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MUTE SPEECH

JACQUES RANCIÈRE

TRANSLATED BY JAMES SWENSON
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY GABRIEL ROCKHILL

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CHAPTER 2

FROM THE BOOK OF STONE TO THE BOOK OF LIFE

BEFORE THE wall and the sacred desert, there was the cathedral. Before Flaubert's "book about nothing"—and in order for this book to be thinkable—there was Hugo's monstrous "book of stone." Planche's text, of course, is "metaphorical." Hugo's novel is about a cathedral, but the matter in which he writes is words, not stone. The metaphor, however, is not merely a figurative way of saying that Hugo's book subordinates action to description, discourse to images, and syntax to words. It ratifies, in a polemical form, a new principle of translatability among the arts. It reminds us that poetry is two things: both a particular art and the principle of coherence of the system of the arts, of the convertibility of their forms.

The poetics of representation unified the system of beaux arts according to a dual principle. The first, expressed by the dictum *ut pictura poesis*, was that of mimetic identity. Painting and poetry were convertible into one another in that both were stories. It was on this same basis that music and dance had to be appreciated if they were to deserve the name of arts. No doubt the principle developed by Batteux quickly found its limits. Diderot, albeit without great success, had explored the limits of translation between the pictorial scene and the theatrical stage. Burke had shown that the

power of Milton's "images" consisted paradoxically in the fact that they showed nothing. Lessing's *Laocoon* proclaimed the collapse of the principle: The stone face that the sculptor gave to Virgil's hero could only translate Virgil's poetry by turning the awesome into the grotesque. But the general principle of translatability between the arts is not thereby ruined; it needs to be displaced from the problematic concordance of forms of imitation toward the equivalence of modes of expression.

The second unifying principle was the model of organic coherence. Whatever its matter and form of imitation, the work was a "beau vivant," a totality of parts adjusted to one another to contribute to a single end. Such coherence identified the dynamism of life with the rigor of architectural proportion. Burke had harshly criticized this unifying ideal of beautiful proportion and organic unity. But as there is no poetics without an idea of the translatability of the arts, the new poetics will necessarily rethink this translatability. Poetics will cease imposing the model of representative fiction on the other arts, and will now borrow from them a substitutive principle of poeticity, a principle capable of freeing literary specificity from the representative model. Mallarmé and Proust will provide exemplary illustrations of this singular procedure by which poetry seeks to take from music, painting, or dance a formula capable of being "repatriated" into literature, and thus of giving a new foundation to poetic privilege, even as it gives such a principle to the other arts: Elstir's pictorial "metaphors" or the "conversation" of Vinteuil's sonata. The principle underlying these complex interchanges is, in any case, clear: Henceforth, the correspondence between the arts will no longer be conceived as an equivalence between ways of telling a story but as an analogy between forms of language. If Gustave Planche can turn Hugo's metaphor of speaking stone against him, it is because it is more than a metaphor, or rather because metaphor itself is henceforth more than a "figure" whose function is to give a fitting ornament to the discourse. Metaphor, as an analogy between languages, is now the very principle of poeticity.

The novel of Hugo the innovator and the discourse of his retrograde critic are both possible on the basis of a supposition that the analogy between the monument of the book and the poem of stone is an analogy between two works of language. The cathedral here is a scriptural model, not an architectural one. This means two things. If the work is a cathedral, it is because, in a first sense, it is the monument of an art that is not governed by the mimetic principle. Like the cathedral, the new novel does not allow itself to be compared to anything outside itself; it does not relate to its subject in terms of a representative system of decorum. It builds, in the matter of words, a monument that must be appreciated purely in terms of the magnitude of its proportions and the profusion of its

figures. The translation of the architectural metaphor into a linguistic metaphor expresses the idea that the work is in the first place the effect of a singular power of creation. It is like a particular language carved in the material of common language. Another contributor to the *Revue des deux mondes* put it in these terms:

> No one but M. Hugo could have written these pages, with their faults and beauties. Here we encounter a thought that seems so powerful that the sentence containing it is about to explode. Elsewhere we find an image so picturesque that no painter could render it as the poet conceived it. Sometimes the language seems so strange that we think the author must have used the unknown letters of a primitive idiom and that no other author is capable of having produced the very combination of the letters of the alphabet.[1]

