

Imagining Liberalism: The New Right and The Camp of The Saints

Rebecca Visser, King's College London

Abstract

Evaluating Jean Raspail's *The Camp of The Saints*, popular in alt- and far-right circles, offers a window into the New Right. When broken down, the novel's arc demonstrates a civilizational anxiety mediated through a forecast of liberalism's 'weakness'. Its depiction of cultural institutions further fixates on liberalism as a false ideology, but *the* root cause of Western inaction over racialised 'threat' Raspail conjures. Finally, individual characters affirm a liberal 'betrayal' of identity and biopolitics. This article's intervention is two-fold: it offers a new understanding of *The Camp Of The Saints*, and through this, underscores that the New Right's ethnocultural logic distinctively hinges on a critique of liberalism.

Keywords: New Right, Liberalism, Ethnocentrism, Raspail, Literary Critique

Introduction

Influential radical right-wing figures have embraced the 1973 novel *The Camp Of The Saints*. Jean Raspail prefaced his apocalyptic tale of Third World masses ‘overriding’ France when their boats reach European shores with the claim ‘we are inevitably heading for something of the sort’, essentially forecasting a vast migration triggering the collapse of the Western order.¹ Steve Bannon, amongst others, have agreed, calling the 2015 migration crisis in Europe a ‘*Camp of the Saints*-type invasion’.² The book and its popularity on the radical right is largely understood through its racist overtones; its appeal on and insight into thought on the ‘New Right’ is attributed simply to base white ethnocentrism. Alternatively, apologists frequently dismiss or downplay the racial discourse to argue the Frenchman was bringing up important concerns about the inherent insufficiency of liberalism in the face of civilizational threats. By contrast, this article will argue that Raspail’s piece centres on a critique of liberalism, but that this underwrites and is inseparable from the racial discourse. In short, the book and its appeal on the ‘New Right’ rest on a fearful ethnocentric narrative as underpinned by civilizational anxiety animated by the ‘blindness’ of liberalism.

¹ Jean Raspail, *The Camp Of The Saints*, trans. Norman R. Shapiro (Petoskey, Mich; Social Contract Press: 1994), preface.

² Cecil Alduy, “What a 1973 French Novel Tells Us About Marine Le Pen, Steve Bannon and the Rise of the Populist Right,” *Politico Magazine*, April 23, 2017, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/04/23/what-a-1973-french-novel-tells-us-about-marine-le-pen-steve-bannon-and-the-rise-of-the-populist-right-215064/>.

This article will first briefly define the ‘New Right’ and detail the popularity of *The Camp*; this will legitimate assessing the conceptual assemblage of the ‘New Right’ via Raspail’s novel. Second, it will speak to the literature surrounding the book, arguing that responses essentially articulate one of the two interpretations outlined above, and that synthesis is missing from these perspectives. Turning to close literary analysis, this article will then deconstruct the portrayal of liberalism first in the metanarrative, then via institutions, and finally through individual characters. Here, it will show how Raspail’s narrative is discursively racial but that the portrayal of liberalism is the core conceptual mechanism actualising the ethnocultural fear; the internal logic of this critique sustains the novel. As figures on the New Right offer *The Camp* as an encapsulation of their movement’s key insights, this suggests that the New Right’s ethnocentric claims are uniquely grounded within its assessment of the liberal order. To reinforce the validity of extending this characterisation to the New Right on the whole, and underscore the distinctiveness of this reliance, at each stage, the book’s logic will be briefly situating within the offerings of some of the core thinkers of the international, radical right wing. Thus, this article’s intervention is two-fold: it offers a new assessment of the appeal of *The Camp Of The Saints*, and a broader characterisation of the logic of the New Right through this.

