



The Outrage Against Words

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By Bernard Noël

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# THE OUTRAGE AGAINST WORDS

BERNARD NOËL

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SCREAMS. THEY BEGIN AGAIN. I HEAR THEM, YET I HEAR nothing. I'd like to know what they are saying. I knew it before. Now I seek what censors them within me. Screams, like those of a woman driven mad. Listening to them, I said to myself: nothing can be happening here. Nothing was happening but those cries. Night. I was afraid, and I was afraid of being afraid. Filthy wog, the warders had called me. It's easy to resist provocation, easier than the waiting. I was listening. I am listening, but each time it comes again, it's no more than the hollow of the cry. How can I put it? It cries out but no longer says anything. Something has erased the words, the sense which could perhaps reassure me. At that very moment I was afraid of what was going to follow; now I'm afraid of making literature. I have very much wanted to, but cannot, here, echo the emptiness of that empty cry. Cannot even explain why it comes back, and comes back, always obsessing, for more than fourteen years. A woman about to be raped, who has been raped and who endlessly relives its imminence. A woman for whom darkness brings her fear alive again. But in prisons it's never dark. My body recalls quite easily what it experienced: that cold which spreads from the spine, while everything in the chest stops so that no noise interferes with the listening, so well in fact that one is suddenly out of breath as must be that other one, out there, who's screaming. But what do I want to tell? Not those cries, which catch me unawares every time. No. Besides, I feel them becoming something other than what they were. That woman was crying out for death; what do her actual words matter? I know she was crying out for death. But then what has happened? Why assert a correct meaning after having said that it has changed? It's that, now, that cry for death, whose words I've censored, censors me in its turn. It echoes and everything falls silent, all I'd like to discover, and to which it is bound. Perhaps one writes to erase? During those nights, if they'd opened my door, I would have howled like a madman. It's intolerable to be afraid. One never speaks of it. An old internee once told me: One evening, in the centre of the camp, thousands of Jews were gathered together. They were going to be exchanged for lorries. But nothing arrived. Silence. Snow. A long time. Snow. A long time. Suddenly, a scream. Everyone was screaming. And he demonstrated that cry. A raw, interminable blast. I saw. Yes, I saw.

Despair was snowing down. I was frozen. A cry demonstrated; a cry I have heard before. The same cold. And at that moment, I understood why no indignation is possible at the moment when there echoes the cry for death of one human being whom other human beings are maltreating. There is only the cold seizure of horror, and that neither speaks nor is spoken. Afterwards comes anger, revolt, but how could one express that cry? What if one could cry it out again, such cold—that of death. Revolt warms us: it brings us back from death. Revolt scrubs out death. Revolt acts. Indignation seeks to speak out. From the start of my childhood there had been reasons for becoming indignant: the War, the deportations, the war in Indochina, the Korean War, the Algerian War . . . and so many massacres, from Indonesia to Chile via Black September. There's no language to describe that. There's no language because we live in a bourgeois world, where the vocabulary of indignation is exclusively moral — or rather, it's those morals which massacre and make war. How can one turn their language against them when one finds oneself censored by one's own language?

For a long time, I've not known how to formulate that question, and now I can't find words to answer it. Not that it requires other words than ours, but that they arrange themselves spontaneously according to structures which correspond to the moral order of society. The police are even in our mouths. To lift censorship it's necessary to . . . Necessary to what? In any case, no longer to play the game. And I really believe in carrying the civil war among us, for there's no other way. What to say? A mere nothing leads us back to the order, and sometimes even to the weapons that we believed were ranged against it. Everywhere there is at work a fantastic power of recuperation. First of all in ourselves. I know something about that.

Prosecuted for outrages against morals, I didn't want to defend myself. I ought to have persevered. My friends were emotive: I was wrong, I was ignorant of the machine I was about to confront, I should put my trust in a specialist and then my case could serve as an example. Thus, little by little, without ever taking myself as a victim of the freedom of expression, I ended up believing that I'd serve that freedom by playing the game of the courts. The barrister had reas-

sured me when, thanking him for not demanding of me fees that in any case I could not have paid, he had put me at my ease: I'm not defending you, but a principle. I never doubted that, in our society, principles could be indefensible since it's in their very essence of being principles and thus can never be brought into question. Example: in strangling Maurice Audin, the officer Charbonnier never infringed any principle, given that no spokesman of our principles ever wanted to know it.