The cathedral of words is a unique work, stemming from the power of a genius that goes far beyond the traditional task of genius as Batteux had analyzed it, that of seeing clearly the object to be represented. It is already a "book about nothing," the signature of an individual as such.[2] But this incomparable book, which expresses only the genius's individual power, becomes like the cathedral of stone, which also expresses only the anonymous power of its creators, the genius of a common soul. The creator's absolute genius recognizes its likeness with the anonymous genius that built the collective poem, the collective prayer of the cathedral. The poet can make, in a cathedral of words, the novel of the cathedral of stone because the latter is in itself already a book. This is what Hugo discovered one night while traveling when he saw the tympanum of Cologne cathedral:

> A light shining in a nearby window briefly illuminated a crowd of exquisite statuettes seated under the vaults. Angels and saints were reading from a great book resting on their knees, while others spoke and preached with one finger raised. Some studied, others taught. An admirable prologue for a church that is nothing but the Word made marble, bronze, and stone.[3]

The original power of the poem is borrowed from the common power whence all poems originate. The cathedral is a poem of stone. It is the identity of an architect's work and a people's faith; it materializes the content of that faith, that is, the power of incarnation of the Word. In opposition to the unifying principle of narrative, as expressed by *ut pictura poesis*, we now see the unifying principle of the Word as the language of all languages, the language that gathers together at the origin each particular language's power of incarnation. The

value of the poet's singular idiom lies in its expression of the common power of the Word made visible by the cathedral, the divine power of speech become the collective spirit of a people. This speech would forget itself in stone and be lost to the insouciance of builders and wreckers if poetic speech did not once again make manifest in a poem of words the poetico-religious power inscribed in it. A circle—mimicking the one that once linked the dramatic poet and the universe of speech in action—brings together the readers and the preachers of the book of Life represented on the stone tympanum, the cathedral as Book or Word incarnate in stone, the faith of the builders of cathedrals, and the enterprise of bringing to life in a novel charnel figures analogous to the sculpted figures and stone-words of the cathedral-book. But this circle is no longer that of the orator's speech act: Is the circle of writing. In opposition to the sacred orator we find the stone saint or angel who can better proclaim the power of the Word made flesh. In opposition to the profane orator exhorting the assembled people we find the builder of the stone poem who can better express the power of the community inhabited by speech. Eloquent speech is henceforth the silent speech of what does not speak in the language of words or what makes words speak otherwise than as instruments of a discourse of persuasion or seduction: as symbols of the power of the Word, the power by which the Word becomes flesh. The circle of speech binding the poet's book to the book of the tympanum, and the book of the tympanum to the book of Life that inspired the builder, can seem quite close to the one that was drawn around the dramatic scene. There has nonetheless occurred a substitution in the paradigm of living speech, so that writing has become living speech. This new paradigm now governs poetry, making it no longer a genre of belles lettres, defined by the principle of fiction, but a use of language, one that is most exemplarily demonstrated in the prose of the anti-genre that is the novel. Hugo's prose derives its poetic character not from its reproduction of the sculpted scene on the tympanum of the cathedral, but from what that scene expresses, that is, what it both manifests and symbolizes—what it says twice in its muteness—: the difference by which stone becomes Word and Word stone.

But, in order to understand and draw all the consequences of the formula that makes poem and stone equivalent, we must unfold the various relations it envelops: between the novel and the book of Life; between the book of Life and the poem; between the poem, the people, and stone. Let us begin with the beginning, that is, with the apparent paradox that binds together the novelistic anti-genre and the sacred text in the name of poetry. In 1669, Pierre-Daniel Huet published his treatise *De l'origine des romans*. Huet is the very exemplar of Voltaire's *littérateurs*, more passionate about the Latin verses he exchanges with his friend Ménage than about the new productions of the tragic stage. It is

all the more meaningful to see him, like Ménage, take an interest in the ruleless literature of the novel and to collaborate discreetly with Mme. de Lafayette, writing this preface for her *Princesse de Montpensier* that is as long as the novel itself. The link he forges between the disdained genre of the novel, poetic tradition, and the sacred Book whose priest he was soon to become is even more significant.