The Ideological Context of The Camp Of The Saints

The term ‘New Right’ refers to the cohorts of Identitarians who are loosely bound together by the view that the liberal order is dangerously ignorant—or simply dangerous—and believe this necessitates the unleashing of the nation.³ Though imprecise, using this term recognises commonality in their perspectives and the common intellectual heritage of these groups.⁴ The reach of and regard for Raspail’s work legitimates deconstructing its narrative to seek understanding of this ‘New Right’. The book’s spread has closely aligned with the resurgence of nationalist, anti-immigrant sentiment, with the initial reprint in 1985 coming as far-right in France consolidated; it was even offered at Front National rallies during the 1980s and 1990s.⁵ Amid rising popular concern about migration—especially from Muslim states—in the past decades, the most recent edition (2011) reportedly sold upward of 70,000 copies and is repeatedly included on reading lists on r/New_Right, r/DarkEnlightenment, and r/The_Donald, consequently being referred to as the ‘Bible of alt-right circles in the United States and France’ by Politico.⁶

³ Pablo de Orellana and Nicholas Michelsen, “Reactionary Internationalism: the philosophy of the New Right,” *Review of International Studies*, 45, no. 5 (2019): 748.

⁴ Ibid, 749.

⁵ Alduy, “What a 1973 French Novel Tells Us About Marine Le Pen, Steve Bannon and the Rise of the Populist Right.”

⁶ Ibid.; Sarah Jones, “The Notorious Book that Ties the Right to the Far Right,” *The New Republic*, February 2, 2018, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://newrepublic.com/article/146925/notorious-book-ties-right-far-right>.

The terms by which the novel is praised are further indicative: extremist websites Breitbart and VDARE refer to *The Camp* to support claims about the ‘true’ nature of migratory issues today.⁷ Similarly, some of the New Right’s most successful political actors hailed the novel for its supposed explanatory power; both Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller promoted the text as important to understand the refugee crises in Europe (2015) and at the US border (2017-18).⁸ Le Pen’s 2015 invitation to “the French to read, or read again” Raspail’s book and her crediting *The Camp* with clarifying her insight into immigration demonstrates such regard is transatlantic.⁹ In all referencing the value of the identitarian insight or prophetic power, all implied the novel was a key articulation of the radical perspectives they sought to incorporate into the political sphere. Given this self-consciously positions Raspail’s work as an encapsulation of their philosophy, locating the operative logic of *The Camp Of The Saints* can provide a window into the conceptual assemblage of the New Right.

There is a limited literature seeking to understand *The Camp Of The Saints* and its appeal, though mostly journalistic rather than scholarly. In this paper’s reading, these interpretations divide into emphasising the racial discourse, or

⁷ Michael Edison Hayden, “Miller Pushed Racist ‘Camp of the Saints’ Beloved by Far Right,” *SPLC Hate Watch*, December 11, 2019, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2019/11/12/miller-pushed-racist-camp-saints-beloved-far-right>.

⁸ Elian Peltier and Nicholas Kulish, “A Racist Book’s Malign and Lingering Influence,” *The New York Times*, November 22, 2019, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/22/books/stephen-miller-camp-saints.html>.

⁹ Alduy, “What a 1973 French Novel Tells Us Marine Le Pen, Steve Bannon, and the Rise of the Populist Right.”

the critique of liberalism. The Southern Poverty Law Centre,¹⁰ Alduy for *Politico*,¹¹ and *The New York Times* in several lengthy articles¹² highlight the dehumanisation of the migrants, the envisioned racial war, and approval of genocidal violence to ‘defend’ the white West. In such analysis, Raspail’s logic is ethnonationalist in the tradition of Evola and Maurras, and the book’s appeal rests on the racial perspective.¹³ As exemplified by treatments from *The American Conservative*,¹⁴ *The Federalist*¹⁵ and especially *The National Review*,¹⁶ an opposing strand argues the narrative is simply a commentary on Western culture. Remarkably formulaic, reviews from conservative outlets admit “off-putting” discourse but marvel at the accuracy of the satire of global high society and the recognition of the latent threat of immigration.¹⁷ By recasting the novel as an exposé of the liberal Western order, such accounts distract from the racial discourse to preserve the legitimacy of the warning

¹⁰ Camille Jackson, “The Turner Diaries, Other Racist Novels, Inspire Extremist Violence,” *Intelligence Report*, Southern Poverty Law Center, October 14, 2004, accessed March 1, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2004/turner-diaries-other-racist-novels-inspire-extremist-violence>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Peltier and Kulish, “A Racist Book’s Malign and Lingering Influence.”