Facing the bench, I began to understand, but it was too late. First case: a young man accused of pimping and theft. Irony of the presiding judge. And, despite the polite use of 'vous', the patronising tone of 'tu'. Conclusion: the jangling of handcuffs. Second case: mine. All change: I'm a gentleman, I am free. I am well-represented. Who wouldn't vomit at being suddenly made so different? They question me. I stammer. They allow me time to speak: I attack. I want to say why I am there — in the wake of such violence from the army, from the police and institutions, not only upon me, but on my language. I allow no interruption. I have finished. I sit down. I hear one of my barristers say to another:

“He needed to get that off his chest.”

And then the comedy begins, not to defend a principle, but to demonstrate, for three or four hours, that I am a good writer, therefore an inoffensive writer. And I listen, the accused become accomplice of his accusation.

I ought to have just gone there and let out that cry. But what, in saying that, do I appear now — what in my own eyes? All the words are accomplices of their context in the same way as all the oppressed are accomplices of their oppressors, otherwise they, who are in the majority, would simply unite to conquer. History is only the history of oppression. Revolutions, finally, have only ever served those who overthrow power in order to seize it for themselves. We are duped in advance because the language is controlled. Language, like the State, has always served the same ends. We ought to distrust everything the bourgeois say: With this system, at least, we can speak. This system is already a traitor, even if it has not yet betrayed. In the context of order, in dialogue with it, one can only serve it. Even as I was trying to tell the

judge of my indignation, I was betraying it. I should have been just a body there - one of those bodies that censors all moral order. Just a body . . . and simply to shit there, before the presiding judge.

Shit: up to what age did I dare not say that word? And how many other coarse words thus forbidden? All the words of the body. Good taste is one of the morality police. It serves it. It squeezes itself around our throats and over our eyes. Good taste is a way of accommodating, of forgetting the death of others. And even here, I experience the impotence to chase out my own. How can I treat my sentence so that it refuses the articulation of power? It would necessitate a language which, in itself, was an insult to oppression. And more than an insult, a NO. How to find a language unusable by the oppressor? A syntax that would send back the spiked words and tear apart the tongues of all the Pinochets? I write. I have cries in return. There is no liberal power: there's only a smarter way of fucking us. For every televised fire-side conversation, each of us should have replied with a parcel of shit posted to the great shit at the Elysée. Whowould salvage such a language?

A book is unarmed. One believed one had armed it well. Yet it doesn't resist. It will never be intolerable. I had thought I'd killed off my good taste by writing *Le Château de Cène*. And killed off in me a certain writer. What foolishness. I said to myself: since style is the value, I'm going to shatter that value by making it say what is not said. Nothing simpler to salvage than style: it is the very movement of recovery. Must it always come out on top? I mistrust myself. In one's own solitude, one only converses with the self to stylise oneself. Why is the first edition signed with a pseudonym? I always dreamt of writing under several names to accelerate my own contradictions, giving them diverse identities on paper, but was it a question of that? That pseudonym censored me: it was the mask beneath which I remained white and waiting. Was I afraid? Was I waiting to be recognised?

Time censors us, of course. We don't remember what death is. The forgetting is redoubled: we forget the forgotten. And there's that hole in the middle where our days are about to be lost. Effective censorship doesn't erase, it annuls, and leaves no trace. From then on,

what has disappeared, never existed. One does not write in order to say something, but to define a place where no one will be able to declare what hasn't taken place. There is a connection from far away to this *Château de Cène* and to that line which, it could be said, flows from my hand, and all that is my place. But what is that living place if it is obliterated in the very thing that writes it?

I see a beggar. I see a dog that's been thrown in a pool of shit and which flees, yelping. I hear someone speak of a man they'd flayed alive: he was still moaning in the shroud in which they'd rolled him. Now, I'm in the barracks. How to kill a man noiselessly. The educational film they're projecting for us could well be called that. I whistle disapproval. I whistle again. "Lay off," says someone next to me, "what good will it do?" I lay off. I'm ashamed. Another film, another day. All the prisoners in that one shoot the over-lenient victors in the back. Morality. No morality, that comes from the self. I'm still in the barracks. I learn that revolt is in vain if it isn't organised. One rebel is powerless. What can my solitary revolt do when this Warrant Officer is telling us of the Big Head Affair. It's in Indochina. They've taken a Viet. They've tied him up. Now, with the flat edges of their American bayonets, they're beating him about the head. They beat in turn. And the head swells. And swells.

