time with painting, reading, letter writing and enforced socialising. However, this was punctuated by the appearance of one final alternative route in her life’s path. Père Pichon, a Norman Jesuit who had acted as Céline’s spiritual advisor since late 1887, wrote to her in June 1891 from his missionary post in Canada, making the suggestion that she come and join him working in a new foundation to prepare

⁷ Sœur Geneviève, *Conseils et Souvenirs*, pp. 136-7.

⁸ HA, Ms. A, 82r°, p. 176.

'morally neglected' children for their first communion.⁹ A new option, a life as a missionary, was added to that of nun and was considered right up until her final decision to enter Carmel was made. The return of Louis Martin from the Bon Sauveur asylum in May 1892 saw the beginning of a new period in Céline's life. With the help of her uncle, she re-established the Martin household in a house backing on to the Guérin's property (see figure 2.3). In June 1893, Léonie left for another try at the religious life, leaving Céline alone. After a further year as the head of her own household, Louis died, with Céline at his side. The ordeal of her father's illness had been traumatic for Céline, and she devoted pages and pages to its twists and turns when she wrote her memoirs fifteen years later. Six weeks after his death, she entered the Carmel of Lisieux, and later she would see herself as having had a lucky escape from a sinful life, wanting to call her unpublished memoir *Histoire d'un tison arraché du feu* ('Story of a brand snatched from the fire'). Just four years after her entry, Thérèse was dead and Céline was completing her first portrait of her – her life's work had begun.



Figure 2.3. Céline (centre) with her father, Léonie and the Guérin family, c.1892-94. Source: Album famille Martin, ACL.

⁹ Piat, *Céline*, pp.58-9.

The *Recueil* and the Production of the Prototype Representations

The principal source for retracing Céline's lifetime of artistic work is the *Recueil Travaux Artistiques Geneviève*, held at the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux. This is used here, in an academic context, for the first time.¹⁰ This two-volume, one hundred-page document was commissioned by Mère Agnès in the early forties, and provides an overview of the building of the cult of Saint Thérèse and Céline's half-century of work on her sister's representation. Listing all of Céline's artistic works and giving a short commentary on each, it provides vital information on the portraits of Thérèse, as well as an account of Céline's collaboration with other artists. In the manuscript, Céline's comments are often highly personal, and the text gives an insight into her motivations, influences and responses to her artwork. The *Recueil* was written between January 1941 and November 1956, and Céline was between seventy-one and eighty-seven years old when she composed it. In some cases she was recalling works she had completed some sixty years before,¹¹ and there was a gap of forty-three years between the completion of her first portrait of Thérèse and the commencement of the composition of the *Recueil*. As such, it must be borne in mind that this is not a contemporary document and that Thérèse's official recognition by the Church must have coloured Céline's recollections in the *Recueil* profoundly – for Céline, as a Catholic and a Carmelite, her sister was utterly transfigured by her canonisation. Despite its limitations, the *Recueil* provides an insight into the building of an iconography for Saint Thérèse, and while it is the core source for this chapter, other archival sources are also used, including the correspondence between the convent and Church officials, artists and businessmen, as well as Céline's autobiographical manuscript, *Histoire d'une «Petite âme» qui a traversé une fournaise* (1909). Together these sources reveal the history of the construction and legitimation of the Celinian image.

Carrying Out the Work: Resentment and Toil

In the *Recueil* Céline explains her methods of working in detail, and also expresses considerable bitterness and resentment about her lifetime of artistic work. She explains:

In my compositions I had recourse to living models (alas, only furtively!). Indeed, I posed myself in a small mirror which was part of my painting equipment. Or indeed, I used photography when the

¹⁰ It was, however, used in François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux* (Lisieux, 1961) and Piat, *Céline*.

¹¹ The earliest works catalogued in the *Recueil* are those completed when she was still at the Benedictine Abbey school in Lisieux, which she attended between 1883 and 1885. See RTAG, pp. 1-2.

other sisters posed for me. I had no permanent studio for painting and drawing. I worked in my cell, in the Chapter house, in the library, here or there that allowed me a momentary refuge. Many of my drawings and paintings were done in my free time: the midday silences in summer, Sundays and free days, but in the Community most of the sisters considered this type of work a waste of time.¹²

She echoed this last assertion elsewhere, likening her artistic endeavours to her later employment in the convent kitchen, and saying of the *Recueil* 'when I read it I had the feeling that I wasted my time!', adding that her efforts would have been better spent singing the Divine Office.¹³ When writing of her 1907 composition, 'Thérèse with harp', a very large portrait in oils, Céline again emphasised the very difficult working conditions she faced:

I moved this portrait on entirely during my own time – it required nine months!... How can you complete something *in paint* in periods of just *one* hour or less...?... I must say that this difficult and involved work cost me a lot during my noonday siesta hours in summer – me, who slept such a lot. Also, after having worked with ardour standing up (where to better judge the work I stepped back from it often), I was very tired, and indeed, a few minutes before the end of the Silence, I laid on the floor, with my handkerchief under my head in a ball and I slept for a minute at the feet of the tableau like a dog at the feet of his master. I called it, in fact, 'playing the dog'. Normally, working two hours a day, I could finish a portrait in a month.¹⁴

Throughout the *Recueil* Céline emphasises her suffering for her art, and this is an attitude also found in some of her other writings. In her autobiographical manuscript of 1909, she emphasised her unending struggles to complete her works, explaining how she constantly had to mount the stairs between the attic, where she worked, and her cell, and:

Reading this sentence written on the wall 'Today a little work, tomorrow eternal rest' I said: 'A lie! Today a lot of work and after a long time, alas, eternal rest!'... In these conditions my painting has always been a great ordeal, never did I find pleasure in it, but always more work.¹⁵

In her remarks concluding the *Recueil*, Céline continues the theme of hidden and selfless toil: 'It appears to me that the humble and *hidden* works had had all the value for [God]... these works that I have judged as nothing are... in His eyes, *of value!*'¹⁶ This was how Céline perceived her work at the end of her life, and this is important background to the investigation of her work that follows in this chapter.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. ii.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42-3.

¹⁵ CAC, p. 336.

¹⁶ RTAG, pp. 97-8.

From Jouvenot to Sœur Marie du Saint-Esprit: The Commissioned Artists

Despite her emphasis on her solitary and hidden work on the images of Thérèse, Céline did not in fact work entirely independently, and a small handful of artistic collaborators were brought in to help her. Very little has been written about these artists, but here the archives have been mined to reveal something about these people whose work is known by millions, although their names are forgotten. The initiative to employ other artists came in 1915, when Mère Agnès excused Céline of all other work to concentrate on her art,¹⁷ and the employment of outside help was initially spurred on by the sixty or so images needed for *La Vie en images*, Thérèse's Life in sixty-eight tableaux (see chapter 3). Céline's limited technical skill may also have made the commissions necessary for the production of serviceable works in a short time. In total five commissioned artists contributed to *Vie en images*, all working to directions about composition given by Céline in advance, and most of them also eventually contributed other images of Thérèse to the Carmel's ongoing project. These collaborators included five professional artists outside the convent, along with a nun of the Carmel, Sœur Marie du Saint-Esprit, the convent's other resident artist (see Appendix 1 for a complete list of the works completed by each of these artists for the Carmel).

Charles Jouvenot (1861-1938) was the Carmel's favourite artist and he had considerable influence on Thérèse's public image (see figure 2.4).¹⁸ Primarily an illustrator of children's books, his acquaintance with the Carmel probably began when he provided drawings for the chapter headings of the 1909 popular edition of *Une rose effeuillée*, the shortened version of Thérèse's autobiography. He provided the illustrations for many of the Carmel's other publications (see chapter 3), as well as various other projects, such as the designs for the stained glass windows depicting Thérèse's miracles for the *chapelle de la Châsse*.¹⁹ He developed a close relationship with the Carmel and when he died, Céline wrote on the front of his death notice 'Our Jouvenot!!!.'²⁰ Another artist who worked with Céline was, Pascal Blanchard, a Paris-based painter who worked with Céline from 1920, producing five compositions for *Vie en images* (see figure 2.5).²¹ He would

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹⁸ On Jouvenot, see 'Charles Jouvenot', *Journal des Pèlerins de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, 1st year, no. 23 (30 December 1923-12 January 1924), pp. 1-2, and 2nd year, no. 1 (13-26 January 1924), pp. 3-4.

¹⁹ These designs had originally appeared in Carmel of Lisieux, *Quelques miracles et interventions de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Paris, 1928). On the windows see 'Les Vitraux de la Chapelle du Carmel', *Journal des Pèlerins*, 2nd year, no. 7 (6-12 April 1924), pp. 2-3.

²⁰ Death notice, S-23LL TRAVAUX correspondance Jouvenot dessinateur, env. 4, ACL.