At first sight, Huet's point seems to come down to an enlargement of the poetic domain to allow it to include the marginal genre of the novel. He establishes this point on the basis of a "maxim of Aristotle's," which is nowhere to be found in the text of the *Poetics* but is certainly in agreement with its doctrine: "The poet is a poet on account of the fictions he invents rather than the verses he composes." The concept of *mimesis* is discretely replaced with the broader concept of "fabulation." But this substitution is what allows the apparent broadening of the mimetic domain to subvert its own principle. For "fabulation" means two things at once. On the one hand, it is the confused and imagistic perception by the peoples of the barbarian West of a truth that they are incapable of discerning. But it is also the set of artifices—fables, images, plays of sonority—that the peoples of the refined East have invented for the transmission of truth, which hide the part that must be hidden and decorate the part that must be transmitted. The domain of fabulation is therefore that of the sensible presentation of a nonsensible truth. This mode of presentation is both the art by which wise men enveloped the principles of theology and science in fables or hid them in hieroglyphs, and the naturally "poetic and richly inventive" turn of mind of peoples who reason figuratively and explain themselves allegorically. Homer and Herodotus taught the Greeks this manner. Pythagoras and Plato used it to disguise their philosophy, which Aesop translated into popular fables and the Arabs took from Aesop and passed into the Qur'an. But it is also the manner of the Persians, in love with the "art of lying beautifully" to which the buskers in the Isfahan marketplace still bear witness. It is found in Chinese apologues and Indian philosophical parables. This Oriental manner, finally, is that of Holy Scripture itself, "entirely mystical, entirely allegorical, entirely enigmatic." The Psalms, Proverbs, and the books of Ecclesiastes and Job are "poetic works full of figures that would appear too bold and violent in our writings but that are common in those of this nation"; the Song of Songs is "a drama in pastoral form in which the passionate feelings of the bride and the bridegroom are expressed in a manner so tender and touching that we would be enchanted by them if these figures were only more in accord with our own genius."[4]

It had long been recognized—at least since Saint Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*, and Erasmus had forcefully recalled the fact—that the tropes used

in the sacred text were formally comparable to those of profane poetry. But an immense distance separates that recognition from Huet's thesis. With no particular difficulty, this churchman, courtier, and man of letters has reduced Scripture as a whole not only to the tropes of the poets but to the fabulating genius of peoples. Holy Scripture is a poem, a poem that expresses not only the human genius of fabulation in general but also the particular genius of a people far from us. The notion of fabulation comprises the images of the prophets, the riddles of Solomon, the parables of Jesus, the refined consonances of the Psalms or Saint Augustine, the oriental turns of Saint Jerome, the exegeses of the Talmudists, and the figural explanations of Saint Paul. Fable, metaphor, rhyme, and exegesis are all modes of this power of fabulation, that is, the presentation of the truth in images. They all compose a single language of images in which the categories of *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio* collapse, and with them the "literature" of the erudite. The novel communicates with Holy Scripture in the name of a theory of poetry that turns it into a tropology, a figurative language of truth.

The notion of fabulation thus implies a coexistence of opposites: the old dramatic conception of poetry and a new conception that gives it an essentially tropological nature. It was Vico who, in his *New Science* of 1725, broke the compromise and proclaimed the overturning of "all the previous theories about the origins of poetry" from Aristotle to Scaliger. Huet's "Aristotelian" formula grounded the poet's identity in his use of fictions and not his employment of a determinate mode of language. But the notion of fabulation that he used undermined this opposition insofar as it identified fiction and figure. Vico formulates the reversal in its full generality: Fiction is a figure, a way of speaking. But for him, the figure itself is no longer an invention of art, a technique of language that serves the ends of rhetorical persuasion or poetic pleasure; the figure is a mode of language that corresponds to a certain state of its development. This stage of language is also a stage of thought. The figurative mode of language expresses a spontaneous perception of things that does not yet distinguish between proper and figurative, concepts and images, things and our feelings. Poetry does not invent; it is not the *tekhnè* of a personage, the artist, who constructs verisimilar fictions for the pleasure of another personage, the spectator, who is equally skilled in the art of speech. Poetry is a language that speaks of things "as they are" for someone awakening to language and thought. It speaks of things as he sees them and speaks of them, as he cannot help but see them and speak of them. It is the necessary union between speech and thought, between knowledge and ignorance. The cascade of synonyms that opens the chapter on Poetic Logic summarizes this revolution in the idea of poeticity:

