

normal symbolic value of a lightning-flash image, permits me today to characterize this pineal eye fantasy as an excremental fantasy. Besides, it would have been impossible for me to speak explicitly of it, to express totally what I felt so violently in early 1927 (and it still happens that I bitterly feel it) in any other way than by speaking of the nudity of an ape's anal projection, which on a day in July of the same year, in the Zoological Gardens of London, overwhelmed me to the point of throwing me into a kind of ecstatic brutishness. Today as I write, what I imagine of the pineal eye attains, through the course of a certain disorder, a brutality of erection so terrifying that I cannot imagine the enormous anal fruit of radial and shit-smearred raw pink meat (the one that struck me so in London) other than as an ignoble skull that I would smash with an axe blow, a rattled *grunt* deep in my throat. The axe blade would sink into this imaginary skull, like the cleavers of butchers that split in two, in a violent blow struck on the block, the sickening heads of skinned rabbits. For it is not self-evident that the noble parts of a human being (his dignity, the nobility that characterizes his face), instead of allowing only a sublime and measured flow of profound and tumultuous impulses, brusquely cease to set up the least barrier against a sudden, bursting eruption, as provocative and as dissolute as the one that inflates the anal protuberance of an ape . . .

The Pineal Eye

When my face is flushed with blood, it becomes red and obscene.

It betrays, at the same time, through morbid reflexes, a bloody erection and a demanding thirst for indecency and criminal debauchery.

For that reason I am not afraid to affirm that my face is a scandal and that my passions are only expressed by the Jesuve.

The terrestrial globe is covered with volcanoes, which serve as its anus.

Although this globe eats nothing, it often violently ejects the contents of its entrails.

These contents shoot out with a racket, and fall back, streaming down.

The Solar Anus

I. Scientific Anthropology and Mythical Anthropology

To the extent that a description of human life that goes back to the origins tries to represent what the formless universe has accomplished in producing man rather than something else, how it has been led to this useless production and

by what means it made this creature something different from all the rest—to this extent it is necessary to abandon scientific anthropology, which is reduced to a babbling even more senile than puerile, reduced to giving answers that tend to make the questions put to it seem ludicrous, whereas these answers alone are miserably so when confronted with the inevitable and demanding brutality of an interrogation taking upon itself the very meaning of the life that this anthropology supposedly aims to describe.

But in the first phase, at least, philosophical speculation is rejected with no less impatience than the impotent theories of prehistory when this speculation, obeying the dictates of a guilty conscience, almost always kills itself or timidly prostrates itself before science. For even if this inhuman prostration can still be denounced, even if it is still possible for man to contrast his own cruelty and madness with a necessity that is crushing him, nothing of what is known of the means proper to philosophical investigation can inspire in him any confidence; philosophy has been, up to this point, as much as science, an expression of human subordination, and when man seeks to represent himself, no longer as a moment of a homogeneous process—of a necessary and pitiful process—but as a new laceration within a lacerated nature, it is no longer the leveling phraseology coming to him from the understanding that can help him: he can no longer recognize himself in the degrading chains of logic, but he recognizes himself, instead—not only with rage but in an ecstatic torment—in the virulence of his own phantasms.

Nevertheless, the introduction of a lawless intellectual series into the world of legitimate thought defines itself at the outset as the most arduous and audacious operation. And it is evident that if it were not practiced without equivocation, with a resolution and a rigor rarely attained in other cases, it would be the most vain operation.

Outside of a certain inaccessibility to fear—it is a question here essentially of undergoing, without being overwhelmed, the attraction of the most repulsive objects—two conditions thrust themselves on anyone whose object is to invest understanding with a content that will remain foreign to it, and they do so not only in a clear and distinct way, but as imperative prescriptions.

II. Conditions of Mythological Representation

In the first place, methodical knowledge can only be brushed aside to the extent that it has become an acquired faculty, since, at least in the present circumstances, without close contact with the homogeneous world of practical life, the free play of intelligible images would lose itself and would dissolve fatally in a region where no thought and no word would have the slightest consequence.