²¹ See Blanchard's correspondence with the Carmel, S-23NN TRAVAUX artistes divers A-B, env. 9, ACL.

later do other decorative works for the Carmel, but their relationship soured when he refused to sign works he had completed but that Céline had significantly retouched (see 'Challenges to Authenticity' below).²² Pierre Annould (1861-1925) was the artistic director at the popular Boumard publishers, well-known for their production of Saint-Sulpician devotional ephemera. He made four contributions to *Vie en images*, as well as completing two images of Thérèse on the battlefields of the First World War.²³

Other artists had only a brief involvement with the Carmel. Pharaon de Winter (1849-1924) produced only one image for them, that showing Thérèse throwing roses towards the Holy Sacrament at a Corpus Christi procession,²⁴ while Samuel Grün, an artist about whom very little is known, contributed the 'Apotheosis above St Peter's Basilica', showing Thérèse, the Virgin and child Jesus in glory.²⁵ Ferdinand Roybet (1840-1920) produced a portrait of the saint that remains one of the most popular and most reproduced.²⁶ He was the most well-known and successful of the artists the Carmel worked with (some of his works are now in the Hermitage and Musée d'Orsay). He did not work collaboratively with Céline and she never dared retouch his work as she did with her other artists (see 'Challenges to Authenticity' below), but the correspondence from Roybet preserved in the archives reveals that the Carmel directed the portrait heavily.²⁷ Céline provided photographs of Thérèse for the work, and she asked him to 'keep these intimate documents for you alone – we are counting on your absolute discretion on this subject', and told him 'I believe you will satisfy us, Sir, if you give Thérèse a heavenly appearance, if you manage to make her an ideal and beautiful character.'²⁸ He was indeed felt to have met this tall order, and Marie later wrote to Léonie that 'It is truly very beautiful and a very good likeness. Everyone is of the opinion that it is an artistic marvel.'²⁹

Perhaps the most important of Céline's collaborators is also the one who is most hidden. Sœur Marie du Sainte Esprit (Marie Elisabeth Marthe Madeleine de Couffon de Kerdellec'h, 1892-

²² See RTAG, pp. v-vi, pp. 51-3, 80.

²³ See Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, p. 488 on these wartime images by Annould. See also Annould's death notice, S-23NN, ACL.

²⁴ RTAG, p. 50.

²⁵ For a letter from Grün, see S-23PP TRAVAUX artistes divers C-M, ACL.

²⁶ The inheritors of Roybet's estate would later threaten the Carmel with legal action for reproducing the image widely without their permission. See Syndicat de la propriété artistique/DB 03/07/1925 and DB/Syndicat de la propriété artistique 10/07/1925, S-23QQ TRAVAUX artistes divers N-R, env. 11, ACL. See also C/FTh 08/04/1917, ACL on the Roybet portrait.

²⁷ See, for example C/R 08/05/1916, S-23QQ, env. 11, ACL.

²⁸ C/R 03/12/1916, S-23QQ, env. 11, ACL.

²⁹ MSC/FTh 15/06/1917, ACL.

1982) was a nun of the Carmel and a clearly accomplished artist who acted as artistic handmaiden to Céline.³⁰ Most of her work involved copying pieces by the other commissioned artists into colour versions. Two of her major projects were the copying in watercolours of several of Jouvenot's works that appeared in *Vie en images* and the entirety of the plates from the illustrated book *La petite voie* (see chapter 3).³¹ She also rendered de Winter's image in oils, as well as Annould's popular 'Nazareth' and his 'The cure of the Holy Virgin'. Sœur Marie's greatest independent works were two large oil paintings depicting Saint Thérèse's canonisation mass inside St Peter's Basilica and showing Thérèse as Patroness of the Missions. She may also have designed the cover of the book *La nielle des blés*.³² Sœur Marie is hardly mentioned in the *Recueil*,³³ and in a note on the images contained in *Vie en images* held by the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux, it is often mentioned that 'a nun of the Carmel of Lisieux' rendered the work of other artists in watercolours or oils, as well as doing twelve original compositions.³⁴ This is undoubtedly Sœur Marie that is being referred to, but her name is not used. Sœur Marie was also an important figure for the business side of the cult, with her name frequently appearing in letters from publishers throughout the twenties and thirties, as well as in correspondence with Jouvenot and the notes by which Raymond de Bercegol, director of the Office Central de Lisieux, the business arm of the Carmel (see chapter 3) communicated with those inside the cloister.³⁵ It seems that the extent of Sœur Marie's contribution to the Theresian project was greater than the *Recueil* suggests. An undated note written by Céline in the archives of the Carmel explains the strict conditions under which Sœur Marie was permitted to use her library of art books and hints at a strained working relationship, which may be the reason for this.³⁶

³⁰ See Marie du Saint Esprit – circulaire inédite établie en 2007, ACL.

³¹ The former are still displayed in Thérèse's bedroom at *Les Buissonnets*. See Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, pp. 490, 492-3 on these. The latter are contained in *La Petite Voie – Aquarelles*, ACL.

³² Carmel of Lisieux, *La nielle des blés ou mission de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus auprès des pécheurs* (Paris, 1925). This is suggested in J/MSE 06/06/1925, S-23LL, env. 2, ACL.

³³ See only RTAG, p. 52, 78.

³⁴ Archival note 20/02/1975, *Vie en Images de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, ACL.

³⁵ Many of Jouvenot's letters are addressed to Sœur Marie, rather than to Céline, and he called her 'My pupil'. See J/MSE 29/11/1935, S-23LL, env. 4, ACL. See also Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance d'affaires, ACL and Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL.

³⁶ Note kept with catalogues of images Céline used as models, ACL.

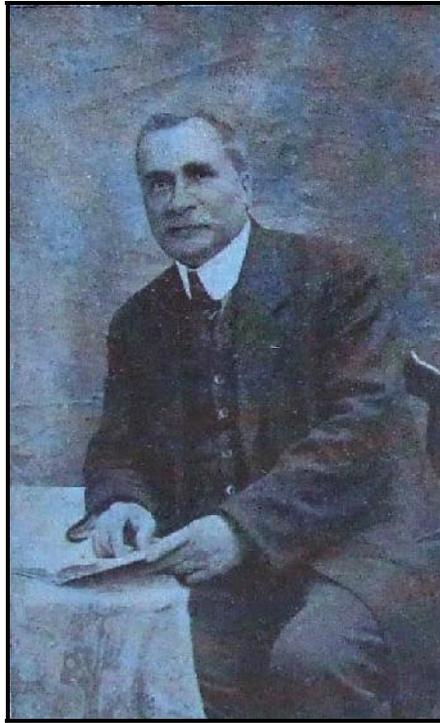


Figure 2.4. Charles Jouvenot, c. 1923. Source : 'Charles Jouvenot', *Journal des Pèlerins de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, 1st year, no 23 (30 December 1923 to 12 January 1924), p. 2.

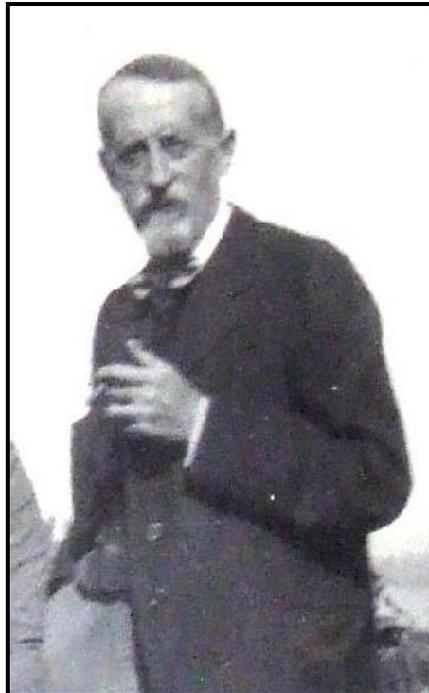


Figure 2.5. Pascal Blanchard, c. 1920. Source: S-23NN, env. 9, ACL.