One writes a book. All memory passes through it. And suddenly, there's a perpetual slipping of referents. Censorship halts this sliding. It wants one sense, only one, and for it to be fixed. I write. I put down words and these words desire other words. Desire produces the encounter: it's the necessity of what one believed was due only to chance. I write *Le Château de Cène*. What happens? I am before my judges: I'd like to explain what happened. Referents slip out: the dog, the flayed man, the films, the swollen head. I'm at a meeting for the freedom of the press, the Wagram Hall, 1956. The fascists attack. *Algéries Français*. Tear gas. Chairs are broken. Heads are bashed in. Trails of blood. French Algeria is thrown out. Suddenly everything is calm in the smoke, the coughing, the tears. The police enter. The police who ought to protect us. The crowd gets up and gradually moves back against the walls. Mobile police units and peacekeepers fill all the space that is freed. Silence. Before me, face to face, a police-



man. Silence. All of a sudden the law cries out. Butts and batons are raised. I fall, hit across the forehead.

I write *Le Château de Cène*. I've had enough of violence, of horror. I hope that the time has come for my *Aurélia* (Gérard de Nerval). For the first time in my life I write quickly, as if emerging at last from those years of measuring my words. I no longer hold anything back. I write. What happens? I reveal myself and I remember. Only, in unfolding in my body, my memories hook up with others which aren't all my own, and their conjunction makes figures emerge, at which my reason is sometimes appalled. I remember. I wrote as with a fixed stare. Everything was in my eyes. I was the living look that I was bothreading, in order to write, and feeding upon. But I am before my judges and how can I tell of that all at once? I play the game — their game, except that I truly believe in justice.

“Yes sir, a man they beat on the head for hours; it's not a question of making him talk, anyway he's gone mad. They beat for nothing. They beat to avenge themselves for being nothing more than an arm which is beating. The action isn't even furious. It's more and more mechanical. Can you hear the blows? They hardly resound any more. It's as if the bone has become soft. Nothing but this rather soggy noise.”

“Nostrils bleed, or eyes, or ears. Or all at once.”

“In the morning, usually, they cut off the head to go and throw it into a village. Sometimes they laid bets: it will deflate, it won't deflate, but they didn't have time to wait and see.”

I remember, I forget, alternately. You could say that something central has leapt out. In place of the centre, there's a hole. Sometimes that falls, sometimes it rises again. And I turn back my tongue, vainly trying to make it touch the edge of my throat. Now, I can no longer write *Le Château de Cène* and never will write it any more. Finished\_ Fallen down there, and it's not that which rises again, but a demand which has no limit. One writes at a precise moment. What deception! What has happened? One has filled pages, it's become a book. And the title of that book is a stone beneath which what has happened is resting. I cannot lift the stone, I only dig around it.

“Yes, sir, I have memories even more horrible. So many that there are degrees of horror . . .” This Algerian who was hung upside down above the open doors of an oven. His hair burns. His skin cracks. His face smells of burnt fat and blackens through the red of the flame. The man is gagged. Above the gag, which protects it, his chin seems fantastically intact and white.

For a general referent, every book has, not a subject but an historical moment where the biography of its author and the state of society intersect. The biography and the social state communicate permanently through culture and information. This communication is unstable in the sense that one cannot reduce it to a formula which would fix it. In the same way, the general referent of a book, whether it be ancient or recent, is unstable because it is no longer reducible: each reading changes it, according, of course, to the immediate state of the reader and his social context, but equally according to the relationship of these components with those which exist at the moment of the book’s composition. The relationship is itself unstable. Today, technology gives us the illusion that we can define all the periods of instability, synthesize them and therefore find a total formula — or a totalising one. This genre of progress — do we realise? — leads to the gradual elimination of culture to the benefit of information. Culture is neither quantifiable, nor reducible. Culture cannot be reduced to knowledge. It is unstable. It even includes forgetting. Culture spends; information capitalises. But paradoxically it ends in an empty knowledge, for it’s flat and everything there is equal. The important thing is not to know but to relativize. The man crammed with information cannot see the difference and soon becomes indifferent. I believe that the generalisation of torture is bound to the cult of information. When it’s a question of knowing — nothing but knowing — what does it matter what means are employed since the end justifies, in advance, the means? What is serious is that education itself revolves around information. The proof: the teaching machine is taking the place of the teacher — or at least we’re approaching that.