It is thus necessary to start by reducing science to a state that must be defined by the term subordination, in such a way that one uses it freely, like a beast of

burden, to accomplish ends which are not its own. Left to itself, free in the poorest sense of the word (where liberty is only impotence), inasmuch as its legacy as the first condition of existence was the task of dissipating and annihilating mythological phantasms, nothing could keep science from blindly emptying the universe of its human content. But it is possible to use it to limit its own movement and to situate beyond its own limits what it will never attain, that before which it becomes an unsuccessful effort and a vague, sterile being. It is true that, posed in this way by science, these elements are still only empty terms and impotent paralogisms. It is only after having passed from these exterior limits of another existence to their mythologically lived content that it becomes possible to treat science with the indifference demanded by its specific nature, but this takes place only on condition that one has first enslaved science through the use of weapons borrowed from it, by making it itself produce the paralogisms that limit it.

The second condition is, first of all, only one of the forms of the first; here too science is utilized for a contrary end. The exclusion of mythology by reason is necessarily a rigorous one, on which there is no going back, and which, when required, must be made still more trenchant. But at the same time, it is necessary to overturn the values created by means of this exclusion; in other words, *the fact that reason denies any valid content in a mythological series is the condition of its most significant value*. For if the affective violence of human intelligence is projected like a specter across the deserted night of the absolute or of science, it does not follow that this specter has anything in common with the night in which its brilliance becomes glacial. On the contrary, a spectral content only truly exists as such from the moment when the milieu that contains it defines itself through its intolerance toward that which appears in it as a crime. The strongest repulsion by science that can be represented is necessary for the characterization of the excluded part. Such a characterization must be compared to the affective charge of an obscene element whose obscenity derives only from the prohibition leveled against it. So long as the formal exclusion has not taken place, a mythical statement can still be assimilated to a rational statement; the mythical can be described as real and can be methodically explained. But at the same time it loses its spectral characterization, its free falseness. It enters, as in the case of revealed imperative religions, into various mystical groupings that have as a goal the narrow enslavement of impoverished men to an economic necessity: in other words, in the last analysis, to an authority that exploits them.

It is true that such an operation would be inconceivable at the present time, due to the fact that the possibilities have been limited by the very development of science.

Science, proceeding on the basis of a mystical conception of the universe, has separated the constituent elements of the universe into two profoundly distinct classes: it has elaborated, through assimilation, the necessary and practical

parts, transforming a mental activity, which previously was only an instrument of exploitation, into an activity useful for man's material life. At the same time, it has had to brush aside the delirious parts of the old religious constructions, in order to destroy them. But this act of destruction becomes, at the final point of development, an act of liberation: delirium escapes from necessity, casts off its heavy mantel of mystical servitude, and it is finally only then that, nude and lubricious, it plays with the universe and its laws as if they were toys.

III. The Pineal Eye

Starting from these two principles, and supposing that the first condition, which requires a scientific knowledge of the objects considered, has at least to a large extent been met, nothing stands in the way of a phantomlike and adventurous description of the universe. What remains to be said about the ways in which this description proceeds—and about the relations of the finished description with the object it describes—can only be a reflection on the realized experience.

The eye, at the summit of the skull, opening on the incandescent sun in order to contemplate it in a sinister solitude, is not a product of the understanding, but is instead an immediate existence; it opens and blinds itself like a conflagration, or like a fever that eats the being, or more exactly, the head. And thus it plays the role of a fire in a house; the head, instead of locking up life as money is locked in a safe, spends it without counting, for, at the end of this erotic metamorphosis, the head has received the *electric power of points*. This great burning head is the image and the disagreeable light of the *notion of expenditure*, beyond the still empty notion as it is elaborated on the basis of methodical analysis.

From the first, myth is identified not only with life but with the loss of life—with degradation and death. Starting from the being who bore it, it is not at all an external product, but the form that this being takes in his lubricious avatars, in the ecstatic gift he makes of himself as obscene and nude victim—and a victim not before an obscure and immaterial force, but before great howls of prostitutes' laughter.

Existence no longer resembles a neatly defined itinerary from one practical sign to another, but a sickly incandescence, a durable orgasm.

IV. The Two Axes of Terrestrial Life

No matter how blinding the mythical form, insofar as it is not a simple representation, but the exhausting consumption of being, it is possible, at its first indistinct appearance, to pass from a content to a container, to a circumstantial form

that, although it is probably unacceptable from the point of view of science, does not seem different from the habitual constructs of the intellect.