Père Marie-Bernard and Alliot: The Sculptors

While the work of the commissioned artists remains obscure, another group of artists have fared better in the long-term assessment of their work – the sculptors who ‘moulded’ Thérèse’s iconography. Père Marie-Bernard (1883-1975) was a Trappist monk at Soligny-La-Trappe, Orne, Normandy (see figure 2.6).³⁷ He later carried out many prestigious works for other religious foundations, including the pilgrimage authorities at Lourdes,³⁸ but he became the Carmel’s official sculptor in 1917 and he completed his first work for them, ‘Thérèse sitting’, in 1919.³⁹ In the 1920s and 1930s he provided several statues for the pilgrimage site of Lisieux, including the design for the *gisant* at the *chapelle de la Châsse* (see Appendix 2).⁴⁰ In 1922 Céline directed him to produce a three dimensional version of her famous ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ image (see figure 2.24) and Marie-Bernard’s statue was to become, alongside Céline’s original, the best known representation of Thérèse. It was also to become the most pirated of the Carmel’s representations of Thérèse, and Père Marie-Bernard’s birth name, Louis Richomme, would later be invoked in the many legal cases the Carmel launched against the makers of unauthorised statues (see chapter 5). The relationship between Père Marie-Bernard and Céline was a long and close one, and in the *Recueil* Céline called him ‘our good little Frère Marie-Bernard’,⁴¹ while he in return called her ‘My little sister’.⁴² He felt honoured to work on the cult, writing to Mère Agnès ‘I am richly rewarded by the grace and honour that is done to me to work and to struggle for your angel.’⁴³ However, Père Marie-Bernard was unwilling to put up with what Pierre Descouvemont has called Céline’s ‘sometimes bizarre and often contradictory’ instructions, and they often argued.⁴⁴ When Céline asked him to produce a statue for Thérèse’s former burial plot, Père Marie-Bernard flatly refused to show the future saint kneeling on a carpet of clouds, as requested, telling Céline that the design made Thérèse look like she was ‘on her knees on a mushroom.’⁴⁵ He came to refer to Céline somewhat irreverently as Sœur ‘Je veux’ (Sister ‘I want’),⁴⁶ and the

³⁷ On Père Marie-Bernard see: Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*; Judgment de S. Geneviève de la Ste Face sur le P. Marie-Bernard, THER-14 F Marie-Bernard sculpteur, boîte 1, ACL; RTAG, p. 50; V. Hardy, ‘L’un des Sculpteurs de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus’, *Journal des Pèlerins*, 1st year, no. 15 (23-29 September 1923), pp. 1-2.

³⁸ Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*, pp. 142-7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 33, 74-5.

⁴⁰ See Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, pp. 459, 482-3, 485, 507.

⁴¹ RTAG, p. 80

⁴² MB/C 25/04/1919, THER-14 F, boîte 1, ACL. See also Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*, p. 36.

⁴³ MB/MA 18/03/1918, THER-14 F, boîte 1, ACL. See also Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*, pp. 23-4.

⁴⁴ Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*, p. 39, 36-7, 77.

⁴⁵ MB/C 13/11/1923, THER-14 F, boîte 1, ACL. See also Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*, pp. 79-80.

⁴⁶ Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l’âme*, p. 37.

Carmel of Lisieux would later request that he burn the letters, numbering around four hundred, that he had received from her.⁴⁷ When Marie-Bernard was uncooperative, a sculptor called Lucien Alliot (1877-1967) was often called in.⁴⁸ He did the actual sculpting of the *gisant*, a statuary group at *Les Buissonnets* and the kneeling figure for the grave, that had been so controversial. In 1924 he also completed a large work showing Thérèse with the Virgin and Infant Jesus for the altar of the Carmel, as well as a number of smaller works for the Carmel's private spaces.⁴⁹ He provided sculptures of angels for the *chapelle de la Châsse*, which were much maligned by critics of the cult and finally removed (see figure 4.4) and similar figures for the Way of the Cross behind the Basilica.⁵⁰



Figure 2.6. Père Marie-Bernard in the garden of *Les Buissonnets*, c. 1920. Source: THER-14 F, boîte 1, ACL.

⁴⁷ See MB/CdeL 24/04/1970, THER-14 F, boîte 1, ACL. See also Descouvemont, *Sculpteur de l'âme*, p. 7, 17.

⁴⁸ See Alliot's correspondence with the Carmel, S-23ii TRAVAUX correspondance Alliot 1919-1959, ACL, and RTAG p. 37, 96.

⁴⁹ RTAG, p. 50.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 78-9

'Emploi de Photographie': The Forty-One Photographs

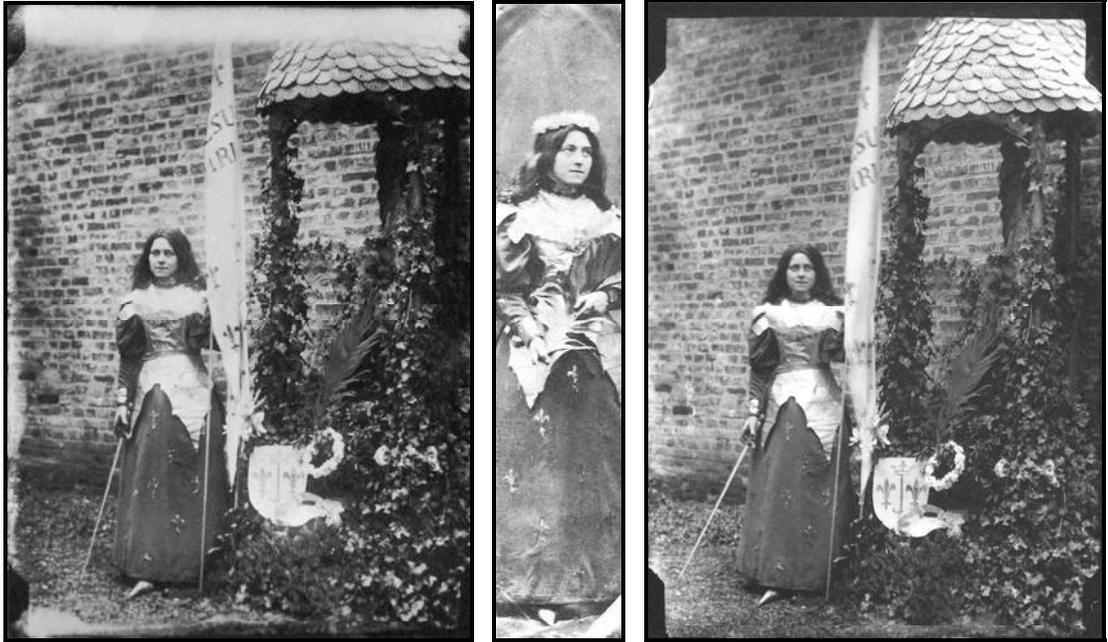
While Céline's original portraits of Thérèse were of great significance for the cult (see below), she had also already produced another set of images of her sister – forty-one photographs, taken inside the cloister between November 1894 and October 1897. Thirteen of these were portraits of the future saint, while the others were group shots in which Thérèse also appeared. These were supplemented by six further photographs of Thérèse – four of her aged between three and fifteen years old, and two of her in novice's garb taken by a visiting priest (see Appendix 2 for a complete list of the photographs). This was a collection that probably made Thérèse the most photographed saint in history at the time of her 1925 canonisation. Céline served as the convent photographer for feast days and special occasions, but she was particularly keen to photograph her sister, even taking a series of three images of her, known as the 'Thérèse *aux images*' series, when she was terminally ill with tuberculosis.⁵¹ Marion Lavabre has seen this as evidence of Céline crafting her sister into a saint even before her death.⁵² Indeed, the photographs were certainly no less influenced by the aesthetic fashions of the times than Céline's painted and drawn portraits. In the late nineteenth century, the sitter's pose was seen as being 'a reflection of [their] character and morality',⁵³ and it was fashionable to give the sitter props related to their profession. Céline posed Thérèse with dramatic props, ranging from a lily (the symbol of virginity), to images of the Holy Face and Child Jesus (her religious titles), to a pitchfork (symbolic of the vow of poverty and the Carmelite's duty to work). It was not only trends in photographic representation that influenced Céline in her photographic work – the poses are often reminiscent of Saint-Sulpician representations of saints, the photographs of Thérèse dressed as Joan of Arc in the play she wrote about her being some of the best examples (see figures 2.7-2.11). Here the photographic medium was being used to produce an aesthetic style usually appearing only in painting and sculpture, showing the integration of ancient tradition and new media, and the adaptability of popular devotional culture.

⁵¹ Photographs 41-43, Appendix 2. See François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage*, p. 75.

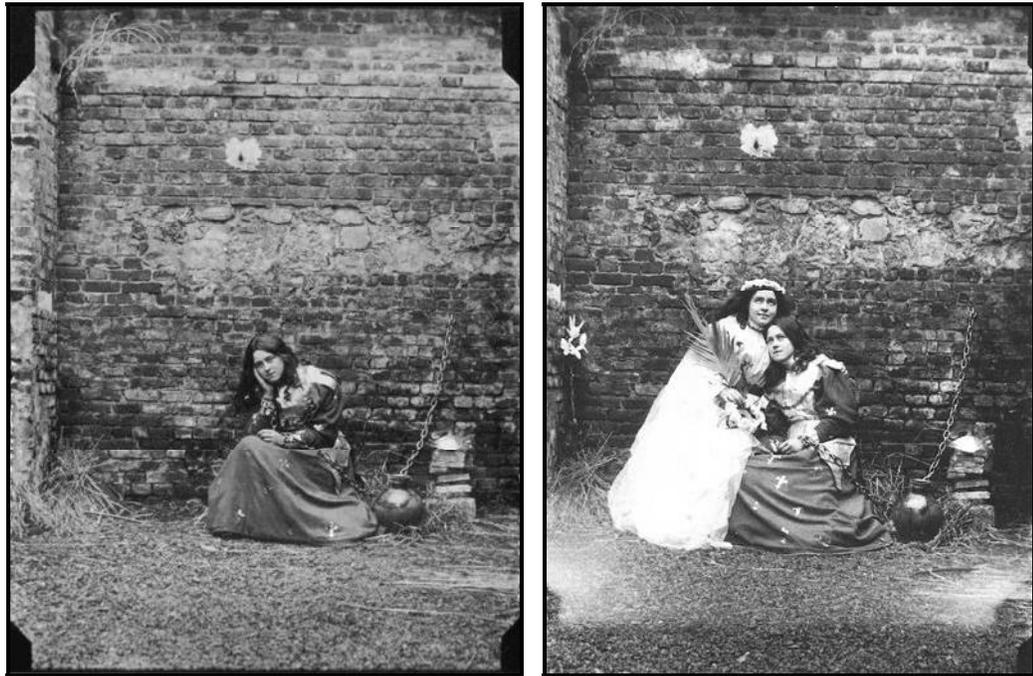
⁵² Lavabre, 'Sainte comme une image', p. 85.

