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# ‘The Radio, This Unknown’ and *La Nouvelle Équipe Française*: National and Transnational Public Spheres in Post-1945 France

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## ABSTRACT

This article examines the representation of the radio in an important post-1945 periodical in France, *La Nouvelle Équipe Française* (*La NEF*). Analysing a double issue of *La NEF*, ‘La Radio, Cette Inconnue’ [‘The Radio, This Unknown’], I argue that we witness an implicit tension between a new state monopoly on radio and the transnational nature of radio broadcasting. On the one hand, this issue features the major figures in the new state radio institutions, the RDF and the Club d’Essai, with their contributions functioning as quasi-promotional material. On the other hand, three philosophers (Gaston Bachelard, Louis Lavelle, Brice Parain) all focus on the potential of radio for founding new transnational communities post-1945. We then turn to the status of the periodical within this dynamic. I propose that *La NEF* presents the periodical as a privileged site of the articulation of this tension between the national and the transnational, thus affirming the value of the periodical for the construction of a post-WWII public sphere.

## KEYWORDS

radio, periodical, public sphere, France, post-WWII, *La Nouvelle Équipe Française*

La NEF fera tout son effort pour anticiper sur la réunion prochaine, et pour rassembler, dès maintenant, à l'intérieur de ses pages, ceux qu'un avenir déjà perceptible va sans aucun doute réunir pour l'œuvre de reconstruction.<sup>1</sup>

Et l'on sait, par la tragique expérience de l'histoire la plus récente, que ce flot sonore peut être, selon le cas, utile comme l'eau dans les canalisations et les barrages électriques, ou néfaste comme les inondations.<sup>2</sup>

The first issue of *La Nouvelle Équipe Française* (*La NEF*) sets a bold ambition: to provide a space for the 'work of reconstruction' of France after World War II. Published in July 1944, with Paris still occupied, *La NEF* presented itself as a substitute for the physical gathering of intellectuals, bringing them together 'within its pages' and anticipating their future meeting. The title of the magazine itself, 'The New French Crew' carried with it a nautical connotation, which was echoed by the emblem of the journal, a boat at sea, embossed on the cover of nearly every issue of the first series. *La NEF* thus sought to assemble a worthy seafaring crew to reconstruct France, with the periodical itself being the vessel for this. As our second epigraph suggests, however, the magazine was not the only waters to be sailing on: Jean Tardieu speaks of the 'tragic experience' of WWII and the use of the radio, presenting it as at once productive and dangerous, a canal or a flood. Published in a 1951 double issue of *La NEF*, 'La Radio, Cette Inconnue' ['The Radio, This Unknown'], Tardieu's comment captures the complex position of the radio in post-war France. It is in this context that *La NEF* thus decided to set sail on this 'flood of sound' and to consider what role the radio might play in this 'the work of reconstruction'.

I argue that 'The Radio, This Unknown' helps illustrate a major tension in the French public sphere post-1945: a need to construct new national institutions, alongside a desire for transnational media. This tension was particularly pronounced with regard to radio after WWII, due its prominent use as propaganda. Within the double issue, I propose we see this conflict through justifications for the new French state monopoly on radio. I examine this quasi-promotional material in relation to the three opening articles of the issue, which emphasize the transnational potential of radio, as a ground for a new post-war community. 'The Radio, This Unknown' thus provides unique insight into the conflict between national and transnational conceptions of the public sphere post-WWII. Finally, I turn to the position of the periodical within this media ecology, arguing that the periodical is presented as a privileged space to articulate this national/transnational tension, due to its archival and visual affordances.

### ***La NEF* in Post-War France**

To understand the importance of 'The Radio, This Unknown', we must first look at *La NEF* itself. Founded by Lucie Faure and Robert Aron in Algeria in 1944, *La NEF* faced

- 1 'La NEF will do its best to anticipate the forthcoming coming together. And, to henceforth assemble, those who an already-perceptible future will undoubtedly unite for the work of reconstruction.' Robert Aron and Lucie Faure, 'Editorial', *La Nouvelle Équipe Française*, (July 1944), 5 (p. 5). All translations from *La NEF* are my own, excluding the citations of Gaston Bachelard, which come from the authorized translation. Where it is not my own translation, this is indicated in the footnotes.
- 2 'And we know by the tragic experience of our most recent history that this flood of sound can be, according to the situation, useful like water in canalizations and electrical dams, or harmful like floods.' Jean Tardieu, 'Nous autres, gens du moyen âge', 'La Radio, Cette Inconnue', *La Nouvelle Équipe Française*, 73–74 (February–March 1951), 41–42 (p. 42).

fierce competition as a new periodical in post-war France.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the periodical itself could not even lay claim to being the only periodical established in Algeria during the war. *Fontaine*, one of the major literary periodicals of the French resistance, had been founded in Algiers in 1939 and *L'Arche* was founded there in the same year as *La NEF*, with very similar ambitions (and, in the figure of Jean Amrouche, similar staff also). If new periodicals abounded in this period, it was at least in part due to the decline of the main player in the field pre-1939: *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (*La NRF*). Banned due to collaboration until 1953, the sudden decline of *La NRF* opened up a space for new magazines to emerge. And, while *La NEF* made no explicit claim to the mantle of *La NRF*, the similarity in the title alone was suggestive. Moreover, Robert Aron was significantly involved with *La NRF* in the 1930s, with Martyn Cornick describing him as one of the 'NRF intellectuals'.<sup>4</sup> In its title, staff and mission, *La NEF* was thus seeking to claim some of the space previously held by *La NRF*.