> The word logic comes from Greek *logos*, which at first properly meant fable, or *fabula* in Latin, which later changed into Italian *favella*, speech. In Greek, a fable was also called *mythos*, myth, from which is derived Latin *mutus*, mute. For speech was born in the mute age as a mental language [. . .]; this is why in Greek *logos* means both word and idea.[5]

Let us follow the order of implications. Fiction—or figure, it amounts to the same thing—is the way in which still-speechless man conceives of the world, in his own resemblance: He sees the sky and designates a Jupiter who speaks, as he does, a language of gesture, who says his will and enacts it at the same time through the signs of thunder and lightning. The original figures of the arts of poetry and rhetoric are the gestures by which man designates things. They are the fictions that he creates for himself: they are false if considered as representations of the being of things, but true insofar as they express his position amongst them. Rhetoric is mythology; mythology is anthropology. Fictive beings are the imaginative universals that hold the place of the general ideas man does not yet have the ability to form by abstraction. The fable is the common birth of speech and thought. It is the first stage of thought, formulated in a language that mixes together gesture and sound in a speech that is still equivalent to muteness. These imaginative universals, to which the power of fiction can be reduced, can be rigorously assimilated to the language of the deaf and dumb. The deaf and dumb speak with gestures that draw resemblances of what they mean or with confused sounds that strive vainly towards articulate language. From the first language stem the images, similitudes, and comparisons of poetry, the tropes that are not the inventions of writers but "necessary modes of expression of all the early poetic nations." From the second derive song and verse, which precede prose: Men "formed their first languages by singing."[6]

Thus poetry's original power is equivalent to the first impotence of a thought incapable of abstraction and an inarticulate language. Poetry invents the gods in whose figure man makes manifest—that is, both knows and ignores—his power of thought and speech. But this "knowledge" of false gods that forms the matter of the first poetry and wisdom of peoples is of course also the way that the providence of the true God allows them to become conscious of themselves. This knowledge is not abstract; it is the historical consciousness of a people as translated by its institutions and its monuments. The "poets" are also theologians and founders of nations. The "hieroglyphs" that divine providence uses to signal itself to men and give them self-knowledge are not the enigmatic signs and depositories of hidden wisdom upon which so many interpretations and reveries have been built. They are the altar of worship and the augur's wand; the flame of the hearth and the funerary urn; the farmer's plow, the scribe's tablet, and the ship's tiller; the warrior's sword and the scales of justice. They are the instruments and emblems, the institutions and monuments of common life.

Poetry, as we know, was not Vico's real concern. If he wanted to find "the true Homer," it was not in order to found a poetics but to put an end to a quarrel as old as Christianity and refute once and for all the paganistic argument that saw Homer's fables and Egyptian hieroglyphs as dissimulating an ancient and admirable wisdom. Vico responds to this theory that sees poetry's language as a sort of false bottom with a radical thesis: poetry is only the language of childhood, the language of a humanity in transition from original silence to articulate speech by way of the image-gesture and the deafness of song. But this apparent refutation of the duplicity of poetic language in fact radicalizes it. The "mute" speech of poetry is also the form in which a truth is revealed to mortals and humanity becomes conscious of itself. Vico's refutation of the allegorical character of poetry assures its status as symbolic language, as a language that speaks less by what it says than by what it does not say, by the power that is expressed through it. Thus the poem's success can be identified with the deficiency of speech, but this also means it can be identified with the sensible manifestation of a truth or even with the self-presentation of a community through its works. This consciousness inscribed in the language of poetic words is likewise found in the tools of agriculture, the institutions of law, and the emblems of justice. Poetry is thus one particular manifestation of the poeticity of the world, that is, of the way in which a truth is given to a collective consciousness in the form of works and institutions. But it is also a privileged organon for understanding of this truth. It is a fragment of the poem of the world and a hermeneutics of its poeticity, of the way in which this truth anticipates itself through mute-speaking works, works that speak as images, as stones, as matter that resists the signification whose vehicle it is.