¹³ Chelsea Stieber, “Camp of the Saints,” March 17, 2019, accessed March 3, 2021, <https://africasacountry.com/2019/03/camp-of-the-saints>.

¹⁴ Rod Dreher, “Good Lessons From A Bad Book,” *The American Conservative*, September 14, 2015, accessed March 1, 2021, [Good Lessons from a Bad Book | The American Conservative](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/good-lessons-from-a-bad-book/).

¹⁵ John Daniel Davidson, “Does Immigration Mean The End Of Western Civilization?” *The Federalist*, April 5, 2016, accessed March 3, 2021, <https://thefederalist.com/2016/03/05/does-immigration-mean-the-end-of-western-civilization/>.

¹⁶ Mackubin Thomas Owens, “What an Off-Putting French Novel Can Tell Us about Immigration,” *National Review*, June 13, 2014, accessed March 4, 2021, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2014/06/camp-saints-2014-style-mackubin-thomas-owens/>.

¹⁷ Ibid.; Dreher, “Good Lessons From A Bad Book.”

for—and about—liberal society. In doing so, they imply the novel and its appeal centre on a prescient critique of liberalism.

Arguably, this delineation of two interpretative camps is too reductive. Treatments from open ethnonationalists do not disguise the racial discourse: exemplifying this, white nationalist publication *American Renaissance* lauded how Raspail ‘declares his allegiance to his race’.¹⁸ Ironically, however, this aligns with the progressive view that the core of the book’s appeal is white ethnocentrism. A more divergent strand—including the few academic treatments it has received—alternatively interprets Raspail’s core message as neo-Malthusian: Moura¹⁹, Shriver²⁰, Domingo,²¹ and Connelley and Kennedy²² all do so, with Shriver and Domingo addressing *The Camp* within surveys of demographic literature. However, Shriver and Kennedy both claim the novel raises the insufficiency of current liberal responsiveness.²³ Domingo, meanwhile, repudiates Raspail’s demographic projections and argues the Frenchman operates from violent racial ideas, not reasonable analysis.²⁴ While they contextualise *The Camp* distinctly, these

¹⁸ Hayden, “Miller Pushed Racist ‘Camp of the Saints’ Beloved by Far Right.”

¹⁹ Jean-Marc Moura, “Littérature et idéologie de la migration: «Le camp des Saints» de Jean Raspail,” *Revue européenne des migrations internationales* 4, no. 3 (1988): 115, 119.

²⁰ Lionel Shriver, “Population in Literature,” *Population and Development Review* 29, no. 2 (2003): 157-8, 160.

²¹ Andreu Domingo, “Demodystopias”: Prospects of Demographic Hell,” *Population and Development Review* 34, no. 4 (2008): 736.

²² Matthew Connelly and Paul Kennedy, “Must it be the Rest Against the West?” *The Atlantic Monthly* 12, (December 1994): 69, <https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/politics/immigrat/kennf.htm>.

²³ Shriver, “Population in Literature,” 157-8, 160.

²⁴ Domingo, “Demodystopias,” 736-7.

works still identify a civilizational, ‘demographic’ logic driven by ethnocentrism, or an ‘insightful’ concern for the liberal order. Therefore, it remains valid to divide assessments of *The Camp OfThe Saints*, broadly, into understanding the novel’s animating force as ethnocentrism *or* liberal critique.

As a result, this paper offers a distinctive perspective in arguing that the appeal on the New Right and intellectual heart of the book is the critique of liberalism, but that this is inseparable from the ethnocentrism. The internal logic of the assessment of the liberal order defines and animates the engagement with the ethnocentric, neo-Malthusian stakes generated. Unpicking the conceptual construction of Raspail’s liberal critique in the metanarrative, through collective agents in the text, and via individual characters makes clear this dynamic.