⁵³ Hamilton and Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned*, p. 33. See also François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage*, pp. 14-5.

2. Céline Martin's Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image



Figures 2.7-2.9 Left to right: Thérèse as Joan of Arc (1st pose); as Joan of Arc crowned in heaven; as Joan of Arc (2nd pose), 1895. Source: OCL.



Figures 2.10-2.11 Left to right: Thérèse as Joan of Arc in prison; Thérèse as Joan of Arc with Céline as Saint Margaret, 1895. Source: OCL.

Retouching and Découpage

Despite the instant supply of images of Thérèse that these photographs provided, until Céline's death these ready-made pieces of iconography were almost completely suppressed. Where they did appear they were subject to extremely heavy retouching and, in some cases, outright falsification. While Céline gives minute details about her artistic works in both the *Recueil* and her autobiographical manuscript, she says little about the extensive work she did on the photographs.⁵⁴ Using enlarged prints of her photographs, Céline applied watercolours, pencil and eraser to soften Thérèse's features and produce modified images for circulation. For example, a heavily retouched version of the 'Thérèse *aux images*' photograph was produced,⁵⁵ giving Thérèse a wholly new, Saint-Sulpician face, and this was disseminated widely (see figure 2.12-2.13). Other images were subject to even heavier editing, using découpage techniques to create completely new scenes, not uncommon at a time when photographic images had become a cheap and disposable commodity.⁵⁶ For example, a group photograph of 1894⁵⁷ was cannibalised to create an image of Thérèse in meditation in the convent garden (see figures 2.14-2.15). The figure was cut out, pasted onto a photograph of the cemetery inside the enclosure of the Carmel and the face was entirely repainted.⁵⁸ It was presented as an original image and appeared in early editions of *Histoire d'une âme* and on holy cards. In a photograph of Thérèse with her novices,⁵⁹ the figures of Mère Agnès and Mère Marie de Gonzague were removed and an image of Marie Guérin, the Martin sisters' cousin and a postulant in the convent at the time, was inserted. The end result was a conceptually tidier image of Thérèse, the assistant novice mistress, with the newest members of the community (see figures 2.16-2.17).⁶⁰ The adaptation of the photographs allowed Céline to expand her stock of images quickly and provide a variety of marketable images in a short time, but the retouching also allowed the photographs to be harmonised with the other images of Thérèse the Carmel was producing (see 'The Cultural Inheritance' below). In the period in which Céline was working, retouching of photographs was very common, and as Miles Orvell has noted, 'To the nineteenth century, the camera was an unwieldy machine to be overcome by a combination of

⁵⁴ See only RTAG, p. 51, 76.

⁵⁵ Photograph 43, Appendix 2.

⁵⁶ See Hamilton and Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned*, p. 27, 47.

⁵⁷ Photograph 9, Appendix 2.

⁵⁸ Before the 1907 edition (ninth edition), this composite image had appeared in the autobiography with the face unretouched.

⁵⁹ Photograph 20, Appendix 2.

⁶⁰ These images are mentioned in Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, pp. 510-1.

stamina and subtlety'.⁶¹ Retouching was part of this process, and photographic manuals, like Louise Gérard's *Comment on Retouche Un cliché Photographique* (1925), which Céline owned a copy of, instructed amateur photographers in this art. However, she applied these techniques to an extreme extent and later had to justify her use of them (see 'Retouching and "Reality"' below).



Figure 2.12-2.13. Left: The original photograph, 'Thérèse *aux images*' (3rd pose), June 1897. Source: OCL.
Right: The retouched 'Thérèse *aux images*' photograph, circulated by the Carmel from the early 1920s.
Source: ACL.

⁶¹ Orvell, *The Real Thing*, p. 198.

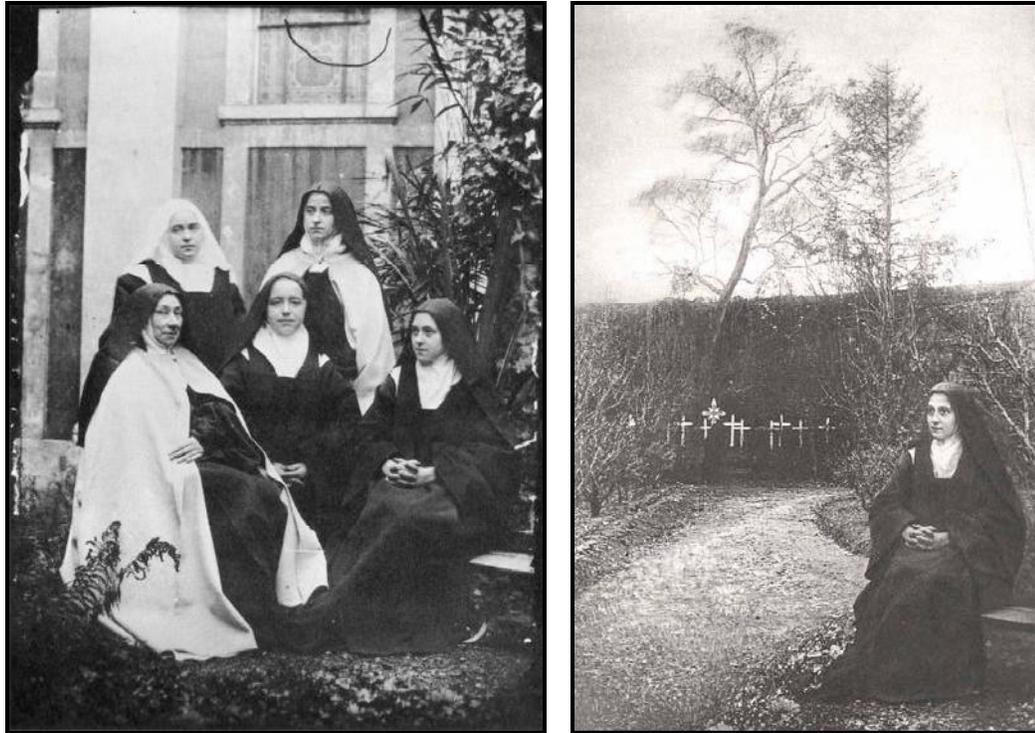


Figure 2.14-2.15. Left: The original photograph of Thérèse et al in the courtyard of the Lourdes grotto (1st pose), November 1894. Source: OCL. Right: The *découpage* image 'Thérèse in meditation', circulated by the Carmel from 1902. Source: *Histoire d'une âme* (Bar-le-Duc, 1907).



Figure 2.16-2.17. Left: Original photograph of Thérèse with novices and hourglass (with the superiors in the window), April 1895. Source: OCL. Right: The retouched image showing just Thérèse and novices, c. 1930. Source: ACL.

The Artistic Inheritance: Christianity, Portraiture and Authenticity

Céline was working in the context of a variety of dominant cultural concepts about good art, authentic religious images and the role of the artist when she produced her portraits of Thérèse. The portrayal of holy figures in the Christian tradition has been underpinned by a concern with authentic representation, images of the holy necessarily having to reveal truth in their role in communicating the Word of God, and indeed 'Images were justified by the Incarnation, which marked a fundamental shift in the relationship between God and the material world.'⁶² There are two principal concepts surrounding portraits in Christian art, and both invest heavily in ideas of the ultimate 'true' representation: *acheiropoietos* ('not made by human hands') – divine images that are believed to have been miraculously made; and the tradition of Saint Luke, where a human artist, with divine inspiration and help, renders a foundational and wholly authentic portrait.⁶³ In the former case, the artist is wholly absent, while in the latter case the artist, themselves always a holy person, is strongly present, but the portrait's 'authenticity is guaranteed by association with the miraculous, an objectivity validated by the means of production.'⁶⁴ The *acheiropoietos* tradition in western Christianity begins with the Veil of Veronica (Veronica meaning 'true image'), produced when Saint Veronica wiped the face of the suffering Christ as he made his way along the Via Dolorosa to Calvary. The true likeness that was seared into the cloth was kept at Rome from the eighth century and venerated as the definitive image of the Saviour. The Turin Shroud, emerging in the historical record sometime in the late middle ages, was believed to have been produced in a similar way. Also part of this tradition is the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, appearing on the cloak of the visionary Juan Diego when the Virgin appeared to him near Mexico City in 1531. These images are not representations, but rather images at a minute distance from their original – a literal re-presentation of the prototype. Such images claim an unassailable authority, promising a level of veracity only a miracle could achieve. As David Morgan has shown: 'The power of these images proceeds from the beguiling myth that they were not fashioned by a wilful hand, but were almost magical transpositions, apparitions projected by God or the unconscious.'⁶⁵ Such images can clearly be related to photography in their

⁶² Richard Marks, *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2004), p. 17.