The quest for the "true Homer" indeed leads to a revolution in the whole system of belles lettres. A century later, Quinet drew up the balance sheet when he said that the solution given to the question of Homer's historicity changed "the very basis of art." By making Homer "the voice of ancient Greece, an echo of divine speech, the voice of the crowd, belonging to no one,"[7] Vico changed the status of poetry. Poetry is no longer the activity that produces poems; it is the quality of poetic objects. Poetry is defined by poeticity: a state of language, a specific way that thought and language belong to one another, a relation between what the one knows and does not know and what the other says and does not say. Poetry is the manifestation of a poeticity that belongs to the first essence of language—"poem of the entire human race," August Wilhelm Schlegel will say.[8]

But the equivalence must be thought in both directions. Any object capable of being perceived in terms of the self-difference that defines poetic language—that is, language in its original state—will be defined as a poetic object. Poeticity is the property by which any object can be doubled, taken not only as a set of properties but as the manifestation of an essence, not only as the effect of certain causes but as the metaphor or metonymy of the power that produced it. This passage from a regime of causal concatenation to a regime of expressivity can be summed up in an apparently anodyne sentence of Novalis's: "A child is a love made visible." What this means, in its full generality, is that any effect is a sign that makes visible the hidden power of its cause. The passage from a causal poetics of narrative to an expressive poetics of language is completely contained within this displacement. Any configuration of sensible properties can be assimilated to an arrangement of signs and thus to a manifestation of language in its primary poetical state. Such a doubling can be carried out for any object.

> For each thing first presents itself, that is, reveals its interior by its exterior, its essence by its appearance (it is thus a symbol for itself); next it presents what is in the closest relation to it and acts upon it; finally, it is a mirror of the universe.[9]

Any stone can also be language. Hugo speaks of a sculpted angel that unites the craftsman's mark with the power of the evoked Verb and collective faith, but the same is true of Jouffroy's pebble: no doubt it tells us relatively little since it lacks remarkable properties, but its color and form are already written signs, hardly legible as yet but destined to become more so if only it be sculpted or spoken in the crystal of words.[10] This power of language, immanent in every object, can be interpreted in a mystical way, as it is by the young German poets or philosophers who endlessly repeat Kant's characterization of nature as a poem written in a "ciphered language" and, like Novalis, assimilate the study of materials to the old "theory of signatures."[11] But it can also be rationalized and seen as the testimony that mute things bear to mankind's activity. In the transition from Michelet's "lyricism" to the sober science of *Annales*-school historians, a new idea of historical science will appear on this basis, founded on the deciphering of "mute witnesses." The common principle of these various interpretations is the following: not only does poeticity no longer stem from any principle of generic suitability, but it also no longer defines any particular form or matter. It is the language of both stones and words, of novelistic prose and epics, of manners and works. Henceforth, the poet is the one who speaks the poeticity of things. He can be the Homeric poet as described by Hegel who expresses the poeticity of a collective way of life. He can also be the Proustian novelist who deciphers the hieroglyphs of the book printed within him, draws a world out of the sound of a fork, and links the alliterations of things in the rings of style.[12] Poetic genius is henceforth defined as the expression of language's distance from itself and of the doubling by which anything can become language, as the union of consciousness and the unconscious or the individual and the anonymous. We must begin from this point if we are to think the notions and oppositions that will structure the literary domain.

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CHAPTER 1: FROM REPRESENTATION TO EXPRESSION

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Mallarmé, or the Poet of Nothingness*, trans. Ernest Sturm (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 139.
2. Charles de Rémusat, *Passé et present* (1847), cited by Armand de Pontmartin, "De l'esprit littéraire en 1858," in *Nouvelles causeries du samedi* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1859), 4; Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly, "Gustave Flaubert," *Le roman contemporain*, in *XIX^e siècle: les œuvres et les hommes* (Paris: Lemerre, 1902), vol. 18, p. 103; Léon Bloy, *Belluaires et porchers* (Paris: Stock, 1905), 96–97.
3. Gustave Planche, "Poètes et romanciers modernes de la France: M. Victor Hugo," *Revue des deux mondes* (1838), vol. 1, 757.
4. Charles Batteux, A *Course of the Belles Letters, or the Principles of Literature* (London: B. Law, 1761), vol. 1, 110.
5. Voltaire, *Commentaires sur Corneille*, in *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire* (Geneva: The Voltaire Foundation, 1975), vol. 55, 465, 976, 964, 965, 731.
6. Batteux, *Course of Belles Letters*, vol. 1, 157.
7. Jean-François de La Harpe, *Lycée ou Cours de littérature* (Paris, 1840), vol. 1, 476.
8. Voltaire, *Commentaires sur Corneille*, vol. 55, 830–831.
9. Batteux, *Course of Belles Letters*, vol. 1, 111.
10. Marc Fumaroli, *L'âge de l'éloquence: rhétorique et "res literaria" de la Renaissance au seuil de l'époque classique* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994), 30.
11. La Harpe, *Lycée*, vol. 1, 198.
12. See Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Qu'est-ce qu'un genre littéraire?* (Paris: Seuil, 1989).
13. Flaubert to Louise Colet, January 16, 1852, *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert, 1830–1857*, ed. and trans. Francis Steegmuller (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 154.