Narrative Arc and the Arc of Time

The metanarrative is exemplary of the novel’s integration of the engagement with race and a judgement of liberalism. Opening with a refugee fleet from India having reached France but narratively focused on the five months leading up to this moment, the entire novel is positioned in expectation of Western response. By making France the subject of this crucible—given the nation’s historical association with liberal universalism and its cosmopolitan vision of a singular humanity is repeatedly mentioned—Raspail offers this

as a test for the liberal order itself.²⁵ Still, the novel tracks the fall of Western civilization as a consequence of the arrival of almost one million *non-white* migrants, dehumanised varyingly as an ‘Endless cascade of human flesh’, ‘The Beast’, a ‘river of life’, and given the biblical inspiration of the title, agents of the devil.²⁶ The clash between them and the West is at times referred to as a race war and the outcome the narrator fearfully foresees is ‘the universal mongrelization’ of humanity.²⁷ Taken with the Malthusian concern that ‘[w]ith millions of us and billions of them, we couldn’t have held out much longer’, this displays a biopolitical anxiety centred on the prospect of racial mixing and the end of the white race.²⁸ With the ‘apocalypse’ Raspail envisions appearing so strongly in racial terms, there is a robust basis for the interpretation of *The Camp* as defined by ethnocentrism, despite the narrative preoccupation with liberal society.

However, racial logic does not appear the *operative* force in the novel with a closer examination of the novel’s formulation of identity and conflict. Three passages indicate a more complex view of identity: the opening chapter holds man can only have affection for those he sees as ‘kin’ and speaks of a ‘scorn’ for others; the narrator suggests the “chapter on the white man” would reflect a lack of self-preservation instincts; and in the exposition of a westernised Indian who joins the murderous right-wing cohort at the end of the novel,

²⁵ Raspail, *The Camp*, 231.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 307, 288, 368.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 314.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 113, 268.

being white is described as a ‘mental outlook’.²⁹ Thus from the outset, Raspail rejects the universality of humanity and assumes natural conflict between peoples, but relates identity to communal feeling, not *directly* to biological fact. This characterises the West by its racial roots—even supposing inherited characteristics—but positions this as a mindset that could be adopted by non-white peoples, as Hamadura does. This links race to identity, and identity to conflict, but with the caveats that race is not entirely deterministic and identity could be mediated by cultural outlook.

Moreover, the realisation of identitarian conflict is sustained by a related but distinctive account of history that emphasises civilizational fragility. References to wars with civilizational stakes are endemic, from the loosely-veiled stand-in for Raspail—Professor Calgues—tracing history through past racial and cultural conflicts in the opening chapters onwards.³⁰ These clashes are made immediate in ‘heroes’ of Raspail’s novel such as Luke Notaras bearing the names of Byzantine or Habsburg leaders who made last stands against Ottoman forces.³¹ Thus, time’s progression is characterised by reoccurring episodes of cultural/civilizational battles between different peoples. This can be read as evidence for a racial logic animating the novel because, with the assumption that difference sustains conflict, the prospect of ‘sameness’ through racial mixing functions for Raspail as a sort of End of

²⁹ Ibid, 12, 124, 358.

³⁰ Ibid, 17-8.

³¹ Ibid, 135-6, 211, 350, 355.

Time. Equally though, narrating history through tests of cultures understands cultural survival as conditional on willingness to wage war to protect one's own identity. The narrator expresses this clearly in claiming the "Rubicon" between civilizations is dependent on the 'cowardice or courage of their dwellers'.³² Therefore, the feature distinguishing the events of the novel from conflicts past is the failure to act that the text is preoccupied with; implicitly, the narrative's ethnocentric fear is actualised—the danger animated—by the West's failure to adhere to its 'historically natural' defence role.