*Le Château de Cène* was written in three weeks from I don’t

know what day to the end of January 1969. The tenth chapter was taken up again and worked on separately after an interruption of a few days. The rest, save for a long cut made in the proofs, appeared without modification from the initial spurt and was only corrected for the Pauvert edition. However, a first version existed, written at the beginning of 1958, in February I believe, that's to say eleven years earlier. It served as the model for the first four chapters and partially for the seventh. It already contained the scene of disembarkation on the island and the rape by the dogs — which seems especially to have motivated the indictment for outrages against morals — and also the one of the monkey.

Wishing to retrace the history of my book, I succeed only in furnishing myself with a little summary of information. I know that between the baton blow at Wagram and the beginning of 1958, I'd been obsessed by the events in Algeria. I know also that I censored the scene with the dogs until its reprise in 1969. Besides, after that first version, also composed very rapidly, I'd stopped writing for six years, and from 1963 to 1969 I wrote very little (a short collection of poems, a recit of 33 pages, some notes). Consequently, *Le Château de Cène*, by lifting my self censorship, made a "writer" of me. Careful to question my game, I would add that a friend reproached me for having censored the first edition, correcting it in view of the Pauvert edition. I'd believed, myself, that I'd thus made the book more precise, more direct, therefore more violent. I still believe that. Further, the pseudonym had prolonged the censorship, my signature annulled it.

Censorship gags. It reduces to silence. But it doesn't do violence to language. Only the abuse of language can violate it, by distorting it. Bourgeois power bases its liberalism on the absence of censorship, but it has constant recourse to the abuse of language. Its tolerance is the mask of an otherwise oppressive and effective violence. The abuse of language has a double effect: it saves appearances, and even reinforces its appearance, and it shifts the place of censorship so cleverly that one no longer notices it. Or to put it another way, through the abuse of language, bourgeois power is made to pass for what it is not: a non-constraining power, a "human" power, and its offi-

cial policy which standardises the value of words in fact empties them of meaning - whence a verbal inflation, ruining communications within the community, and in the same way censoring them. Perhaps, in order to express the second effect, it's necessary to create the word SENSURESHIP, which by referring to the other would indicate the deprivation of sense, not of speech. Deprivation of sense, of meaning, is the most subtle form of brainwashing, for it operates without the victim's knowledge. This process is part of present impoverishment — a form of impoverishment itself very subtle since it consists of giving a freedom that it suppresses by unceasingly creating needs which maintain alienation, whilst removing its painful character.

Freedom of expression is evidently dependent on the state of language. Apparently, I can say what I like, but in reality I can only do so within the limits of this state — a state that current usage of language conceals from us. The words, it seems, are there, always available, always equal to themselves. We use them so spontaneously and they are at our disposal so naturally, that we cannot suspect them. They're a currency which seems unable to be false, at least at the level of the species. How therefore are we to perceive the sensureship? It's true that words are words and that sensureship only insinuates itself in the game of their signified, but the words we have abused, abuse in their turn. Whence, at this point, the appearance of a new ambiguity: sensureship which acts on us through words (whilst censorship acts through us against words) acts in other respects on words with a sensureship effect: it obliterates their significance, that's to say, their matter, their body. Thus we discover that the moral order aims at erasing its materiality in every being, in every thing.

Moral order is less obtuse than one might be tempted to think. The moral order is the order of the mind. It can be strongly served by that which apparently contests it: eroticism for example. Eroticism is not a return to the body, it's only a narcissistic intensification of its image. And that image censors everything in the body which is organic or physical. We've never displayed the body so much, and those were never so barely bodies. They are objects, always new, always beautiful, which impoverish desire to the extent that they stylise it. When the moral order shows its arse or its pubic hairs, no problem; it's still ide-

alism that it's displaying.

Writing, trying to write, the primordial question becomes: how to get rid of this? Bury syntax, comrades, it stinks! Okay, but we make sentences even so. Go on and speak without taking on a subject, a verb, etc. We seek dodges. We change our seduction. We even ask the reader to lend a hand instead of always being passive. The great thing is that we are among the bourgeois and that, under such a regime, there are only the morals which can serve the collective bond. Only, in order for the morals to function, the sentence must also function and the words truly say what they say. Well — that functioning is rotten — rotten since our fathers massacred the workers, the colonised and even their own brothers, all the while continuing to play the good father. Your civilisation has big teeth, o fathers, so big that they end up gobbling it. Now we must pick over the pile of shit and each seek his piece of tongue, his piece of language. No history, everything's putrified!