As with periodicals, the radio in post-1945 France underwent dramatic changes. Most significant was the introduction of a state monopoly on the radio in March 1945, with the establishment of the Radiodiffusion française (RDF). This state monopoly was in sharp contrast to the liberal regime pursued in the 1920s and 1930s, with a mixture of public and private channels. Rebecca P. Scales has demonstrated that the French system was notably open to the radio channels of other countries pre-1939. Scales's work nicely bring out the French state's 'reluctance to jam hostile propaganda broadcasts', arguing that the French 'never seriously considered jamming foreign broadcasts in metropolitan France', unlike other European countries where this was common (such as Britain and Germany).<sup>5</sup> Scales attributes this to French 'audiences' desire for unencumbered access to foreign stations [which] constrained the state's ability to jam hostile foreign propaganda broadcasts or adopt more aggressive counterpropaganda strategies'.<sup>6</sup> This meant that there were two quite different, recent histories of the relationship between the radio and the state in post-1945 France: the decentralized, transnational period of the 1920s and 1930s and the experience of close centralization and identity between the state and the radio during the war. These two experiences represent a significant backdrop to the texts within 'Radio, This Unknown', and, indeed, already anticipate the tension within the issue between national institutions and the transnational.

This tension points to a more fundamental conflict around the meaning of community in radio media. In an American and British context, Michele Hilmes has brought out the key role that radio has played in determining community. Applying Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities', Hilmes argues persuasively that radio has a key role in creating 'a shared simultaneity of experience', which Anderson takes to be fundamental for forming collectives. Importantly, Hilmes emphasizes that when referring to these shared experiences she is not referring to 'one uncontested discourse, but to the one that dominates out of many competing, often conflicting, voices'.<sup>7</sup> Hilmes brings out this tension, singling out in particular the conflict between the national and transnational, 'the inherent *transnationalism* of broadcasting's cultural economy [is] constituted both by the demands of the nation and the equally competing

3 Jean Amrouche was one of the founding editors, but seemed to quickly depart this role (most likely due to his commitment as editor of *L'Arche*).

4 Martyn Cornick, *Intellectuals in History: The Nouvelle Revue Française Under Jean Paulhan, 1925–1940* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1995), p. 79.

5 Rebecca Scales, *Radio and the Politics of Sound in Interwar France, 1921–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 151, 153.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 157.

7 Michele Hilmes, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922–1952* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), xvii.

impulse to go beyond'.<sup>8</sup> Though Hilmes focuses on an Anglo-American context, we will see that this dynamic very much applies to post-WWII France. Indeed, though Scales's work underscores how different the decentralized pre-1939 French radio was to the state monopoly post-WWII, her work also emphasizes how debates around the radio are tied up with ideas of nationhood and citizenship. She argues that the 'radio nation' became 'a new type of collective space [...] to debate both the definition of the body politic and the terms by which citizens could participate in the life of the nation'.<sup>9</sup> In the conclusion of her seminal work, she suggests that the interwar years 'cemented the notion [...] that listening constituted a critical means of participation in civil society and in political life'.<sup>10</sup> Scales's argument points to the important role that radio plays in delineating both national community and citizenship. I will argue that 'The Radio, This Unknown' supports Scales's position and remains a key zone of conflict between the national and the transnational after the end of WWII.

### Constructing a National Public Sphere

The 'Radio, This Unknown' comes to over two hundred pages and is split into four parts: 'Connaissance de la radio' ['Understanding the Radio'], 'Anthologie de la radio' ['A Radio Anthology'], 'A l'écoute des Auditeurs' ['Listening to Listeners'], and 'Deux interviews' ['Two Interviews']. The latter part also includes the final fifty pages of regular columns, largely reviews of books, theatre, cinema, and music. The 'Two Interviews' section contains interviews of Wladimir Proché, head of the RDF, and Henri Barraud, head of the national radio channel. As part of this section, there is also a bibliography of radio drama and radio criticism, including translations from other languages (English, German, Spanish, Italian, and Hungarian). The radio anthology has transcripts from several different types of radio programmes and recordings. The first part, 'Understanding the Radio', is the most eclectic and is itself split into four sections: 'Philosophie de la radio' ['Philosophy of the Radio'], 'Aspects de la radio' ['Aspects of the Radio'], 'Problèmes de la radio' ['Problems of the Radio'], and 'La Télévision' [Television]. Seven of the sixteen articles found in the first part of the double issue were previously broadcast as part of a lecture series for the 'Club d'Essai', the RDF's centre for radio experimentation. Though the 'Anthology of the Radio' is given a short introduction, this is not the case for the first section, and the special issue itself opens directly with the philosopher, Louis Lavelle's article.

Perhaps the most common theme across the sixteen articles of the first part of the issue, is a reflection on the relationship between the radio and the state. Given the new state monopoly, this is, of course, not unsurprising. However, its prominence is still worth underlining. Our second epigraph already pointed to this double experience, when Tardieu stated: 'And we know by the tragic experience of our most recent history that this flood of sound can be, according to the situation, useful like water in canalizations and electrical dams, or harmful like floods.'<sup>11</sup> These nefarious waters, on which 'the new crew' is sailing, therefore, carry with them a threat of propaganda, as Tardieu suggests in his reference to the recent tragic history. Indeed, André Gillois makes a similar point, emphasizing that the radio has the potential to become propaganda: 'La

8 Michele Hilmes, *Network Nations: A Transnational History of British and American Broadcasting* (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), p. 2. Emphasis in the original.