This conceptual mechanism allows highly racialised, biopolitical discourse to function alongside Raspail's at-times positive assessment of the Third World. These axioms of identity and civilizational clash make civilizational survival historically contingent, therefore, the overturn of a civilization is not inherently an act of hate or evil. In fact, in twice referring to the West as "Jericho" and the refugees seeking a land of "milk and honey", the migrants are coded as Israelis: God's chosen people.³³ This messianic positioning would be incoherent if the novel's animus was a deterministic racial account positing inherent racial strength or an evil non-white. Rather, the novel repeatedly highlights this as the consequence of their strength and instinctual action, in contrast to the "deadly doubt" inflicted by the liberal conscience.³⁴ The denial of subjectivity to the migrants—portraying them as mindlessly

³² *Ibid*, 304.

³³ *Ibid*, 4, 28, 41, 125, 233, 312.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 141.

instinctual—is certainly a bigoted denial of the faculties of non-white individuals, but also functions to emphasise their actions are animated by the dictates of their identity. Thus, Raspail does not identify the individual Indian as a racial enemy; by elimination, this situates responsibility in the cultural sphere and is suggestive of fault in the West.

As Stephen Miller’s references to *The Camp Of The Saints* as showing the true significance of Hispanic immigration exemplify, the account of identity and the consequences of waves of immigration are core parts of the novel’s appeal.³⁵ The text’s formulation of identity and coding of feared extinction to a civilizational narrative captures two perspectives distinctive to the New Right. Raspail’s dystopia expresses the racial aspect (and fear) overtly, but the account of identity introduces culture as a key factor; de Benoist’s understanding of identity as both “objective” and “subjective” mirrors this, turning from the firmly biological understandings from Kjellen, Ratzel and Evola that rooted interwar fascist nationalism but still embedding race.³⁶ Further, just as within *The Camp* this account displaces the individual Other as the object of blame, it is the application of identity and civilizational logics that allows the New Right to fear the Other, while claiming not to hate him.³⁷ It is by this mediating logic that the prominent radical right wing youth-

³⁵ Peltier and Kulish, “A Racist Book’s Malign and Lingering Influence.”

³⁶ Jean-Yves Camus, “Alain de Benoist and the New Right,” *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy*, eds. Mark Sedgwick (Oxford University Press: 2019), 78-9; de Orellana and Michelsen, “Reactionary Internationalism,” 754-5.

³⁷ de Orellana and Michelsen, “Reactionary Internationalism,” 754-6.

aligned movement *Bloc Identitaire* rationalised their slogan ‘0 percent racism, 100 percent identity’, while its founding President simultaneously claimed non-European migration was resulting in the “colonization” of Europe and called for “cultural combat”.³⁸

(In)action and Institutionalised Liberalism

The characterisation of liberalism through its institutional—cultural—power confirms the answer to the civilizational question the metanarrative offers. The Catholic Church, the international press, globalised high society and French radio opinion are portrayed in lockstep, each casting the refugees as escaping a historic injustice by the West on their “Third World brothers”.³⁹ In the name of this and universal humanity, they each promote the view that the West has a duty to welcome the refugees, and each portray anything else as morally indefensible.⁴⁰ Raspail venomously characterises this liberal morality as a “monstrous cancer”; under the logic of identitarian conflict embedded in the metanarrative, this spirit of fraternity is blind to reality and alien to instinct, endangering civilization.⁴¹

This ethos is portrayed as absolutely dominant, but only maintained so *conspiratorially*. The narrator implies media collusion to bury chilling

³⁸ José Pedro Zúquete, *The Identitarians: The Movement Against Globalism and Islam in Europe*. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press: 2018), 30, 48, 287.