The distribution of organic existence on the surface of the earth takes place on two axes: the first, vertical, prolongs the radius of the terrestrial sphere; the second, horizontal, is perpendicular to the first. Vegetation develops more or less exclusively on the vertical axis (which is also the axis of the fall of bodies); on the other hand, the development of animal life is situated, or tends to be situated, on the horizontal axis. But although, generally speaking, their movements are only slippages parallel to the lines described by the rotation of the terrestrial globe, animals are never completely foreign to the axis of vegetal life. Thus existence makes them raise themselves above the ground when they come into the world and, in a relatively stable way, when they exit from sleep or love (on the other hand, sleep and death abandon bodies to a force directed from high to low). Their skeleton, even in the most regular cases, is not perfectly adjusted to a horizontal trajectory: the skull and thus the orifice of the eyes are situated above the level of the anal vertebra. However, even if one refers to the position of the male in coitus, and to the structures of some birds, a complete verticality is never attained.

V. The Position of the Human Body and Eyes on the Surface of the Terrestrial Globe

Only human beings, tearing themselves away from peaceful animal horizontality, at the cost of the ignoble and painful efforts that can be seen in the faces of the great apes, have succeeded in appropriating the vegetal erection and in letting themselves be polarized, in a certain sense, by the sky.

It is thus that the Earth—whose immense regions are covered with plants that everywhere flee it in order to offer and destroy themselves endlessly, in order to project themselves into an alternately light and dark celestial void—releases to the disappointing immensity of space the totality of laughing or lacerated men.

But, in this liberation of man, which leads to a suffocating absence of limits on the surface of the globe, human nature is far from surrendering without resistance. For if it is true that his blood, bones, and arms, that the shuddering of his pleasure (or still more the silence of true dread)—if it is true that his senile laughter and his insipid hate are endlessly lost and rise toward a sky as beautiful as death, as pale and implausible as death, his eyes continue to fetter him tightly to vulgar things, in the midst of which necessity has determined his steps.

The horizontal axis of vision, to which the human structure has remained strictly subjected, in the course of man's wrenching rejection of animal nature, is the expression of a misery all the more oppressive in that it is apparently confused with serenity.

VI. The Vertigo-Tree

For the anthropologist who can only observe it, this contradiction of axes of the human structure is devoid of meaning. And if, without even being able to explain itself, anthropology underscored the importance of the axes, it would only betray an unjustifiable tendency toward mysticism. The description of the perpendicular axes only takes on its value once it becomes possible to construct on these axes the puerile play of a mythological existence, answering no longer to observation or deduction but to a free development of the relations between the immediate and varied consciousness of human life and the supposedly unconscious givens that constitute this life.

Thus the pineal eye, detaching itself from the horizontal system of normal ocular vision, appears in a kind of nimbus of tears, like the eye of a tree or, perhaps, like a human tree. At the same time this ocular tree is only a giant (ignoble) pink penis, drunk with the sun and suggesting or soliciting a nauseous malaise, the sickening despair of vertigo. In this transfiguration of nature, during which vision itself, attracted by nausea, is torn out and torn apart by the sunbursts into which it stares, the erection ceases to be a painful upheaval on the surface of the earth and, in a vomiting of flavorless blood, it transforms itself into a vertiginous fall in celestial space, accompanied by a horrible cry.

VII. The Sun

The sun, situated at the bottom of the sky like a cadaver at the bottom of a pit, answers this inhuman cry with the spectral attraction of decomposition. Immense nature breaks its chains and collapses into the limitless void. A severed penis, soft and bloody, is substituted for the habitual order of things. In its folds, where painful jaws still bite, pus, spittle, and larva accumulate, deposited by enormous flies: fecal like the eye painted at the bottom of a vase, this Sun, now borrowing its brilliance from death, has buried existence in the stench of the night.

VIII. The Jesuve

The terrestrial globe has retained its enormity like a bald head, in the middle of which the eye that opens on the void is both volcanic and lacustrine. It extends its disastrous countryside into the deep folds of hairy flesh, and the hairs that form its bush are inundated with tears. But the troubled feelings of a degradation even stranger than death do not have their source in a typical brain: heavy intestines alone press under this nude flesh, as charged with obscenity as a rear end—one that is just as satanic as the equally nude bottom a young sorceress raises to the black sky at the moment her fundament opens, to admit a flaming torch.

The love-cry torn from this comic crater is a feverish sob and a rattling blast of thunder.

The fecal eye of the sun has also torn itself from these volcanic entrails, and the pain of a man who tears out his own eyes with his fingers is no more absurd than this anal maternity of the sun.