9 Scales, p. 4.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 267.

11 'Et l'on sait, par la tragique expérience de l'histoire la plus récente, que ce flot sonore peut être, selon le cas, utile comme l'eau dans les canalisations et les barrages électriques, ou néfaste comme les inondations.' Tardieu, p. 42.

propagande, comme la publicité, peut lui [l'auditeur] enfoncer un certain nombre de slogans dans la tête. Elle abrutit, elle n'éclaire pas' ['Propaganda, like advertising, can force a certain number of slogans into their (the listener's) head. It dazes, it does not clarify'].<sup>12</sup> Strikingly, throughout the issue, the concern around propaganda is never associated with the RDF. Indeed, for Tardieu, the risk of propaganda can be addressed by increased control through: 'les esprits responsables [...] soient appelés à contrôler et à gouverner de plus en plus cette masse de vibrations' ['responsible minds [...] who are increasingly called to control and govern this mass of vibrations'].<sup>13</sup> Similarly, for Gillois, the RDF is not in question here. Rather, propaganda can be resisted by the engagement of writers with the radio: 'Mais l'écrivain est par essence un homme qui sort de lui-même ce qu'il exprime. C'est un homme libre.' ['But the writer is in essence a man who draws his expression out of himself. He is a free man.']\*<sup>14</sup> For Gillois and Tardieu, therefore, the risk of propaganda is serious, but it is never seriously posed as an issue for the emerging state monopoly.

This attitude is continued in Dermée's and Guilly's respective articles, where they address the change in relationship between the French state and the radio. As Dermée writes, 'ceux qui écoutaient la radio avant la guerre seraient sans doute nombreux à évoquer avec nostalgie l'abondance, la diversité, la vie [...] et la familiarité aimable, la fantaisie, la bonne humeur'.<sup>15</sup> Dermée appeals to the pre-1939 liberal regime not to challenge the monopoly, but rather to argue that the new relationship to the state has limited some of the creative dimensions of the radio. In his view, the RDF faces 'des lourdes servitudes' ['heavy constraints'] as it has an 'obligation de donner le micro au chef du Gouvernement et aux ministres [...] obligation de donner une image sonore plus ou moins large de toutes les cérémonies rituelles' ['obligation to give the microphone to the Head of Government and government ministers [...] obligation to provide a sonic image, more or less large, of all the ritual ceremonies'].<sup>16</sup> Dermée's concern then is not with the risk of propaganda, but simply that the formats of these ceremonies and the need to broadcast politicians' speeches is tiresome. His issue is not the content as such, but rather the form, as he argues the radio needs to make greater use of '*documents sonores*' ['sounds documents'] of events and interviews, which allow for '*témoignages authentiques*' ['authentic testimonies'].<sup>17</sup> While at once acknowledging the monopoly of radio, Dermée dismisses any concerns around propaganda; the problem with the new configuration of the relationship between state and radio is not the state control of communication, per se, but rather that this new relationship has reduced the creative potential of radio.

Guilly's article directly addresses the relationship between the radio and the state and is entitled 'Free Speech'. As in Dermée, it acknowledges the potential risk of a state monopoly, but then dismisses this risk. Guilly begins by emphasizing the importance of free speech in a democracy and states that '[d]ans les pays totalitaires, la radio est non seulement le monopole de l'Etat, mais aussi un des plus perniciox instruments de corruption des valeurs humaines' ['in totalitarian countries, the radio is not only the monopoly of the state, but also one of the most pernicious instruments

12 André Gillois, 'L'auditeur attend un homme libre', 'La Radio, Cette Inconnue', *La Nouvelle Équipe Française*, 73–74 (February–March 1951), 29–33 (p. 32).

13 Tardieu, p. 42.

14 Gillois, p. 33.

15 'no doubt there will be many who listened to the radio before the war who would evoke, with an abundance of nostalgia, the diversity, the life [...] and the friendly familiarity, the fantasy, the good humour'. Paul Dermée, 'Puissance et servitudes du journalisme parlé', 'La Radio, Cette Inconnue', *La Nouvelle Équipe Française*, 73–74 (February–March 1951), 56–62 (p. 56).

16 *Ibid.*, p. 57.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 60. Emphasis original.

of the corruption of human values’].<sup>18</sup> He rhetorically considers this as an option in France in order to categorically dismiss it: ‘En serait-il de même au sein de nations qui se prétendent démocratiques? Assurément non.’ [‘Could it be the same at the heart of nations who claim to be democratic? Absolutely not.’]<sup>19</sup> Guilly delays offering a justification for his position, instead further complicating it, by pointing to the distinct problem that the radio maintains for free speech, due to its ‘pouvoirs presque démiurgiques’ [‘almost demiurgic power’], ‘la liberté de parole se trouve, lorsqu’il s’agit de la radio, singulièrement transformé’ [‘free speech finds itself, when it comes to radio, uniquely transformed’].<sup>20</sup> The mysterious side of radio causes individuals who listen to believe what is said automatically, suspending the critical attitude they might normally have towards printed words. This would suggest that a monopoly on radio is a serious concern, even with a democratic state, but this is a fact that Guilly dismisses out of hand. For him, ‘[l]a nationalisation de la radio semble une évolution légitime, en accord [...] avec la nature même de la radio’ [‘the nationalization of the radio is a legitimate evolution, in accordance with (...) the nature of radio itself’].<sup>21</sup> Radio can combine immediate information with ‘tout le patrimoine littéraire, musical, artistique et même universitaire d’un pays. Un seul système d’émissions peut informer, éduquer et distraire toute une nation, et il est normal, semble-t-il, que les pouvoirs publics s’assurent ce privilège.’<sup>22</sup> Not only, therefore, is Guilly unconcerned by the state monopoly, but rather he welcomes this new relationship.