³⁹ Raspail, *The Camp*, 89, 96, 118, 156, 164.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 114.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 7.

pictures of the ‘turd-eater’ and his child, and details the actual burying of a strangled Westerner to hide the hostility of the fleet, all to deliberately maintain public pity for the refugees.⁴² Compounding this, *The Camp* presents all those who disagree as accused of racism, narrating this as quasi-comedic when a westernised Indian man accuses the media of not understanding “the squalor, the superstitions, the fatalistic sloth” of his people and the liberal radio host responds by cutting him off, then struggling for a response until a contributor claims the outburst was the product of tragically internalised racism.⁴³ This understands liberal institutional actors as not just representatives of a false and debilitating mindset, but complicit offenders who uphold it. By detailing the behaviour of liberal cultural actors, liberalism is represented as maliciously ontologically exclusive, but fundamentally false and weak.

Crucially, Western existence under this hegemonic spirit roots the *inability* of the West to resist migratory ‘invasion’ in the novel. By holding liberalism as artificially culturally dominant and defining common morality, Raspail leaves no escape from the ‘guilty’ prescription of passivity. The text reinforces this causal chain explicitly in explaining inaction in French society: it is the reassurance from the press that is portrayed as suppressing the instinctive fear and cultural pride of Marcel, the novel’s representation of the common

⁴² Ibid, 123, 125, 142.

⁴³ Ibid, 120-121, 359.

Frenchman.⁴⁴ It is the President’s moral horror at giving the order to shoot the migrants that pushes him to balk at the last moment and tell soldiers to follow their conscience.⁴⁵ Finally, it is the inability to face the prospect of shooting starved refugees that triggers the progressive defection of the army until there are only twenty soldiers left, making conclusive the lack of struggle.⁴⁶ For maintaining this moral judgement—summarised as “remorse, self-reproach, and self-hate”—Raspail’s narrative positions liberal, Western institutions as being *the* agents of Western inaction, over and over.⁴⁷ In this, the failure of the West to stand against the Third World is ascribed to blind, institutionalised liberalism.

This is the operative logic in resistance in *The Camp* too. The men of “The Village” at the end of the novel are positioned as its central ‘heroes’, and their chief activity is killing the non-white migrants as if hunting, keeping a tally.⁴⁸ In this, the narrative praises racial violence. Still, these reactionaries are defined chiefly by their break with the global order. Having reasoned the hegemony of liberalism is necessarily debilitating, only via the total rejection of the liberal conscience and order does Raspail understand such action possible. This logic is made explicit by Perret, the most conservative member of the government and later member of The Village, identifying the ‘real

⁴⁴ Ibid, 102, 105, 138, 152.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 250-252.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 280.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 89, 160, 174.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 350.

enemy’ as ‘always behind the lines’: in this, he roots their struggle against societal mentality.⁴⁹

Similarly, the outlook of the group is narrated at length as jovial, in contrast to the pathologically guilty and angry liberal mind; at the level of the individual of this commune, Raspail reaffirms the rejection of liberalism.⁵⁰

Each admits the futility of their efforts against the migrants; the rationale for their action cannot be understood simply as a last-stand defence of the white race, as the characters perceive this—and the West—as already lost.⁵¹ Rather, the purpose of “The Village” is framed as to avoid “dull, drab, egalitarian existence” and acquiescence.⁵² This is not racial violence for its own sake, but defiance for its own sake: in action, spirit, and objective, their defining characteristic is made the struggle against supposedly fatalistic liberalism. The ‘resistance’ Raspail applauds manifests as committing genocidal atrocities yet is itself animated and defined by the metaphysical rejection of ‘unnatural’ liberal conscience.

The account of institutionalised liberalism, therefore, defines the cause of Western inaction—and so civilizational collapse—and roots the logic of resistance, meaning the novel pivots on this critique. This synthesis is exemplary of the New Right: co-opting the Gramscian idea that politics is “downstream from culture”, de Benoist likewise positioned the battle for

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 258.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 256.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 357.