IX. The Sacrifice of the Gibbon

The intolerable cry of cocks has a solar significance because of the pride and feeling of triumph of the man perceiving his own dejecta under the open sky. In the same way, during the night, an immense, troubled love, sweet as a young girl's spasm, abandons and throws itself into a giant universe, with the intimate feeling of having urinated the stars.

In order to renew this tender pact between belly and nature, a rotting forest offers its deceptive latrines, swarming with animals, colored or venomous insects, worms, and little birds. Solar light decomposes in the high branches. An Englishwoman, transfigured by a halo of blond hair, abandons her splendid body to the lubricity and the imagination (driven to the point of ecstasy by the stunning odor of decay) of a number of nude men.

Her humid lips open to kisses like a sweet swamp, like a noiseless flowing river, and her eyes, drowned in pleasure, are as immensely lost as her mouth. Above the entwined human beasts who embrace and handle her, she raises her marvelous head, so heavy with dazzlement, and her eyes open on a scene of madness.

Near a round pit, freshly dug in the midst of exuberant vegetation, a giant female gibbon struggles with three men, who tie her with long cords: her face is even more stupid than it is ignoble, and she lets out unbelievable screams of fear, screams answered by the various cries of small monkeys in the high branches. Once she is trussed up like a chicken—with her legs folded back against her body—the three men tie her upside down to a stake planted in the middle of the pit. Attached in this way, her bestially howling mouth swallows dirt while, on the other end, her huge screaming pink anal protrusion stares at the sky like a flower (the end of the stake runs between her belly and her bound paws): only the part whose obscenity stupefies emerges above the top level of the pit.

Once these preparations are finished, all the men and women present (there are, in fact, several other women, no less taken with debauchery) surround the pit: at this moment they are all equally nude, all equally deranged by the avidity of pleasure (exhausted by voluptuousness), breathless, at wits' end . . .

They are all armed with shovels, except the Englishwoman: the earth destined to fill the pit is spread evenly around it. The ignoble gibbon, in an ignoble

posture, continues her terrifying howl, but, on a signal from the Englishwoman, everyone busies himself shoveling dirt into the pit, and then quickly stamps it down: thus, in the blink of an eye, the horrible beast is buried alive.

A relative silence settles: all the stupefied glances are fixed on the filthy, beautifully blood-colored solar prominence, sticking out of the earth and ridiculously shuddering with convulsions of agony. Then the Englishwoman with her charming rear end stretches her long nude body on the filled pit: the mucous-flesh of this bald false skull, a little soiled with shit at the radiate flower of its summit, is even more upsetting to see when touched by pretty white fingers. All those around hold back their cries and wipe their sweat; teeth bite lips; a light foam even flows from overly agitated mouths: contracted by strangulation, and even by death, the beautiful boil of red flesh is set ablaze with stinking brown flames. . . .

Like a storm that erupts and, after several minutes of intolerable delay, raves in semidarkness an entire countryside with insane cataracts of water and blasts of thunder, in the same disturbed and profoundly overwhelming way (albeit with signs infinitely more difficult to perceive), existence itself shudders and attains a level where there is nothing more than a hallucinatory void, an odor of death that sticks in the throat.

In reality, when this puerile little vomiting took place, it was not on a mere carcass that the mouth of the Englishwoman crushed her most burning, her sweetest kisses, but on the nauseating JESUVE: the bizarre noise of kisses, prolonged on flesh, clattered across the disgusting noise of bowels. But these unheard-of events had set off orgasms, each more suffocating and spasmodic than its predecessor, in the circle of unfortunate observers; all throats were choked by raucous sighs, by impossible cries, and, from all sides, eyes were moist with the brilliant tears of vertigo. . . .

The sun vomited like a sick drunk above the mouths full of comic screams, in the void of an absurd sky . . . And thus an unparalleled heat and stupor formed an alliance—as excessive as torture: like a severed nose, like a torn-out tongue—and celebrated a wedding (celebrated it with the blade of a razor on pretty, insolent rear ends), the little copulation of the stinking hole with the sun . . .