That these articles raise no concern about the new relationship between the state and the radio is perhaps no surprise. Indeed, one of the most striking aspects of the table of contents is the overlap between the contributors and those in senior positions within this new monopoly. These include: Paul Gilson, Director of Artistic Services at the RDF; André Vigneau, Director of Research at the RDF; André Gillois, spokesperson for de Gaulle during WWII and regular presenter of *Radio Londres* during WWII; Jean Tardieu, Director of the Club d’Essai; Pierre Schaeffer, the previous director of the Club d’Essai; as well as an interview with Wladimir Proché, the head of the RDF.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, of the sixteen articles in the issue, it appears as if only three contributors (all philosophers) were not employed by the RDF. Indeed, the overlap itself is somewhat subtle, as bylines or titles are never included at the end of these articles. While there would no doubt have been some name recognition, given the seniority of some of the contributors, the overall effect masks the effort to legitimize a new state institution and a new regime of organizing radio in France.

As the above suggests, we should understand ‘The Radio, This Unknown’ as primarily an effort to legitimize a newly emerging national institution. Indeed, these texts do not simply valorize radio in general, but specifically the RDF and often explicitly support the state monopoly. We can bring out two important points here. Firstly, in light of the place vacated by *La NRF* in the magazine landscape, we can certainly suggest that this alignment suits *La NEF*, helping establish itself as an important venue for discussing a major national institution. Secondly, in light of Scales’s and Hilmes’s positions, we

18 René Guilly, ‘La liberté de parole’, ‘La Radio, Cette Inconnue’, *La Nouvelle Équipe Française*, 73–74 (February–March 1951), 51–55 (p. 51).

19 *Ibid.*

20 *Ibid.*

21 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

22 ‘all the literary, musical, artistic, and even academic culture of a country. A sole system of programmes can inform, educate, and entertain a nation and, it is appropriate, it seems, that it is the public authorities that assure this privilege.’ *Ibid.* It is worth noting that Guilly’s argument is partially a justification for a controversy that he was involved in: the censoring of the work of Antonin Artaud in 1947.

23 The Club d’Essai, or formally Centre d’Études radiophonique, took over from Pierre Schaeffer’s Studio d’Essai (which itself was established in 1943).

can understand this as a broader symbolic effort to present the national citizen and nation-state as the primary model. These articles do so by implicitly presenting the nation as the only resource for imagining community post-WWII.

## Transnational Communities and the Individual

In spite of the exclusive focus on the national in some of these articles, this tension with the transnational nature of radio is not so easily dismissed. It is here that we can turn to three articles which begin this issue; all three of which push beyond the national towards the potential for transnational communities.

The three opening articles of the issue were each written by different philosophers: Louis Lavelle, Gaston Bachelard, and Brice Parain. These articles were originally presented as lectures at the Club d'Essai, thus further enforcing the promotional nature of the double issue. However, their participation at the Club d'Essai and, even more so, their inclusion in *La NEF* is surprising on at least two counts. Firstly, because there was a substantial amount of other material that could have been selected from this lecture series, held over the previous three years.<sup>24</sup> Secondly, none of the three had done any work on the radio prior to their lecture, nor had they published before with *La NEF*. There are at least two reasons for their inclusion and their prominent position within the issue itself. The first reason is their status as philosophers. This added an assuredly 'highbrow' dimension to the journal, as the figure of the philosopher had substantial symbolic capital in France.<sup>25</sup> In that respect, the prominence of three leading philosophers helped add symbolic force and cultural capital to the issue and emphasized the 'serious' nature of the discussion of radio and the status of *La NEF* as a 'serious' player in the French public sphere. The second reason relates to the content of the texts and particularly their insistence on the potential of transnational or supranational communities.

Though all three philosophers came from quite distinct schools of thought, with different areas of expertise, the proximity of their positions in *La NEF* is remarkable. Two common points emerge: firstly, the radio provides a unique experience of individualism; secondly, it can serve as a ground for community, with such a community going beyond the state. It is here that we see a tension between the promotion of the state as the primary community for the radio and the transnational accounts of these philosophers. We can speculate that this focus on both the individual and transnationalism is, in part, a response to WWII authoritarianism, as well as the different French experiences of the radio.

All three present radio as tied to an experience of individuality, where we sense ourselves as distinct from others. Brice Parain's 'Radio and Solitude' presents this experience as 'solitude' (with solitude being understood in a positive sense). For Parain, human communication and connection is fundamentally fragile and a ground for misunderstanding: '[C]haque homme est seul, et qu'il n'est en communication avec les autres que d'une façon extrêmement fragile.' ['Every man is alone and is only ever in communication with others in an extremely fragile way.']<sup>26</sup> This is so because language itself is fundamentally inconsistent, with words having distinct meanings for every

24 Bachelard's talk was given in 1948, while Lavelle's was a year later in 1949.

25 Indeed, *La NEF* had already understood the importance of the figure of the philosophe in presenting their journal and Julien Benda, a leading rationalist philosopher had his final book, *Mémoires d'infirmité*, serialized in *La NEF* from 1949 until 1951. It was clearly a successful strategy, with one respondent to the survey of radio listeners explaining her print media consumption as 'Benda in *la NEF*'. Georgette Elgey and Michel Vincent, 'À l'Écoute des Auditeurs', *La Radio, Cette Inconnue*, *La Nouvelle Équipe Française*, 73–74 (February–March 1951), 135–66 (p. 151).