⁶³ On these two traditions see Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art* (Chicago, 1994), ch. 4.

⁶⁴ Warner, 'The Image of Mary', p. 209.

⁶⁵ Morgan, *Visual Piety*, p. 144.

manner of production – precise, mimetic images, produced without human labour (indeed, Saint Veronica is the patron saint of photographers).

The tradition of the divinely-inspired artist and Saint Luke's portrait of the Virgin also hinges on ideas of authentic, faithful representation, but in this case the painter provides a human presence and acts as an earthly intermediary in the production of the work. The legend is that the Virgin miraculously sat for Saint Luke and he produced a portrait of her. Luke took the position of the portraitist, directing his painterly gaze at the sitter and attempted to turn what was before his eyes into a fixed, faithful representation. Unlike the average portraitist, Saint Luke is believed to have had divine assistance in his work, and some versions of the story assert that the Virgin herself finished off the image. The Saint Luke tradition brings the figure of the artist into view, suggesting that human agency can play a part in the rendering of authentic images of the divine. The eastern Christian tradition of the icon also has relevance here.⁶⁶ Painted by anonymous artists, the icon was a physical artefact which made the invisible divine visible and tangible, not only providing an image which was alleged to bear precise verisimilitude to its prototype, but also providing a material object that was imbued with the power and personality of that prototype (Gilbert Dagron has explained, 'both the reproduction of (ἔχτυπωμα) and equivalent to (ὁμοίωμα) the model').⁶⁷ Indeed, 'the icon works as a statement of authentic identity and theological value', communicating the 'truth about the person' depicted and evoking a solid identity by using a 'strict conformity to style and form... to authenticate the truth'.⁶⁸ Ingrained in the Christian tradition, these are concepts that influenced Céline's work profoundly, as we shall see.

The Great Artist: The Nineteenth-Century Ideal

Céline was also working in the age of the emergence of 'the myth of the Great Artist'⁶⁹ – a secular, modern ideal of the individual, creative personality that was the polar opposite of the anonymous icon-painter. Before her entry to the cloister Céline had received art lessons from a student of the successful Parisian romantic painter Léon Cogniet, as well as some guidance from Édouard Krug, a pupil of Jean-Hippolyte Flandrin, himself a pupil of Ingres.⁷⁰ She was proud of

⁶⁶ See Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, for a definitive account of the icon tradition.

⁶⁷ Dagron, 'Holy Images and Likeness', p. 23.

⁶⁸ Warner, 'The Image of Mary', p. 210.

⁶⁹ Linda Nochlin, 'Why have there been no great women artists?', in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York, 1988), p. 153.

⁷⁰ On Krug see Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, p. 24.

these associations, adding a three-page article at the end of the first volume of the *Recueil* on the achievements of Édouard Krug,⁷¹ and she seems to have fully internalised the ideal of the 'great artist', figuring herself as such throughout the *Recueil*. With the full flowering of Romanticism, the idea that 'the inspired ideas of exceptional individuals' were the force of innovation in art, rather than 'structural shifts involving everyone'⁷² became dominant, and the artist was often depicted as sacrificial author, the act of painting being portrayed as 'a psychological drama, a point of struggle between thought and physical appearance.'⁷³ Indeed, Linda Nochlin has pointed to the 'semireligious conception of the artist's role', with the 'apparently miraculous, nondetermined, and asocial nature of artistic achievement' being emphasised, and 'elevated to hagiography in the nineteenth century... when art historians, critics, and, not least, some of the artists themselves tended to elevate the making of art into a substitute religion, the last bulwark of higher values in a materialistic world'.⁷⁴

In the late nineteenth century, the production of a mimetically faithful physiognomic likeness had come to dominate conceptions of good portraiture. The Victorian idea of the authentic portrait was defined by the concept that 'the viewer could in imagination stand in the place of the original artist as he had once looked at the sitter, and so travel back in time to the moment when the sitter lived.'⁷⁵ But the advent of photography in the mid-nineteenth century problematised the position of the artist, removing the need for an authorial figure and 'implicitly challeng[ing]... portraiture's claim to absolute truth.'⁷⁶ However, although photography was used from very early on in its life for making empirical records,⁷⁷ it had other possibilities as a medium for late nineteenth-century societies, and in some contexts the 'practice of photography was founded on an understanding of the medium as an illusion, and the realism of Victorian photography is properly understood as an "artificial realism", in which the image offers the viewer a representation of reality, a typification, a conscious simulacrum'.⁷⁸ Further, when photographic images were clearly retouched or falsified in other ways, some viewers 'were well aware of the

⁷¹ RTAG, pp. 54 v-vii.

⁷² Joanna Woodall, 'Introduction: facing the subject', in Joanna Woodall (ed.), *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* (Manchester, 1997), p. 5.

⁷³ Paul Barlow, 'Facing the past and present: the National Portrait Gallery and the search for 'authentic' portraiture', in Woodall, *Portraiture*, p. 219.

⁷⁴ Nochlin, 'Why have there been no great women artists?', p. 155.

⁷⁵ Paul Barlow, 'Facing the past and present', p. 221.

⁷⁶ Woodall, 'Introduction: facing the subject', p. 7.

⁷⁷ See Thomas, *Beauty of Another Order*, and Hamilton and Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned* on scientific and legal uses of photography, respectively, early on in its history.

⁷⁸ Orvell, *The Real Thing*, p. 77.

staging and in fact savoured precisely the ontological ambiguity of the resulting image.'⁷⁹ Whatever the perceived 'truth' of photography, the photographic portrait soon became dominant, becoming both 'a trusted method of establishing identity and a key medium for promoting celebrity.'⁸⁰ These ideas of the modern artist and the ideal portrait were a formative influence on Céline Martin, as we will now see.

Christian Artistic Tradition, the Portrait Painter and Céline's Work: A Pre-Cult Case Study

Céline's concept of the authentic image and internalisation of the concepts of both miraculous, unmediated modes of representation (the *acheiropoietos* and Saint Luke traditions), and the idea of the creative artistic personality, are revealed by her work on an image she produced in 1904. This image was not one of Thérèse, but it was the image she considered to be her greatest artistic achievement – a *grisaille* painting of the Holy Face (figure 2.18). She devoted many pages of her autobiographical manuscript to a lengthy and anguished account of its production, and this was undoubtedly the image that she felt had seen the full flowering of her artistic efforts, despite its early production date. The devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus had been revived in nineteenth-century France by Sœur Marie de Saint-Pierre, a Carmelite nun who had visions of Saint Veronica aiding Christ on the road to Calvary.⁸¹ In one vision Christ described blasphemy as a 'poisoned arrow' which added to the insults he had suffered on the Via Dolorosa, and he said that contemplation of the Holy Face was a reparation for these insults. The devotion had clear relevance for France under the anti-clerical Third Republic and Céline was an ardent enthusiast of the devotion, as Thérèse herself had been⁸² – both appended 'the Holy Face' to their names in religion at different times in their lives. But Céline's enthusiasm was reignited when she saw the first photographs of the Turin Shroud, taken in 1898, which revealed the figure on the cloth in far starker detail than was visible with the naked eye.⁸³ In her autobiographical manuscript, Céline explains how she felt on seeing the images for the first time:

I was speechless with emotion. It seemed to me that I was seeing him in person... It was indeed my Jesus, just as my heart had sensed him to be... This image was in no way inferior to the ideal of the mortal traits of God that I had conceived of... Looking for the traces of his

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁸⁰ Hamilton and Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned*, p. 1.

⁸¹ See Sœur Marie Pascale, *Sœur Marie de Saint Pierre et de la Sainte Famille. Carmélite de Tours* (Paris, 1998).

⁸² See Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, pp. 150-77.

⁸³ She first saw them when Isidore Guérin sent her a copy of Paul Vignon, *Le Linceul du Christ. Étude Scientifique* (Paris, 1902).