X. The Bronze Eye

The little girls who surround the animal cages in zoos cannot help but be stunned by the ever-so lubricious rear ends of apes. To their puerile understanding, these creatures—who seem to exist only for the purpose of coupling with men—mouth

to mouth, belly to belly—with the most doubtful parts of nature—propose enigmas whose perversity is barely burlesque. Girls cannot avoid thinking of their own little rear ends, of their own dejecta against which crushing interdictions have been leveled: but the image of their personal indecency, conveyed to them by the parti-colored, red, or mauve anal baldness of some apes, reaches, on the other side of the bars of the cage, a comic splendor and a suffocating atrocity. When the mythological deliria dissipate, after having fatigued the spirit through a lack of connections and through a disproportion to the real needs of life, the phantoms banished from all sides, abandoning the sun itself to the vulgarity of a nice day, make room for forms without mystery, through which one can easily make one's way, with no other goal than defined objects. But all it takes is an idiotic ape in his cage and a little girl (who blushes at seeing him take a crap), to rediscover suddenly the fleeing troop of phantoms, whose obscene sniggers have just charged a rear end as shocking as a sun.

What science cannot do—which is to establish the exceptional signification, the expressive value of an excremental orifice emerging from a hairy body like a live coal, as when, in a lavatory, a human rear end comes out of a pair of pants—the little girl achieves in such a way that there will be nothing left to do but stifle a scream. She drifts away, pressed on by a need; she trots in an alley where her steps make the gravel screech and where she passes her friends without seeing their multicolored balls, which are nevertheless well designed to attract eyes dazzled by any riot of color. Thus she runs to the foul-smelling place and locks herself in with surprise, like a young queen who, out of curiosity, locks herself in the throne room: obscurely, but in ecstasy, she has learned to recognize the face, the comic breath of death; she is unaware only of her own sobs of voluptuousness that will join, much later, this miraculous, sweet discovery . . .

In the course of the progressive erection that goes from the quadruped to *Homo erectus*, the ignominy of animal appearance grows to the point of attaining horrifying proportions, from the pretty and almost baroque lemur, who still moves on the horizontal plane, up to the gorilla. However, when the line of terminal evolution is directed toward the human being, the series of forms is produced, on the contrary, in the direction of a more and more noble or correct regularity. Thus at the present stage of development the automatic rectitude of a soldier in uniform, maneuvering according to orders, emerges from the immense confusion of the animal world and proposes itself to the universe of astronomy as its highest achievement. If, on the other hand, this mathematical military truth is contrasted with the excremental orifice of the ape, which seems to be its inevitable compensation, the universe that seemed menaced by human splendor in a pitifully imperative form receives no other response than the unintelligible discharge of a burst of laughter . . .

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When the arboreal life of apes, moving in jerks from branch to branch, provoked the rupture of the equilibrium that resulted from rectilinear locomotion, everything that obscurely but ceaselessly sought to throw itself outside the animal organism was freely discharged into the region of the inferior orifice. This part, which had never been developed, and was hidden under the tails of other animals, sent out shoots and flowered in the ape; it turned into a bald protuberance and the most beautiful colors of nature made it dazzling. The tail, for a long time incapable of hiding this immense hernia of flesh, disappeared from the most evolved apes, those that carried on the genius of their species, in such a way that the hernia was able to blossom, at the end of the process, with the most hideous obscenity.

Thus the disappearance of the free caudal appendage with which, more than anything else, human pride is commonly associated, in no way signifies a regression of original bestiality, but rather a liberation of lubricious and absolutely disgusting anal forces, of which man is only the contradictory expression.

The earth, shaken to its foundations, answered this doubtful colic of nature—discharged, in the gluey penumbra of forests, through numberless flowers of flesh—with the noisy joy of entrails, with the vomiting of unbelievable volcanoes. In the same way that a burst of laughter provokes others, or a yawn provokes the yawns of a crowd, a burlesque fecal spasm had unleashed, under a black sky ravaged with thunder, a spasm of fire. In this wonderland, a wind, heavy with bloody smoke, broke down from time to time immense glowing trees, while tortuous rivers of red incandescent lava streamed from everywhere, as if from the sky. Victims of an insane terror, the giant apes fled, their flesh broiled, their mouths distorted by puerile screams.

Many of them were felled by fiery tree trunks, which laid them down, screaming, on their stomachs or backs; they soon caught fire and burned like wood. Occasionally, however, a few arrived on a treeless beach, spared by the fire, protected from the smoke by an opposing wind: they were nothing more than breathless lacerations, shapeless silhouettes, half eaten by fire, getting up or moaning on the ground, staggered by intolerable pain. Before a spectacle of red lava—as dazzling as a nightmare—of an apocalyptic lava that seemed to come bloody out of their own anuses (just as, originally, their own hairy bodies had thrust out and sadistically exhibited these vile anuses—as if all the more to insult and soil that which exists) these unfortunate creatures became like the wombs of women who give birth, something horrible . . .