26 Brice Parain, 'Radio et solitude', *La Radio, Cette Inconnue*, *La Nouvelle Équipe Française*, 73–74 (February–March 1951), 21–23 (p. 21).



individual. Following Leibniz, each individual is a distinct monad, but one which contains '[u]ne petite fenêtre sur l'extérieur' ['a little window to the exterior world'].<sup>27</sup> Parain points out that 'la fenêtre, maintenant, sera le micro' ['the window is now the microphone'].<sup>28</sup> Such a position might appear pessimistic at first, but for Parain this is simply an ontological fact, neither positive nor negative. Accordingly, what is important is to accept the absence in communication and for him radio has a distinct capacity to accept this, because we listen to it alone, in the privacy and 'au chaud' ['in the warmth'] of our own home, but we also receive information — through the window of radio — about the outside world, 'la rumeur du monde entier' ['the rumour of the world'].<sup>29</sup> In this sense, we are at once 'seuls et occupés, distraits et intéressés à un monde présent autour de nous' ['alone and occupied, distracted and interested in a world present around us'].<sup>30</sup> Radio thus provides us with an equilibrium, which best captures our relationship to ourselves, which Parain calls 'solitude'.

In quite a different argument, Lavelle reaches a similar conclusion, arguing that radio allows a unique degree of individuality, or what he labels 'sincerity'. Lavelle focuses on the person speaking, rather than the receiver (largely Parain's focus). While Parain understood language as a ground for misunderstanding, emphasizing our separation, Lavelle places the emphasis on the intersubjective nature of language: 'parler, c'est toujours parler à quelqu'un' ['to speak is always to speak to someone'].<sup>31</sup> Yet, Lavelle asks, who am I speaking to? For Lavelle the answer is the microphone itself. The microphone, in his view, needs to be personified, but in a striking way, because it is personified as supernatural, or more precisely as divine and diabolic. The microphone also has a 'médiateur' ['mediating'] function of 'une puissance extraordinaire' ['extraordinary power'].<sup>32</sup> It reaches audiences beyond physical presence, and allows the voice to be recorded, thus 'le conférencier parle à une multiplicité infinie d'auditeurs possibles, au-delà même des auditeurs réels qui seront à l'écoute. Il parle à tous ceux qui pourront un jour prendre l'écoute.' ['the speaker speaks to an infinite multiplicity of possible audiences, beyond even the audience who is listening. He speaks to all those who could, someday, listen.']<sup>33</sup> For Lavelle what is most proper to the radio is that it cuts one off from specific audience in any specific time or place: 'Elle a un caractère d'universalité [...] le propre de la radio est donc, semble-t-il de couper toute relation entre celui qui parle et un auditeur particulier, vivant, situé.' ['It has a universal character (...) it cuts off any relationship between the person who speaks and any specific living, situated listener.']<sup>34</sup> If we do not have a target audience, who do I speak to on the radio, Lavelle asks, and then answers: oneself. The speaker on the radio articulates what is most intimate and singular about themselves, 'l'expression la plus profonde de ce qu'il y a en lui de plus personnel' ['the most profound expression of what is most personal in himself'].<sup>35</sup> It is radio, therefore, that enables us to establish a fundamental connection with ourselves, one which Lavelle sees as only made possible via this media.

Bachelard's article makes a similar point and reiterates Parain's use of the term 'solitude': 'La radio a tout ce qu'il faut pour parler dans la solitude.' ['Radio has everything

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid., p. 22.

30 Ibid.

31 Louis Lavelle, 'Un nouvel art de persuader', 'La Radio, Cette Inconnue', *La Nouvelle Équipe Française*, 73–74 (February–March 1951), 8–14 (p. 8).

32 Ibid., p. 12.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., p. 13.

35 Ibid., p. 13.

required for speaking in solitude.']<sup>36</sup> For Bachelard, radio is closely tied to what he labels 'rêverie'. This can be translated into English as dream or daydream, but for Bachelard it has a broader and more active meaning. James S. Hans summarizes this well: 'In reverie, a subject can imagine itself and the image as they are co-constituted and can report this complex as it occurs.'<sup>37</sup> For Bachelard, archetypes or images represent a fundamental part of our subjectivity, and radio enables a unique connection to them. Radio makes this possible because of its aural nature. He insists that communication with our unconscious emerges from sound itself: 'Elle vient derrière des sons, des sons bien faits.' ['It comes in the wake of sound, in the wake of well-formed sound.']<sup>38</sup> On this account, the radio echoes archetypes which are 'vraiment enraciné(s) dans le psychisme de chaque individu' ['thoroughly rooted in the psychism of every individual']<sup>39</sup> Indeed, Bachelard goes so far as to suggest that we not only need radio engineers, but also 'ingénieurs psychiques' ['psychic engineers']<sup>40</sup> Importantly, like Parain, 'solitude' becomes a key reference point because we listen alone, in our home, and radio reaches us in a fundamental way because it can interact with our archetypes. Bachelard, therefore, focuses on unconscious rather than conscious communication, yet for him as well, the radio foregrounds the individual.