Love for us, I traced the bloody imprint of his wounds... Then, no longer able to restrain the sentiments of my heart, I covered that adorable Face with my kisses and bathed it with my tears.⁸⁴

The images conformed to Céline's personal vision of Christ, and the reference to his wounds, the physical proof of his sacrifice, also shows her sense of the visceral authenticity of the image, treating it with the same reverence as if faced with Christ himself.⁸⁵ Despite her conception of the image as the ultimate, foundational representation, Céline wished to create her own version of the Holy Face, explaining that her cousin Marie Guérin (Sœur Marie de l'Eucharistie) found the copies of the Veil of Veronica so ugly that she had to turn her back on them when she prayed, while 'Our chaplain... told me he had known pious ecclesiastics estranged from the devotion to the Holy Face due to the imperfect image presented for the veneration of the faithful.'⁸⁶ She felt that there was a need for a new, more artistic rendering of the Holy Face, and accordingly set to work.

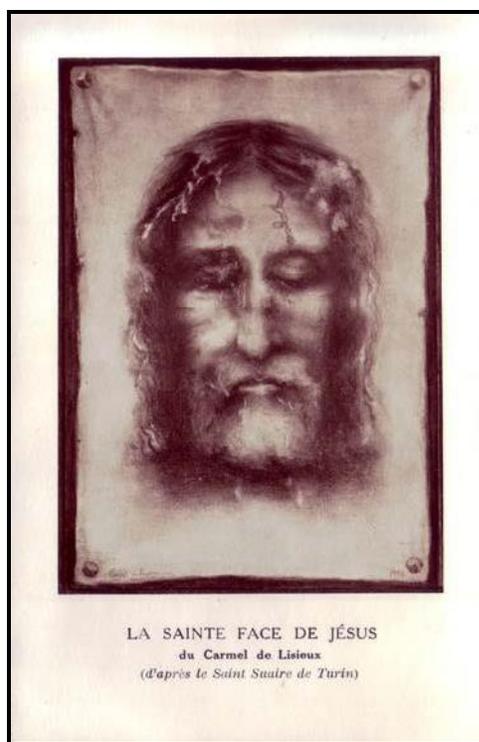


Figure 2.18. Céline's 'Holy Face' on a holy card produced by the Carmel of Lisieux, c.1910. Source: Author's collection.

⁸⁴ CAC, pp. 332-3.

⁸⁵ The violence she saw in the image would inspire her to produce a particularly bloody rendering of the Crucifixion, and also an image showing the flagellation of Christ. It also inspired her to retouch the face of Christ in her rendering of the Agony in the Garden. See RTAG, p. 16-8.

⁸⁶ CAC, p. 333.

Céline shows clear investment in the *acheiropoietos* tradition in her approach to the Holy Face image she created. Already, when completing some paintings for the choir between 1898 and 1900, Céline explained how she 'carried the canvases and paint brushes to the miraculous statue of Mary [that had cured Thérèse of her childhood illness] and asked her to work in my place. She... did not refuse me this gift.'⁸⁷ When she began work on the Holy Face picture in 1904, she again put her paintbrushes in the hands of the statue and brought the canvas before it, making a clear suggestion that the Virgin was the true artist, not her.⁸⁸ She also 'begged the good God... to come and paint the portrait of his son Jesus himself, and that the Spirit of Love would breathe life into it so that it would not be an ordinary portrait.'⁸⁹ This is a remarkable passage, showing a desire for a divinely-created icon, rather than a portrait that was the result of her own labour. Céline also prayed to Saint Veronica – the saint who symbolised the *acheiropoietos* tradition.⁹⁰ Céline's investment in this idea came to its climax when she directly sought to stimulate the miraculous creation of an image by placing her Holy Face canvas before the exposed Holy Sacrament in the convent chapel. She explains in her manuscript:

Placing it as close as possible, I begged Jesus to print his perfect resemblance on it. I said 'O, my Jesus do you prove yourself less powerful than men? They have invented the photo. We need do nothing but put an object before a sensitive plate and immediately the object is printed on the plate with an amazing exactitude. I expose my canvas to the rays of love from the living Host, which is your holy body, and I come away with no imprint.'⁹¹

Here there is a marrying of Christian tradition and modern ideas of photographic accuracy, and despite her rejection of the authenticity of photography (see 'Challenges to Authenticity' below), Céline shows here that her concept of the ultimate authentic image is a divinely-inspired photograph. Gilbert Dagron has suggested that when 'the saint or Christ himself helps the powerless artist, or takes his place in order to achieve an absolute likeness... in this multiform topos, the image creates itself; it is a photograph, a relic.'⁹² Céline took this analogy to its extreme.

With the failure of her attempts at divine photography, Céline returned to the methods and tradition of Saint Luke, placing emphasis on her labour as a human mediator receiving divine

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 335.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 344.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 345.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 344.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, pp.345-6.

⁹² Dagron, 'Holy Images and Likeness', p. 23.

aid, and also showing investment in the 'Great Artist' tradition by highlighting the role of the portraitist as someone with first-hand knowledge of the subject's appearance. We have already seen how Céline believed that she did not need artistic training, as God would make up for her shortcomings,⁹³ and in the *Recueil* she speaks of the Virgin being her 'mistress of painting',⁹⁴ finding that 'every time I took up pencil and paintbrush after long periods of inactivity it was always with greater fluency... I did homage to the Holy Virgin, for I knew that I owed her everything'.⁹⁵ She felt that she never worked on her images alone then, but like Saint Luke was always in receipt of divine assistance. When it came to her Holy Face image, she emphasised another element of the Saint Luke tradition – the artist having a vision of the divine subject. She explains:

Many times, during the course of my work, the face of the suffering Jesus appeared before me (this was not through bodily eyes) but this vision was extraordinarily clear and striking. I looked at Jesus like this to etch it on my spirit, it was the model I posed before me.⁹⁶

The importance of seeing the subject, and the work involved in transcribing it onto canvas, is a key part of the concept of the 'Great Artist', and Céline goes on to explain that, having benefited from this 'vision which lasted a few seconds', she 'copied with great faithfulness the tiniest details' of the face she had seen onto her composition, 'changing the least detail that was not him'.⁹⁷ Her labour is underscored and her agency as artist in transcribing the vision she had seen into a tangible image is emphasised.

Despite her investment in the Saint Luke tradition, in her account of the creation of the Holy Face image, Céline never fully abandons the *acheiropoietos* tradition either. She explains that in the finished image 'There is a certain little light which draws the gaze to the half-closed left eye... but it was not me alone who rendered this on my canvas, it is something that I cannot explain.'⁹⁸ In her autobiographical manuscript Céline describes the picture's production as a complex emotional drama, suggesting throughout that her painstaking transcription of her vision of the suffering Christ had been complemented by miraculous action – the work was ultimately a meeting of her labour as artist and divine intervention. The finished picture is strongly marked out as an incontestably genuine, faithful representation in the manuscript. She explains that soon after

⁹³ CAC, p. 71.

⁹⁴ RTAG, p. 54.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. iv. See also CAC, pp. 334-5.

⁹⁶ CAC, p. 346.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 346-7.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

finishing it, she took the portrait before the statue of the Virgin and 'turned towards the assembly of the elect and asked them if they recognised him'. Then, opening the Gospels at random for her answer, she chanced upon the line from Saint Matthew 'Truly, this was the Son of God.'⁹⁹ Her image is thus confirmed as not only a good resemblance, but like an icon, interchangeable with its prototype and an embodiment of Christ himself. She also explains that, shortly after finishing the picture 'the demon, jealous of the good wrought in the world by this holy image' attacked her one night, smashing objects and making her pillow seem as if it was on fire¹⁰⁰ – divine approval was twinned with diabolical disapproval as proof of the authenticity of the image.

The Pope himself commended Céline's Holy Face image, sending her a special medal in recognition of her work.¹⁰¹ The piece also won the grand prize at the International Exposition of Religious Art at Bois-le-Duc, Holland. Céline promoted the image alongside those of Thérèse on postcards and in the popular publications produced by the convent, and the first mention of Thérèse in the national press, in an article by François Veuillot in *l'Univers*, was in fact in an article about Céline's Holy Face image, which praised it fulsomely.¹⁰² Such approval no doubt played a part in Céline's suggestion that this semi-divinely wrought image in fact had miraculous properties, working many conversions. She recounted how one priest told her that 'This is not an ordinary image... one believes oneself in the presence of a living person.'¹⁰³ Céline explained 'He did not know that it was the work of the whole heavenly court and that the Spirit of Love had come to animate it with its divine breath.'¹⁰⁴ Here Céline not only positions herself as the divinely-inspired artist, but goes beyond this to suggest that this was a miraculous image which, like the icons of Orthodox tradition, was in some way indistinguishable from the person it represented. Her conception of her artistic practice, and her work on the Holy Face image in particular, is directly illustrated by a mysterious image in the convent archives (see figure 2.19). Here, Céline is shown at work on her Holy Face image, while no fewer than five angels, looking like little elves, help her by holding her palette, steadying the canvas or arranging her paintbrushes. Meanwhile, Thérèse has appeared in a puff of clouds, directing her work, while Christ hovers

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* Matthew 27:54.