I had a friend, name of Marcel. That wasn't his real name. In that war, no one fought under his own name. I never knew his real one. Marcel was Algerian. Fatigue, stress had caused him to lose his mind. I found him a room. He was not to move from it. He was ordered to rest, to remain calm. The room was near the Seine. Marcel had wanted to go for a walk. He didn't get the chance. He was arrested. Later, in prison, I knew where he'd been tortured and by whom. Marcel didn't have very strong nerves, nor no doubt a strong heart. He is dead. The Seine washed away many corpses in the autumn of 1961.

Writing *Le Château de Cène*, I had the feeling that its bad taste was going to make me a literary wog. Why didn't I speak directly? And why, now, bring up my ex-serviceman histories? Violence opens onto death. Death puts an end to violence, or else it's necessary to invent hell. How can I speak of violence? I wanted to forget it. It holds me fast. The first chapter of *Le Château de Cène* is quite folkloric, yet not sufficiently so for me not to guess where that setting was leading me. I tried to divert the violence, which is why in the second chapter it only incites pleasure. These two chapters are the traps in which I'd have liked to be captured in order to avoid the dogs.

What would realist literature be? Cross questioning, we've police for that. Or let's set up cross questionings that have never before been erected. Let's say how one makes speech, how one speaks. Reality slopes off at the same rate as the passing minutes. Here are words on paper, that's the only reality between us. All the rest is illusion and illusion censors too. We don't write to fix: we write to superimpose drift onto the universal drift. And to hell with the message; besides, the message is an attempt to censor since it aims to impose a truth. The signified is the smell of the mental charnal-house, the scent of decomposition. But, comrade reader, does there remain a body beneath it?

"You write. You've written to me."

"Yes, and I continue to do so. I feel another tongue beneath my tongue. Something which wants to break through. No more long-ing to be conquered by abandon. I'll split French without leaving it."

"Hold on, such grandiloquence all of a sudden."

"One writes to restore that. Life only ever offers a round tour. Everything escapes us. And if words have no meaning, everything escapes us twofold."

The next day of the court case, Jean-Jacques Pauvert telephoned very early. He wanted me to write what I'd said to the judge, make a book of it. That was a friendly suggestion. I'd wanted to take it up. First of all the work seemed simple. I was going to show that, in order to found its power, the bourgeois had replaced God with the Encyclopaedia, which would have an answer for everything, but that, by doing so, it had founded the new social relationship on the correctness of language. No more divine right, but a secular right, the same for everyone. By betraying this right to the mercy of its interests, the bourgeoisie abuses language. I wanted to analyse that outrage against words, the censorship which follows, via three historical moments: the Commune, the 1914-18 War and Gaullism. A simple montage of the discourse of Thiers and the declarations of the Versailles newspapers shows that bourgeois paternalism prepares only for *La Semaine Sanglante*, likewise the patriotic narrative of the Great War carries along a humanism of which the massacre, that it has to jus-

tify its role, is the negation. As for Gaullism, that it fabricates the myth of the Resistance, or that of grandeur, is an easily demonstrated abuse of language. I was that far with my little pamphlet, when suddenly I realised that the violence done to language was not exclusively from the bourgeois State, and that this violence touched me infinitely less than another. After all no less was expected than that the bourgeois defend their interests by trying to make us believe the moon's made of green cheese, but the fact that communism has been emptied of its meaning to serve a totalitarian enterprise neither the world nor thought can restore - that's a much more serious outrage against words. An outrage which discouraged me. In what name am I pursuing my work? Towards what? Could it be that the abuse of language is tied to power? And could it be that there's only correct language to direct against power? Against what power? For power, which is central to everything, is first and necessarily a confiscation of meaning.

It was while writing *Le Château de Cène* that I became aware of the outrage against words, just like listening to speeches that General de Gaulle made throughout a tour of Brittany. Consequently Chapter Ten, that few people want to read for what it is, although the sadistic scene it depicts is clearly situated on the level of language and the "colonial."