Each of these articles, therefore, points to the potential for the radio to disconnect us from the world, to make possible an experience of oneself in 'solitude'. Yet, at the same time, all three present this experience of 'solitude' as the grounds of a community. For Parain, it is the ground for a 'a type of new civilization':

It is a sort of civilization that we could almost call primitive, because there would no longer be this social life in which people are all half-present to one another. There will be in this solitude a type of more urgent call, more true, and perhaps the possibility of a reply coming from far away, from a place where the person who speaks would perhaps not have been able to go.<sup>41</sup>

This is a new civilization, then, not only because radio will accept the limits that Parain identifies in language, but rather also because it allows for a greater physical range of communication. Imagining a future development of radio, where we can each individually transmit our own programme, Parain speculates that we will be able not only to listen to the rumour of the whole world, that is to say take an interest in what is happening, but will also be able to 'parler au monde entier' ['speak to the whole world']<sup>42</sup> Parain thus offers a vision of the radio beyond the national, as an enabling force for a new public sphere. For him, the community of the radio is not to be dominated by the nation or state, but rather is inherently part of a transnational world.

Such a view is echoed also by Lavelle, when he argues that radio creates the possibility of 'une communication actuelle, vivante, spirituelle' ['current, living, and

36 Gaston Bachelard, 'Rêverie et radio', 'La Radio, Cette Inconnue', *La Nouvelle Équipe Française*, 73–74 (February–March 1951), 15–20 (p. 19). Here, I cite from the authorized translation, Gaston Bachelard, 'Reverie and Radio', *The Right to Dream*, trans. J. A. Underwood (Texas: The Dallas Institute, 1988), 167–72 (p. 171). Both page numbers will be given, with the English translation given in parenthesis.

37 James S. Hans, 'Gaston Bachelard and the Phenomenology of the Reading Consciousness', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 35.3 (1977), p. 322.

38 Bachelard, p. 19 (p. 171).

39 *Ibid.*, p. 17 (p. 169).

40 *Ibid.*, p. 16 (p. 168).

41 'C'est une sorte de civilisation qu'on pourrait presque appeler primitive, puisqu'il n'y aura plus toute cette vie de société par laquelle les hommes sont tous demi-présents les uns aux autres. Il y aura dans cette solitude une sorte d'appel plus pressant, plus vrai, et peut-être une possibilité de réponse venant de loin, d'un endroit où la personne qui parle n'aurait peut-être pu aller.' Parain, 'Radio et solitude', p. 22–23.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

spiritual communication’].<sup>43</sup> As the speaker expresses his own thoughts in such a sincere way, the listeners feel as if these come from themselves:

He who listens should, at the very least, have the impression that the thoughts which are communicated to him are his own and that they come from himself. But undoubtedly that will only be possible if the thoughts of those who speak are also their own thoughts and as a consequence instead of thinking for another, he thinks for himself.<sup>44</sup>

Rather than looking to persuade someone of my ideas, I articulate them with such a degree of sincerity that it touches on a ‘fond commun’ [‘shared foundation’].<sup>45</sup> At ‘la racine de notre intimité’ [‘the very foundation of their own intimacy’], humans are no longer “séparés par des différences infranchissables, nous communions sans le vouloir et même sans le savoir” [‘separated by impassable differences, we are in communion without wishing it or even knowing it’].<sup>46</sup> For Lavelle, then, it is the radio which creates a unique possibility for the construction of a form of shared humanity. This humanity pushes against the focus on the nation-state in the other parts of the issue.

Finally, Bachelard makes a similar point and coins an important concept for his philosophy, the *logosphere*:

It is this: the Bergsonians have spoken of a biosphere, that is to say a living stratum containing forests, animals, and man himself. The idealists have spoken of a nous-sphere, a sphere of thought [...] What term could be better suited to this domain of world speech than logosphere? We all of us speak in the logosphere. We are citizens of the logosphere.<sup>47</sup>

For Bachelard, this ‘domain of world speech’ is made possible by the radio. The radio’s potential to found a new community sets it apart. What is striking is the phrasing of this paragraph, presenting us all as ‘citizens’, something normally reserved to the nation-state. For Bachelard, the radio thus impacts a fundamental part of the nation, the citizen, and opens up a space for imagining this transnationally. For him, ‘la radio est un problème tout à fait cosmique: toute la planète est en train de parler’ [‘radio is an absolutely cosmic problem: the whole world is talking about it’].<sup>48</sup> He maintains that the radio allows communication through the unconscious and this is what creates a universal logosphere: ‘C’est donc par l’inconscient que l’on peut réaliser cette solidarité des citoyens de la logosphère qui ont les mêmes valeurs, la même volonté de douceur, la même volonté de rêve.’ [‘It is through the unconscious, then, that this solidarity among the citizens of the logosphere sharing the same values, the same will to gentleness, the same will to dream, can find its realization.’]<sup>49</sup> Bachelard illustrates this more clearly by referring to unconscious archetypes, which he takes to be universal across all cultures. He takes the archetype of ‘home’ as an example, a theme which he takes to be ‘vraiment

43 Lavelle, ‘Un Nouvel art’, p. 14.

44 ‘Celui qui entend doit, à la limite, avoir aussi l’impression que les pensées qu’on lui communique sont les siennes propres. Cela n’est sans doute possible que si ces pensées sont devenues ses propres pensées et que, par conséquent, au lieu d’entendre penser pour un autre, il pense lui-même.’ Ibid., p. 13–14.

45 Ibid., p. 14.

46 Ibid.

47 ‘Les bergsoniens ont parlé d’une biosphère, c’est-à-dire d’une couche vivante où il y a des forêts, des animaux, des hommes même. Les idéalistes ont parlé de la noosphère, qui est une sphère de pensée. [...] Quel est le mot qui convient pour cette parole mondiale ? C’est la logosphère. Nous parlons tous dans la logosphère. Nous sommes des citoyens de la logosphère.’ Bachelard, p. 15 (p. 167).