¹⁰⁰ CAC, p. 347-48.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

¹⁰² François Veuillot, 'Cà et là. Une image de la Sainte Face', *l'Univers*, 9 July 1906.

¹⁰³ CAC, p. 349.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

above, making a gesture of blessing.¹⁰⁵ This image has no attribution and it is not clear whether Céline herself completed it, but it nevertheless conforms precisely to her written account of her work, showing the artist labouring for perfection, but with divine help.



Figure 2.19. Céline completing the Holy Face image, c. 1910. Source: Dessins, modèles, photos de Céline, ACL.

The Cultural Inheritance: Nineteenth-Century Devotional Culture and Saint-Making

The idea of the great artist and of the religiously authentic image were enduring concepts for Céline, but she was also working within trends in contemporary religious art and sought to insert her images into the landscape of dominant devotional fashions, as well as the classic modes of representation of the holy figure. A major consideration here is the place of the saint, and the changing nature of their representation, in the period in question. The saint has a unique position in the economy of popular devotion, and this perhaps most true of the female saint.¹⁰⁶ Each with their own individual character, they are often more personal to the faithful than the emotionally

¹⁰⁵ This is a photograph of the original. Dessins, modèles, photos de Céline, en vue des statues, tableaux etc, ACL.

¹⁰⁶ See Ford, 'Female Martyrdom and the Politics of Sainthood'.

distant Christ and Virgin and they occupy a special place as intercessor. Otherwise standardised in their physiognomic representation, the saint's attribute makes them instantly recognisable and reduces the system of representation to its bare bones.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, until the nineteenth century, the representation of individual saints was highly standardised, with the almost cartoon-like quality of bold, clear identifying features, but this mode of representation saw a revolution with the advent of photography, leading to more individualised representations of saints who were 'no longer incorporated into the depersonalised and allegorical frame of traditional iconography.'¹⁰⁸ The Curé d'Ars was the first saint to be photographed, captured laid out for burial in 1859, while Marian visionary Catherine Labouré was photographed right at the end of her life, in 1876. Saint Bernadette of Lourdes (not canonised until 1933 but, like Thérèse, treated as a saint long before) was photographed extensively during her life, and it was her cult that was to herald a more complex approach to the representation of saints. In her cult, what became the traditional representation of her at the Lourdes grotto, in the staid and dramatised style of traditional hagiographical images (see figure 2.20), existed side by side with photographic portraits of her – a much more personalised form of representation. These photographs were often subject to retouching – René Laurentin has made a study of the images of Bernadette, which reveals that the extent of the diversification of her representation was similar to that of Thérèse.¹⁰⁹ The cult was also characterised by a strong concern with finding the ultimate authentic image of Bernadette, and many of the images of her sold commercially proclaimed themselves to be a '*portrait authentique*' (see figures 2.21 and 2.22). An 1864 advertisement of a portrait of Bernadette made claims to 'truthful and perfect resemblance', stating that 'One should not confuse it with all the other portraits which... have been reproduced without the same guarantee.'¹¹⁰ Indeed, the privileging of 'genuineness' in representations of saints pre-dated Thérèse's cult and would endure until after its heyday. Theologian Wilhelm Schamoni's 1938 book *Das wahre Gesicht der Heiligen (The True Face of the Saints)* claimed to provide '120 authentic likenesses of saints in full-page illustrations', making some effort to ameliorate the fact that 'through the new technique of unlimited reproduction, as well as through shoddy, sentimental printed and plaster-work reproductions, the true visage of the

¹⁰⁷ On saints' attributes see Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, 6 vols (Paris, 1955-59).

¹⁰⁸ Taylor, 'Images of Sanctity', p. 269.

¹⁰⁹ The historiography on the representation of Bernadette provides a parallel literature to that on Thérèse. See René Laurentin (ed.), *Visage de Bernadette*, 2 vols (Paris, 1978). This study was explicitly based on François de Sainte-Marie's *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux*. See also Taylor, 'Images of Sanctity' and Langlois, 'Photographier des Saintes', for comparative examinations of the images of the two saints.

¹¹⁰ Laurentin, *Visage de Bernadette*, 1, pp. 96-7. See also Taylor, 'Images of Sanctity', p. 277.

saints has become falsified in the visualizations given to the general public.’¹¹¹ Yet photography was not to lead to a purely ‘scientific’ approach to images of saints, and older forms of representation persisted. As Thérèse Taylor has shown, in the case of Bernadette, the photographic images of her did not remain popular, and ‘in the decades after her death photographic prints were replaced by rendered images which reproduced her according to the conventions of religious art... throughout the twentieth century the most common pictures are imaginary images of her with Our Lady of Lourdes.’¹¹² Such was the case for Thérèse too, with portraits of the saint dominating until well after Céline’s death, and still remaining popular. Even into the twentieth century, the saint had to be depersonalised to be successful, and it is this process of depersonalisation in the case of Saint Thérèse that we shall now turn to.



Figure 2.20. Postcard of the Lourdes grotto with glow-in-the-dark Virgin, c. 1900. Source: author’s collection.

¹¹¹ Wilhelm Schamoni, *The Face of the Saints* (London, 1948) [original publication 1938], trans. Anne Fremantle, p. 23.

¹¹² Taylor, ‘Images of Sanctity’, p. 279.



Figure 2.21. Postcard image of Bernadette of Lourdes, carrying the caption 'Portrait authentique', c. 1900. Source: Album cartes postales diverses, ACL.

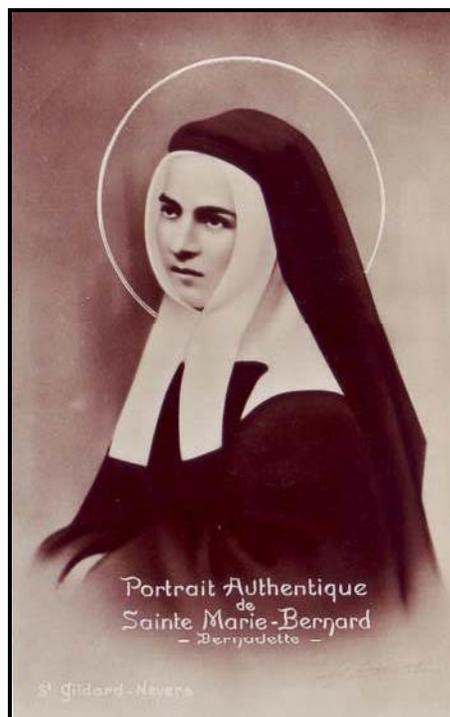


Figure 2.22. Bernadette in the habit of the Sisters of Charity of Nevers, c. 1935. Source : author's collection.

Making a Saint: The 'Buste Ovale'

Through her images, Céline tried to situate Thérèse in this contested terrain of the representation of saints at the end of the 'long nineteenth century', as she faced the task of turning an ordinary nun who had been dead for just a little over eighteen months, into a saint. Gilbert Dagron has asserted that 'a cult image can only be recognized as true and, therefore, valid if the artist and the art disappear, in other words, if subjectivity acting as a screen, and if an illusion which would be a lie, disappear.'¹¹³ David Morgan has concurred that 'The image's power consists in its ability to conceal the historical difference separating it and its admirers from the distant figure of history whom the image portrays.'¹¹⁴ Thérèse was not a 'distant figure of history', and Céline needed to strip away her sister's historical specificity in order to create a convincing visual image. Gilbert Dagron has noted the key functions of the icon or cult image:

The person described or represented is integrated into classifiable categories (bishops, hermits, monks, soldiers). The person is linked to more or less refined moral and physical models. The ... painter brings his model to the threshold of individuality, but it is up to the imagination of the reader or spectator to do the rest: to fill in the fixed form, give it life, and make it into a perfect image.¹¹⁵

The cult image 'eliminates anything circumstantial, and aims at pure presence', 'never putting [the holy person] "in context," but making the subject appear posed, fixed, with a vacant expression, as in an identity photograph.'¹¹⁶ The first portrait of Thérèse Céline created after her death, known as the '*buste ovale*' (see figure 2.23), conforms to this description perfectly. With blank expression and an ahistorical, timeless quality, Thérèse is represented as pious nun – a moral model and pre-existing holy 'type'. There is a personality here, but it is one that is open to the viewer's interpretation – the face is a blank canvas, allowing for a range of personal interpretations, but maintaining the universal, unearthly quality of the saint. David Morgan has shown how 'Popular religious art... is received because it reinforces what people *already* believe, tells them what they *already* know',¹¹⁷ and here Céline was using accepted modes of representation of the saint – pure and iconic – to naturalise her representation. This charcoal drawing, as frontispiece for the second

¹¹³ Dagron, 'Holy Images and Likeness', p. 23.

¹¹⁴ Morgan, *Visual Piety*, p. 48.