⁵² *Ibid*, 359.

civilization in the cultural sphere.⁵³ From Faye to de Benoist to Dugin, influential radical right-wing theorists routinely hold that this space is subject to pervasive—in Dugin’s assessment, “totalitarian”—liberalism, but that this dominance is only artificially maintained by liberal institutions.⁵⁴ The discourse of resistance is consequently centred on a total break with and action against the liberal order.⁵⁵ This doctrine underwrites marked counter-cultural efforts amongst identitarian actors, including the creation of alternative media companies with expressed aims to publicise identitarian cultural content; *The Social Contract Press*, which published the 1991 edition of *The Camp*, exemplifies this, founded by anti-Hispanic immigration campaigner John Tanton and being designated a “Hate Group” by the Southern Poverty Law Centre for its broadcasting of white nationalist articles.⁵⁶ As with the conceptual mechanisms concerning race, this suggests Raspail’s novel has such popularity because it mirrors the New Right’s distinctive rejection of the existing world order, which itself hinges on an account of poisonous liberalism.

⁵³ Camus, “Alain de Benoist and the New Right,” 74.

⁵⁴ Marlene Laurelle, “Alexander Dugin and Eurasianism,” *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy*, ed. Mark Sedgwick (Oxford: 2019), 159-61.

⁵⁵ Nicholas Michelsen and Pablo de Orellana, “Discourses of resilience in the US alt-right,” *Resilience*, 7, no. 3 (2019): 284.

⁵⁶ Southern Poverty Law Centre, ‘The Social Contract Press’, *Southern Poverty Law Centre*, accessed March 11, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/social-contract-press>.

The Liberal Man

Finally, in the portrayal of the western individual, Raspail confirms his critique of liberalism. If narratively tedious, the repetitive characterisation and character arcs allow Raspail to generate an archetypal liberal who—untethered by identity—is profoundly weak and foolish. From the first liberal the reader is confronted with, Raspail is careful to note a conscious divorce from French or Western identity.⁵⁷ The relatively minor liberals in *The Camp* share a dissolute nature, from the vulgar hippy shot by Professor Calgues at the beginning of the novel, to the sexually unbound commune at the end who attempt to welcome the fleet from the Ganges.⁵⁸ By repeated association, the disowning of birth-culture is presented as seductive but perverted. More powerfully, the novel's major liberals almost without exception die after self-realisation of their emptiness, reinforcing the folly of disowning identity. Exemplifying this, Ballan, the atheist who plays a leading role in enabling the Calcutta poor to seize their fleet, is portrayed as pushed to drowning by the crowd and, in his final moment, realising 'how much he loved and missed the West'.⁵⁹ Similarly, Jean Orelle, government minister and cypher for the managerial class, disingenuously welcomes the progress of the migrant fleet even as he fears for his home by the sea, then eventually shoots himself before

⁵⁷ Raspail, *The Camp*, 15-7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 13-4, 214, 259.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 51.

their arrival.⁶⁰ Leftist journalist Dio and the leader of the hippy commune who seek to welcome the fleet are somewhat distinctive, but the former is killed and the latter is broken by those they sought to welcome.⁶¹ In this, their fates reinforce the ‘folly’ of belief in universal humanity. Cumulatively, the experience of the (archetypal) liberal reaffirms liberalism as fundamentally false and again makes Western liberals as agents of their own civilizational destruction.

Moreover, this representation of liberalism through the individual is a microcosm of and reinforces the latent biopolitical apprehensiveness in the metanarrative. The few named female characters—Élise, Iris and Lydie—are personified entirely as a result of their sexuality or their relationship to the male characters. Narratively reduced so, the women of the novel function only to exemplify the biopolitical stakes for the West. The final passage referring to Élise reminds she is the white wife of “an Arab” and mentions she is made “Minister of Population” in the new French government.⁶² Interrupting the discussion of her future, the narrator remembers photographs portraying a black man and white woman as ‘pioneers of an enlightened age’ and muses ‘let [a white woman] choose only nonwhite mates, and the genetic results aren’t long in coming’.⁶³ In doing so, Raspail uses this character to tie

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 253-254.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 316-16, 319.

⁶² *Ibid*, 40, 347.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 347.

the new societal order to interracial relationships and to explicate totalising, racialised biopolitical consequences.