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid., p. 16 (p. 168).

enraciné dans le psychisme de chaque individu’ [‘thoroughly rooted in the psychism of every individual’].<sup>50</sup> It is radio’s ability to provoke these archetypes which make the radio ‘réalisation complète de la psyché-humaine’ [‘a total realization of the human psyche’].<sup>51</sup> Radio thus offers a new relationship to our individual self, as well as a foundation for a new model of intersubjective community, the *logosphere*.

All three articles, therefore, focus not on the link between the radio and the nation, but rather on the transnational, presenting the radio as a model for a future community. Though all three arrive at this position from different starting points, we can see that the focus on transnationalism that emerges here is constant, with the radio seen as occupying a unique position in making a public sphere beyond the national possible. Indeed, all three take the individual as foundational for such a community. The radio thus becomes a ground for imagining forms of non-fusional or non-identity-based community, ones which respect the rights and integrity of the individual. Though this is never explicitly stated, we can suggest that this is part of the reason behind the foundational role of ‘solitude’ in Parain and Bachelard, and ‘sincerity’ in Lavelle. The community that they call for is one based on an original respect for the individual. We can take this focus on the individual and the transnational to be, at least partially, a response to the events of WWII. The transnational theme of these articles push against the nationally-focused articles. In this sense, we can understand the forms of community presented here as fundamentally at odds with the conception behind the state monopoly. The citizen presented is the citizen of Bachelard’s transnational logosphere and not the national citizen. Though such a conflict is never thematized, in the juxtaposition of the transnational and national we come to understand this as an overarching tension in conceptions of the radio in France post-1945.

### **The Periodical, This Unknown**

The relationship between the transnational and the national is not the only tension to be found in ‘The Radio, This Unknown’. There is also the relationship between the radio and the periodical itself. The issue is universally positive about the radio in general, and indeed the transnational accounts present the radio with unique powers beyond the printed word, so one might ask: are the seafaring crew of *La NEF* thinking of jumping ship? In seeking to contribute to the reconstruction of the public sphere in 1944, did they set off on the wrong vessel? Teasing out the precise relationship between radio and periodicals in ‘The Radio, This Unknown’ is difficult precisely because of the lack of introduction or presentation. However, I propose that this issue does indeed present the periodical as having an invaluable and distinct position in the public sphere, as a unique site for thematizing other media and articulating the tension between the national and transnational. By looking at the structure, layout, and contents of the issue, we can see that *La NEF* foregrounds the periodical’s capacity for welcoming a wide range of texts. It does this in two ways: by employing the magazine’s visual capacities, as well as by emphasizing the archival (and therefore multi-temporal) potential of the magazine.

Considering the archival role first, ‘The Radio, This Unknown’ implicitly presents itself as a better archive for radio than radio itself. Indeed, this is in large part because of radio’s linear temporality at the time, with listeners having no ability to replay or return to past programmes. The periodical thus presents itself as a site of storage for radio material that otherwise would be removed from the reader. In the ‘Radio Anthology’ section of the issue, which takes up forty-three pages, we are presented with a diverse range of

50 Ibid., p. 17 (p. 169).

51 Ibid., p. 16 (p. 168).

material. The range of genres here is important: there are five transcripts of poems, six of ‘testimonies and confessions’, and four news reports. Within this, we get extracts of poems, interviews, profiles of individuals, a report of the execution of collaborationist Prime Minister Pierre Laval, and a live report of brain surgery. This both emphasizes the diversity of the radio, but also the potential of the periodical to accommodate diversity and store it permanently and publicly. This point takes on particular importance in light of the different experiences of the radio that we presented in our first section. There, we saw that the liberal regime of the 1920s and 1930s was at odds with the French and German propaganda of the WWII-period and distinct again from the new state radio institution, RDF. The material offered in the anthology presents an even sample of work from these different periods, including the assassination attempt on Laval in 1941. We thus are presented with multiple temporalities and experiences of the radio, with the overall effect being to foreground the position of the periodical as central in mediating and storing these different histories.

Of course, it is not adequate to simply describe the periodical as a neutral archive, but rather in presenting this material anew, the periodical also modifies that material by changing the material’s form. This process of modification has been labelled ‘remediation’.<sup>52</sup> At times, the limits of this transfer from the radio to the printed page are apparent. The brief account of brain surgery illustrates this nicely, featuring several ellipses and simple descriptions of the sounds: ‘bruit du trépan’ [‘sound of the drill’], ‘bruit des gouttes . . .’ [‘sound of drops falling . . .’].<sup>53</sup> While the recording might have been exciting, dramatic, and informative, its transfer to the written page comes across dull and matter-of-fact. Yet in many other cases, this remediation adds something new to the radio text. For instance, for one of the radio scripts, a handwritten manuscript is reproduced. The ability to reproduce the handwritten text foregrounds the remediation of this material: something which would be identical if broadcast on the radio, becomes a distinct document in the magazine. Importantly, there seems to be little reason, at least in terms of content, to reproduce the manuscript. While it certainly underscores the authenticity of the material selected for the anthology, and the archival work done in selecting the pieces to include in the anthology section, the text could have been typed out without any loss of meaning. And, indeed, such a move is repeated shortly afterwards, when over two pages, we see the running order of a radio play reproduced. The inclusion of the script breakdown helps demonstrate the complexity of producing a radio programme or play. Yet it also helps emphasize the capacity of the periodical to mediate this, in a way that would not be possible on the radio. The magazine thus becomes a privileged venue for articulating what takes place ‘behind the scenes’ of the radio. It becomes a space to analyse the operations and actions which make radio possible, and this is brought out through the remediation of this material within the anthology.