It is easy, starting with the worm, to consider ironically an animal, a fish, a monkey, a man, as a tube with two orifices, anal and buccal: the nostrils, the eyes, the ears, the brain represent the complications of the buccal orifice; the penis, the testicles, or the female organs that correspond to them, are the compli-

cation of the anal. In these conditions, the violent thrusts that come from the interior of the body can be indifferently rejected to one extremity or the other, and they are discharged, in fact, where they meet the weakest resistance. All the ornaments of the head, of whatever type, mean the generalized privilege of the oral extremity; one can only contrast them with the decorative riches of the excremental extremity of apes.

But when the great anthropoid carcass found itself standing on the ground, no longer swinging from one tree to another, itself now perfectly straight and parallel to a tree, all the impulses that had up to that time found their point of free expulsion in the anal region ran up against a new barrier. Because of the erect posture, the anal region ceased to form a protuberance, and it lost the “privileged power of points”: the erection could only be maintained on condition that a barrier of contracted muscles be regularly substituted for this “power of points.” Thus the obscure vital thrusts were suddenly thrown back in the direction of the face and the cervical region: they were discharged in the human voice and in more and more fragile intellectual constructions (these new modes of discharge were not only adapted to the principle of the new structure, to the erection, but they even contributed to its rigidity and strength).

Beyond this, in order to consume an excess, the facial extremity assumed a part—relatively weak, but significant—of the excretory functions that up to that time had been routed in the opposite direction: men spit, cough, yawn, belch, blow their noses, sneeze, and cry much more than the other animals, but above all they have acquired the strange faculty of sobbing and bursting into laughter.

Alone, even though it may be substituted at the end of evolution for the mouth as the extreme point of the upper edifice, the pineal gland remains only in a virtual state and can only attain its meaning (without which a man spontaneously enslaves himself and reduces himself to the status of an employee) with the help of mythical confusion, as if better to make human nature a value foreign to its own reality, and thus to tie it to a spectral existence.

It is in relation to this last fact that the metamorphosis of the great ape must be seen as an *inversion*, having as its object not only the direction of the discharges thrust back through the head—transforming the head into something completely different from a mouth, making it a kind of flower blossoming with the most delirious richness of forms—but also the access of living nature (up to that point tied to the ground) to the unreality of solar space.

It is the inversion of the anal orifice itself, resulting from the shift from a squatting posture to a standing one, that is responsible for the decisive reversal of animal existence.

The bald summit of the anus has become the center, blackened with bushes, of the narrow ravine cleaving the buttocks.

The spectral image of this change of sign is represented by a strange human

nudity—now obscene—that is substituted for the hairy body of animals, and in particular by the pubescent hairs that appear exactly where the ape was glabrous; surrounded by a halo of death, a creature who is too pale and too large stands up, a creature who, under a sick sun, is nothing other than the celestial eye it lacks.

The Use Value of D. A. F. de Sade (An Open Letter to My Current Comrades)

If I think it good to address this letter to my comrades, it is not because the propositions that it contains concern them. It will probably even appear to them that such propositions do not concern anyone in particular at all. But in this case I need to have at least a few people as witnesses to establish so complete a defecation. There are, perhaps, declarations which, for lack of anything better, ridiculously need an Attic chorus, because they suppose, as their effect, in spite of everything, a minimum of astonishment, of misunderstanding, or of repugnance. But one does not address a chorus in order to convince it or rally it, and certainly one does not submit to the judgment of destiny without revolting, when it condemns the declarant to the saddest isolation.

This isolation, as far as I am concerned, is moreover in part voluntary, since I would agree to come out of it only on certain hard-to-meet conditions.

In fact even the gesture of writing, which alone permits one to envisage slightly less conventional human relations, a little less crafty than those of so-called intimate friendships—even this gesture of writing does not leave me with an appreciable hope. I doubt that it is possible to reach the few people to whom this letter is no doubt intended, over the heads of my present comrades. For—my resolution is all the more intransigent in that it is absurd to defend—it would have been necessary to deal not with individuals like those I already know, but only with men (and above all with masses) who are comparatively decomposed, amorphous, and even violently expelled from every form. But it is likely that such men do not yet exist (and the masses certainly do not exist).