CHAPTER 2: FROM THE BOOK OF STONE TO THE BOOK OF LIFE

1. C. D., "*Notre-Dame de Paris*, par M. Victor Hugo," *Revue des deux mondes* (1831), vol. 1, 188.
2. "I hope that we will eventually put nothing but the author's name on the cover of a book" (Émile Deschamps, "M. de Balzac," *Revue des deux mondes* (1831), vol. 4, 314–315).
3. Victor Hugo, *Le Rhin*, in *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Club français du livre, 1968), vol. 4, 253.
4. Pierre-Daniel Huet, *Traité de l'origine des romans* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970), 28–29.
5. Giambattista Vico, *New Science: Principles of the New Science Concerning the Common Nature of Nations*, trans. David Marsh (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2001), 157.
6. Ibid., 96, 162.
7. Edgar Quinet, *Allemagne et Italie: philosophie et poésie* (Paris: Desforges, 1839), vol. 2, 97–98.
8. A. W. Schlegel, *Vorlesungen über schöne Literatur und Kunst*, in *Kritische Ausgabe der Vorlesungen*, ed. Ernst Behler and Frank Jolles (Paderborn: Schönigh, 1989), vol. 1, 388.

9. Ibid., vol. 1, 250.
10. Cf. Théodore Jouffroy, *Cours d'esthétique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Hachette, 1863), 220: "The stone does not say much because its elementary signs are not sufficiently prominent; it is a scribbled, poorly written word."
11. See Novalis [Georg Friedrich von Hardenberg], *Notes for a Romantic Encyclopedia: Das Allgemeine Brouillon*, trans. David W. Wood (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 24: "It is not only man that speaks—the universe also speaks—everything speaks—infinite languages. / Theory of signatures."
12. Proust particularly emphasizes the theme of the alliterations of things with respect to the transparent carafes that children set in the Vivonne to catch fish, so that "one no longer knows whether the river is a crystal carafe or if the carafe is frozen liquid." Text drawn from notebook 4, printed in *Cahiers Marcel Proust* 7 (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 165; compare Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*, in *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: Vintage, 1982), vol. 1, 183–184 [where *allitération perpétuelle* is rendered as "perpetually in flight"].

CHAPTER 3: THE BOOK OF LIFE AND THE EXPRESSION OF SOCIETY

1. Novalis [Georg Friedrich von Hardenberg], "Monologue," in *The Origins of Modern Critical Thought: German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism from Lessing to Hegel*, ed. David Simpson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 274.
2. Ibid.
3. Jean-Charles-Léonard Simonde de Sismondi, *Historical View of the Literature of the South of Europe*, trans. Thomas Roscoe (London: Henry Bohn, 1846 [1813]), vol. 2, 25.
4. Théodore Jouffroy, *Cours d'esthétique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Hachette, 1863), 199.
5. Zola was clearly conscious of this on at least one occasion, when, accusing his naturalism of having often substituted the enchanted nature of romanticism for scientific "nature," he gives his own interpretation of the "petrification" inherent in the literary project:

> Now it is certain that we rarely hold ourselves to this scientific rigor. All reaction is violent, and we shall react still against the abstract formula of the last centuries. Nature has entered into our works with so impetuous a bound that it has filled them, sometimes swamping the human element, submerging and carrying away characters in the midst of a downfall of rocks and great trees. [. . .]
>
> We dream of all kinds of folly, we write books in which the springs commence to sing, the oaks to talk with each other, the rocks to sigh and palpitate like a woman overcome with the midday heat. And there are symphonies in the leaves, roles given to the blades of grass, poems on light and on odors. If there is any excuse to be offered for such digressions it is because we have dreamed of broadening humanity, and that we have imbued even the stones in the roadways with it

(Emile Zola, *The Experimental Novel and Other Essays*, trans. Belle M. Sherman [New York: Cassell, 1893], 233–236).