

Robert Antelme

Humanity, Community, Testimony

Martin Crowley



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RESEARCH MONOGRAPHS IN FRENCH STUDIES 15

ROBERT ANTELME
HUMANITY, COMMUNITY, TESTIMONY

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MARTIN CROWLEY



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FOR MY PARENTS
ROD AND HILARY CROWLEY

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M. P. V. C.



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ABBREVIATIONS



Abbreviations are used to refer to the following:

EH Robert Antelme, *L'Espèce humaine*, édition revue et corrigée (1957) (Paris: Gallimard, Tel, 1978)

TI Robert Antelme, *Textes inédits/Sur 'L'Espèce humaine'/Essais et témoignages* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996)

All emphases are original except where otherwise stated.

The World Turned Upside Down

In 1649 to St. George's Hill

A ragged band they called the Diggers came to show the people's will.

They defied the landlords, they defied the laws.

They were the dispossessed reclaiming what was theirs.

We come in peace they said to dig and sow.

We come to work the lands in common and to make the waste ground grow.

This earth divided we will make whole

So it will be a common treasury for all.

The sin of property we do disdain.

No man has any right to buy and sell the earth for private gain.

By theft and murder they took the land,

Now everywhere the walls spring up at their command.

They make the laws to chain us well,

The clergy dazzle us with heaven or they damn us into hell.

We will not worship the God they serve,

The God of greed who feeds the rich while poor folk starve.

We work we eat together, we need no swords.

We will not bow to the masters or pay rent to the lords.

Still we are free though we are poor.

You Diggers all stand up for glory, stand up now.

From the men of property the orders came,

They sent the hired men and troopers to wipe out the Diggers' claim,

Tear down their cottages, destroy their corn.

They were dispersed but still the vision lingers on.

You poor take courage, you rich take care.

This earth was made a common treasury for everyone to share.

All things in common, all people one.

We come in peace. The orders came to cut them down.

LEON ROSSELSON