*La NEF* is not simply an archival site, but through this remediation also presents itself as a unique space for articulating the inner workings of the radio. Indeed, the thirty-one-page survey of radio listeners takes this further, presenting the periodical as capable of analysing the reception of the radio as well. This section takes an early sociological approach, asking people about listening habits, programmes, and frequency. Here, we see the visual dimensions of the periodical come to the fore. The survey section features seven different charts and figures, including a map of France, which are then

52 On remediation in an Anglophone context, see Debra Rae Cohen’s work on *The Listener and the BBC: Debra Rae Cohen, “Strange Collisions”: Keywords Toward an Intermedial Periodical Studies*, *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 41.1 (2015), 93–104.

53 ‘Une intervention de neurochirurgie’, *La Radio, Cette Inconnue*, *La Nouvelle Équipe Française*, 73–74 (February–March 1951), p. 134.

explained in the text itself. The map illustrates the density of radio set ownership in France (number of people per set). We see high ownership, per capita, in Paris and its environs ('Seine'), as well as in the northeast ('Ardennes', 'Nord'), 'Meurthe-Moselle' (whose capital is Nancy) and 'Rhône' (whose capital is Lyon). However, we see sparse ownership in the west of France, as well as lower ownership in the south and southwest. This information is communicated, succinctly and directly, through the map, in a way that would not be possible in a radio format. These graphs underline the prominence of the visual in print and the advantages this brings in quickly communicating information to the reader. Something which would be less graspable if spoken or written linearly, such as the degree of radio listenership during the day, becomes easily and almost immediately comprehensible through line charts and a histogram. Indeed, this emphasis on the visual in the analysis of the radio can also help us understand the motivation behind the reproduction of the handwritten manuscript and script breakdown. It presents the visual nature of the periodical as invaluable in analysing the radio.

As the above suggests, we also witness a significant diversity of material in the issue. The range of documents above also reflects the range of approaches assembled. We begin with philosophers, we move to broadcasters, writers, radio technicians, and those managing the radio, then we come to an anthology of pre-war radio, a statistical survey, two interviews on the radio, and finally a significant bibliography on the radio. Even within this range of documents, the diversity is worth underlining. The anthology, for instance, features poetry, interviews of writers, and a radio drama. This diversity, alongside a lack of introduction and the division of the periodical into several sections, supports what Latham and Cohen have labelled the 'ergodic' nature of the magazine, which emphasizes 'the idiosyncratic actions of individual readers to produce meaning'.<sup>54</sup> With no introduction, we can start at any text in the magazine and it can still make sense (indeed, it is an itinerary within the magazine that we are constructing ourselves). Radio, as Cohen underlines, by virtue of the 'inalterably linear progression of sound' lacks this ergodic capacity.<sup>55</sup> *La NEF* thus implicitly foregrounds yet another distinct capacity of the periodical: its diversity of content, but also the diversity of meaning that can emerge from this.

Finally, this emphasis on the diversity and strengths of the periodical can help us better understand the tension between the transnational philosophers and the nationally-focused RDF figures. Rather than seeking to resolve this tension, or come down in favour of one side, *La NEF* valorizes the periodical through how it presents this tension. It presents the periodical as a distinct space for pluri-temporal and pluri-perspectival approaches. In this sense, 'The Radio, This Unknown' is both a valorization of radio and affirmation of the periodical. Indeed, this ability to offer plural and differing views in one venue is implicitly presented as *La NEF*'s contribution to 'the work of reconstruction'.<sup>56</sup>

## Conclusion

The media ecology of post-war France represents a radical shift from the 1920s, 1930s, and WWII period. This meant that new institutions, like *La NEF* and the RDF, were in search of legitimation. Though much of 'The Radio, This Unknown' supports this new state monopoly, the focus on the transnational potential of radio by the three

54 Sean Latham, 'Unpacking My Digital Library: Programs, Modernisms, Magazines', in *Making Canada New*, ed. by Dean Irvine et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), pp. 31–60 (pp. 37–38). Debra Rae Cohen's excellent work has brought out the value of the 'ergodic' for an intermedial framework. See Cohen, 'Strange Collisions'.

55 Cohen, 'Strange Collisions', p. 99.

56 Robert Aron and Lucie Faure, 'Editorial', *La Nouvelle Équipe Française* (July 1944), 5 (p. 5).

philosophers implicitly challenges this. Within this double issue, therefore, we can identify a tension between two types of imagined communities and public spheres: one focused on the national and the need to establish strong state institutions, the other emphasizing the potential for transnational communication and collectives. *La NEF* takes no position on this, but rather provides critical insight into how this debate emerged post-1945. Though ‘The Radio, This Unknown’ valorizes the radio, we can also understand this issue as supporting the periodical. Indeed, we see the importance of the periodical as an archive, one which remediates content and welcomes a diversity of material, with particular emphasis on its visual affordances. From this perspective, the periodical comes to be seen as a privileged site for the articulation of the tension between the national and the transnational. In maintaining the tension, rather than resolving it, *La NEF* thus re-affirms the value of the periodical for the construction of a post-WWII public sphere.

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‘THE RADIO, THIS UNKNOWN’ AND *LA NOUVELLE ÉQUIPE FRANÇAISE*:  
NATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL PUBLIC SPHERES IN POST-1945 FRANCE

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