What am I working on? I write whilst saying to myself: I don't want to be possessed — and yet they trample on my back. I write against meaning, and I write to produce a meaning. Always the same overload, and the body is exhausted — yes, the body of words burst beneath the weight. I'd like now to work on the level of the sound of language. Or perhaps to *miswrite* as Denis Roche says, crying so rudely: "Leave your tongues, little fathers (my tongue, my tongue, shit), eat your tongues, old dogs, while there's still time!" But there is no more time. And that squawks, squawks in our throats while what would like to rise tumbles and falls in the hole.

One October evening in 1961, the famous evening when the Algerians came out of their ghettos to demonstrate, I crossed Paris by taxi. A police road block. A plain clothes detective opens the car door, looks at my face and shouts:

"Okay let it pass, it's not one of them!"

Humiliation. Racism is a look which classifies you without appeal. What does it matter where it files you, it opens up the difference and nothing can erase that.

Everything is copied. There's a terrorism of imitation. Many a one who was anti is suddenly so much for that he becomes a power like any other. Always some device in the anti-device. What do we do then? At least have foresight:

“Look out, I'm trying to fuck myself. Don't let it happen. Don't let anything happen.”

Recovery is at work in that very thing which denounces it, in believing that recovery and life are but one. Look out, my language is slipping. Beginning this paragraph, I wanted to speak of the racism of writing. It appears that the READABLE is racist in the sense that it treats the reader as simple consumer, instead, as Roland Barthes has said, of bringing him into play, making him “fully accede to the enchantment of the signifier, to the voluptuousness of the writing.” I'm afraid lest *Le Château de Cène* be readable.

I'm afraid of it, although it isn't serious — no, only slightly serious. And although it often laughs at itself in multiplying the false bottoms, the play of words, the false quotations. I state all that so as to reassure myself by referring to it, but I'm sure of nothing. I began by writing the *Extraits du corps*, and have since spoken much about the body, for in the midst of uncertainty, that material seemed to me the only thing that was at all certain. But for a while now I've repeatedly asked myself a double question: How does life become a book? Is it a book through a relationship with life? Not that I hope to find an answer, only a few bursts of reality. If the dead could write, not one living being would write. But why pretend to be dead?

One day, during exercise, because it was so cold, the warders had relaxed their surveillance. For half an hour I was no longer in solitary. All my neighbours had been tortured. I knew where, by whom and how. The one who was speaking to me seemed to find it natural. I was astonished. He was proud of having withstood. A kind of match won. He explained to me that the most unbearable shock comes from the surprise. To avoid that shock, one must be trained. He had had the luck to have received training in torture in a special camp in



Yugoslavia. Where was I? Horror could become a competition.

Perhaps one writes as training for disappearance — too bad if the relationship appears to be shocking — to be trained: to struggle against. Since we have no more to say, nothing more to describe after realism fled in all directions, what remains for us apart from nothing? The situation isn't desperate: one can do a lot of things starting from nothing — nothing only inhibits us from taking them to be everything. Thus the place is clean, and it remains. Not a question of expressing — expressing what? We can create, that is, play. One must first remember a little to nourish the movement of words and to encounter the story, then one becomes the Punch, or the other, or oneself, and all that under one's name, providing one takes that UNDER very literally. Besides, literalness is difficult to share, if I'm to believe my friends to whom it has happened that such and such a reader of *Le Château de Cène* has asked:

“Is he normal?” All in all, I prefer censorship than that question thrown onto my behaviour in many other readings — notably those bound to the trial, the most disagreeable of which consists of ascribing it to publicity for myself. Of course, the plurality of readings must at least reassure me of the polysemia of the book! If it's nothing, it's that nothing has been heaped upon a certain side. But what? One must pretend with sincerity: I play at not playing. The strange thing is that one can pretend to be living otherwise so long as one is a body, so long as one is present, for is it a living being that is satisfied with the spirit? And who can think other than with his body? I know of no other initiatory instrument save the stake — the great stake. The place of the stake is always the arse, from which it pushes its point slowly towards the head, passing through the whole body. Certainly one can make an initiatory reading of *Le Château de Cène* but if it's to lead to mysticism, one has it after all in the arse. In fact, where is the transcendence? Where the finality? The new initiate immediately plays politics and his experience falls back on itself: it has no other meaning outside of it. The same is true of us, and one might as well laugh at what reduces us to being the authors of our books: it's in the essence of living beings to ask other living beings to be someone.

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