Elsewhere, Dio's wife Iris is raped and commits suicide as a consequence of Dio driving them to a hotel that contains former prisoners convicted of sex crimes, while Lydie is raped then dies in a brothel because she attempts to welcome the refugees.⁶⁴ The narrator notes that Lydie was one of many white women forced into sexual servitude, but that such practises were later made illegal as 'it no longer filled a need, since white women soon lost all pride in their color'.⁶⁵ In this, Raspail makes such rapes component to the overall overturn of the Western order, which itself is again closely linked to whiteness. Crucially, especially because the narrative is not strongly critical of the men who attack them (in keeping with its broader perverse fascination with sexual potency), the circumstances of their rapes are made the consequence of liberal foolishness and inability to recognise danger.⁶⁶ Thus, Raspail constructs an overarching biopolitical fear of the non-white Other that is not just a matter of the reproductive future, but the failure of the liberal man to secure it.

Though more nebulous, this elaboration of biopolitical stakes is a final point of conceptual interception unique to thought on the New Right. Implicit in the writing on birth-culture identity and the neo-Malthusian concern for

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 240, 317-18.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*. 318

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 317.

‘numbers’ on the radical right is a similar concern for reproduction, and a reduction of the white female’s role to this. More distinctively, New Right actors betray a fixation on a sexual threat to white women as overlooked or enabled by liberal culture; in the French context, this manifest in works including Michel Houellebecq’s as the Orientalising trope of the “difficult Arab boy” who is admired for his “magnetism” but whose alleged seductive power over white women is to be protected against.⁶⁷ More recently, in the aftermath of the series of sexual assaults in Cologne on New Year’s Eve 2015-6 that were reportedly committed mostly by men of non-European background,⁶⁸ Marine Le Pen linked the migrant crisis to an existential threat to women’s rights, and stated she was disgusted by the ‘unacceptable silence and therefore tacit consent of the French Left’.⁶⁹ This conceptual link is an elaboration of the threat perceived in classical ethnonationalist treatments, but, as in Raspail’s novel, relates biopolitical fear *through* the assessment of liberalism.

⁶⁷ Mehammed Amadeus Mack, *Sexagon: Muslims, France, and the Sexualization of National Culture* (Virginia: 2017), 157-8, 179, DOI:10.5422/fordham/9780823274604.001.0001.

⁶⁸ Anna Sauerbrey, ‘The German Feminist’ Dilemma’, *The New York Times*, June 15, 2018, accessed March 14, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/12/opinion/the-german-feminists-dilemma.html>; Cynthia Kroet, ‘Cologne to boost police presence on New Year’s Eve’, *Politico EU*, December 12, 2016, accessed March 14, 2021, <https://www.politico.eu/article/cologne-to-boost-police-presence-on-new-years-even-sexual-assault-attacks-city-center/>.

⁶⁹ Nicholas Vinocur and Sofia Melo, “Marine Le Pen’s feminist front,” *Politico EU*, January 15, 2016, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://www.politico.eu/article/marine-le-pen-feminist-front-national-gender-equality-migration-cologne/>.

Conclusion

Overall, the critique of liberalism sits at the heart of *The Camp Of The Saints*. At every narrative level, the portrayal of the liberal sustains the biopolitical fear, roots the West's inaction, and defines the terms of resistance; the operative factor throughout is unnatural, debilitating liberalism. The emphasis on race alone misunderstands the narrative while identifying the book with the assessment of liberalism alone neglects how it functions to animate a civilizational/ethnocultural anxiety. Conventional assessments of Raspail's work, therefore, overlook the synthesis of themes that define *The Camp Of The Saints*, and mistake the source of its appeal. As the novel is positioned across the New Right as an encapsulation of key logics, this indicates we cannot understand the New Right's engagement with race without reference to the systemic critique of liberalism. As demonstrated by the sustained contextualisation of the book's critique within thought on the radical right, this dependence on a vision of civilizational/cultural struggle against liberalism is a profoundly distinctive feature of the New Right's conceptual assemblage.