¹¹⁵ Dagron, 'Holy Images and Likeness', p. 26.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Morgan, *Visual Piety*, p. 122. 'Popular art is essentially a conventional art which restates in an intense form, values and attitudes already known; which reassures and reaffirms, but brings to this something of the surprise of art as well as the shock of recognition.' Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel, *The Popular Arts* (New York, 1965), p. 66.

edition of *Histoire d'une âme* and many editions thereafter, immediately signalled to the reader what kind of personality they would encounter inside. While the portrait was principally based on a photograph taken in November 1894,¹¹⁸ Céline said of it 'We decided to paint such a portrait which would be a composite of all the photographs we possessed of our saint.'¹¹⁹ This was, in its method of composition, an archetype – a generalisation of the appearance of Thérèse Martin, with a large dose of saintly gloss thrown in.¹²⁰ In the *Recueil* Céline would emphasise that 'it was declared 'authentic' by the Ecclesiastical Tribunal at the process of beatification.'¹²¹ In the 'buste ovale' Céline had created the 'fixed form' of the saint that would endure and which earned official approval. Indeed, until she produced 'Thérèse aux roses' in 1912 this was the standard representation of Thérèse, disseminated widely through the Carmel's publishing programme.



Figure 2.23. The 'buste ovale', 1899. Source: ACL.

¹¹⁸ Photograph 9, Appendix 2.

¹¹⁹ RTAG, p. 40.

¹²⁰ Morgan calls this the 'ideal method': 'The ideal method proceeds by abstracting features from a class of particulars in order to arrive at a composite that represents the essential characteristics, the true likeness.' Morgan, *Visual Piety*, p. 40.

¹²¹ RTAG, p. 40-1.

The Consolidation of Sainly Identity: 'Thérèse aux Roses'

In the wake of the very successful interviews of witnesses by the diocesan Tribunal for the beatification that had taken place at the Carmel between the summers of 1910 and 1911, Céline made a move towards a bolder figuring of Thérèse as saint. With her 'Thérèse aux Roses' of 1912 (see figure 2.24), she made Thérèse a much more identifiable saintly personality than was the case in the 'buste ovale'. Dagron has noted that in the cult image:

individualization is obtained... by accumulated details which gradually modify a general schema: sometimes a scar (for Gregory of Nazianzus), age, hair and beard, and more often, for convenience, costume, posture, and material attributes. The cult image is put together somewhat like the "identikit" picture of our criminal investigators by approximations based on types.¹²²

'Thérèse aux roses' showed Thérèse with an attribute for the first time – that of the crucifix and roses. Earlier Céline had tried other attributes – the Gospels and a harp, in a large oil painting of Thérèse, but the results had been less than satisfactory, and Céline feared that 'the public did not understand [the attributes] sufficiently – their force wasn't very direct.'¹²³ 'Thérèse aux roses' was done at the request of Mgr. Roger de Teil (1848-1922), Vice-Postulator of the cause for Thérèse's beatification,¹²⁴ who 'said that it was necessary to have a portrait of Sœur Thérèse other than the simple bust known as the 'buste ovale', namely a portrait with an [iconographical] attribute which, in depicting the personality and the spirituality of the Saint, represented the devotion of believers with a mark of its own.'¹²⁵ Here was the consolidation of Thérèse's visual representation as a saint – given the 'material attribute' that allows for the 'identikit' representation Dagron mentions, she was easily recognised and given a stronger identification, more 'direct' in its public understanding. The attribute also made an important point about Thérèse's unique spiritual message, the crucifix all but concealed by roses symbolising suffering and trials patiently borne, and the image summed up the personality the Carmel were putting forward in both image and text. Céline would later emphasise that this was 'the principal portrait, the portrait of the Saint published everywhere'.¹²⁶ Indeed, Thérèse's iconic passivity in this image, evoking a strong sense of the presence of the saint and fixing her identity, made it the authoritative prototype image and saw the final erasure of any

¹²² Dagron, 'Holy Images and Likeness', p. 26.

¹²³ RTAG, pp. 42-3, 45. See also T/MMA 05/05/1909, ACL.

¹²⁴ Mgr. de Teil had met Thérèse when he gave a lecture at the Carmel on the martyred Carmelites of Compègne in 1896 and he became a devotee of the future saint. See 'Un grand ami du Carmel: Mgr. de Teil', *Journal des Pèlerins*, 1st year, no. 3 (30 June-7 July 1923), pp. 1-2.

¹²⁵ RTAG, pp. 44-5. See also Céline's statement on the image, published in Tomás Alvarez, 'Retrato y carácter de S. Teresa de Lisieux', *Ephemerides Carmeliticae*, 24, 1 (1973), pp. 130-47.

¹²⁶ RTAG, p. 44.

sense of Thérèse Martin, the historical personality, from representations of this prospective saint. This was the 'pictorial "founding father"' of a 'visual genealogy' that comes down to us today.¹²⁷



Figure 2.24. 'Thérèse aux roses', 1912. Source: ACL.

The Influence of Saint-Sulpician Art

Through these two best-known works, Thérèse was inserted into the timeless tradition of the saint, but Céline was also heavily influenced by contemporary devotional fashions, and Saint-Sulpician art in particular. Claude Savart has seen the cult of Saint Thérèse as being typically Saint-Sulpician, asserting that it is a devotion that in fact typified the final period of style: 'The apparitions at Lourdes designate the initial phase, the canonisation of Joan of Arc and Thérèse of Lisieux the final phase'.¹²⁸ The Saint-Sulpician quality of Céline's images are clear – romantic and sentimental, Thérèse is depicted as the ideal of beauty, with the rounded face, pink cheeks and fine features of contemporary depictions of the Virgin. The devotional ephemera that the Martin sisters

¹²⁷ Woodall, 'Introduction: facing the subject', pp. 3-4.

¹²⁸ Savart, 'A la recherche de l'"art" dit de Saint-Sulpice', p. 276.

owned, still preserved at the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux, reveals that Céline was often directly inspired by specific Saint-Sulpician images here. When she portrayed Thérèse as Saint Agnès,¹²⁹ she was clearly influenced by a particular image of the saint produced by a company based on rue Saint Sulpice, even copying the trimming on the neckline of the saint's robe (figures 2.25-2.26).¹³⁰ Elsewhere, the composition of the 1920 image 'Thérèse *expirante*', showing Thérèse having her alleged death bed ecstasy, was very similar to a holy card that had belonged to Thérèse herself (it was sent to her by her cousin, Jeanne La Néele, in 1897) (figures 2.27-2.28).¹³¹ Such images showed Thérèse as a fashionable saint, inserting her into contemporary modes of representation of the holy. A photograph of a wall in Céline's workspace, held in the Archives of the Carmel, shows the images she found inspiring, including a Saint-Sulpician rendering of the death of Saint Cecilia, a retouched photograph of the nineteenth-century missionary and martyr Théophile Vénard, and an image of rather older provenance of King David playing the harp, and this demonstrates the nature of the visual milieu she was influenced by (see figure 2.29).

Saint-Sulpician art was also popular art, and the mainstream, secular visual culture of early twentieth-century France, much of which could be defined as 'kitsch', was also influential for Céline. A large folder of cuttings of popular images from magazines that she used for her artwork still survives in the Archives.¹³² The use of such popular visual styles was not only a consideration of fashion, but also allowed the authentication of the images of Thérèse by consolidating them into the accepted, anodyne modes of representation for mass cultural images. Robert C. Solomon has explained how kitsch works in this regard, using an image of two little girls by nineteenth-century painter Adolphe Bouguereau as an example:

What makes Bouguereau kitsch is the one-dimensional purity of the emotion. These girls don't do any of the nasty things that little children do. They don't whine. They don't tease the cat. They don't hit each other. They don't have any bruises. They aren't going to die. The art gives us a false portrait, a carefully edited portrait that limits our vision and restricts our sense of reality. It 'manipulates' our feelings. There is no ambiguity. Above all, there is no discomfort, no ugliness or awkwardness, no sense... of intruding on privacy.¹³³

¹²⁹ RTAG, p. 17 and plate between pp.18-9. This was adapted from her painting 'The Annunciation', 1900.

¹³⁰ This card is reproduced in Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, p. 326.

¹³¹ See RTAG, p. 51 and Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, p. 438.

¹³² Modèles Céline, ACL. See also François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage*, p. 27.

¹³³ Solomon, 'On Kitsch and Sentimentality', p. 5.

Such art made universalised figures, bereft of any of the complexities of their real lives. In adopting such popular styles, Céline modelled the individual into an archetype – a saint. By the time of the beatification, less than twenty-six years after her death, Thérèse could be shown in highly exalted ways, and had become fully separated from her historical original, with the 'Little Apotheosis for the Beatification' (1921) showing her kneeling on a cloud, surrounded by angels (see figure 5.5) – she had been severed from the earthly and become celestial.¹³⁴



Figure 2.25-2.26. Left: An image of Saint Agnès, produced by a company on rue Saint Sulpice, c. 1895. Source: ACL. Right: Céline's image of Thérèse as Saint Agnès, c. 1900. Source: ACL.

¹³⁴ RTAG, pp. 51-2.