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FICCTIONS OF “LA TOURNANTE”: FALLACIES, FACTS, AND EFFECTS

1. Introduction: On the Freudian slip between fact and effect

[I]t is skilled *agency* that brings about the convergence of material and verbal practices. Convergence engenders belief in the correspondence of representations to things in the world.¹

I should like to consider, by way of introduction, the remarks which Sigmund Freud makes at the beginning of “A Special Type of Choice of Object Made by Men”, which was first published in the German in 1910 and only later brought together with two other, related papers under the title “Beiträge zur Psychologie des Liebeslebens” — “Contributions to the Psychology of Love”. Presently, I propose to grapple with the question not of “love”, but of “literature” broadly construed, its validity, and its value as truth. For too long, so Freud’s opening gambit goes, the discourse of love was left to — and, hence, effectively monopolized by — novelists, poets, and playwrights (“*Dichter*” in the German). Whilst, in Freud’s words, “[t]he writer can indeed draw on certain qualities which fit him to carry out such a task”, the imperative to procure “intellectual and aesthetic pleasure” for his readers reduces the “evidential” or probative value of that which he has to say. The “strictly scientific treatment” of the subject which Freud advocates is justified, therefore, on the basis that literature, unlike science, “cannot reproduce the stuff of reality unchanged”.² So, if Freud’s argument is to be believed, it is to science — and, more particularly, to psychoanalysis — that one must turn in order to grasp the facts of the matter called “love”. And yet, there are two very good reasons why one might wish to question whether this chain of reasoning is sound. Firstly, in *L’Archéologie du savoir*, Michel Foucault warns against accepting as self-evident the obscure set of operations by which discourse is divided up prior to any analysis of their existence as facts of discourse: “Peut-on admettre, telles quelles”, he asks, “la distinction des grands types de discours, ou celle des formes ou des genres qui opposent les unes aux autres science, littérature, philosophie, religion, histoire, fiction, etc.”.³ Foucault’s scepticism prompts careful consideration of the distinction which Freud draws between science (as the discourse of facts) and literature (as the discourse of effects). An appreciation of this difference — between *facts*, on the one hand, and *effects*, on the other — is crucial not only to my argument here, but to the work of the French sociologist Laurent Mucchielli, whose 2005 monograph *Le Scandale des “tournantes” : Dérives médiatiques, contre-enquête sociologique* chronicles the blurring of, whilst at the same time seeking to restore an illusory integrity to, this structuring opposition: “*La squala* [film français de Fabrice Genestal sorti en 2000] va bénéficier en effet d’une très large couverture de presse, les journalistes considérant cette fiction comme un témoignage direct sur une réalité cachée, une véritable révélation”,⁴ he remonstrates. Secondly, the absolutist terms upon which Freud’s assessment stands imply that the primary use of language is to convey meaning, and that words bear an originary relation to things. By conceiving of language in this way — as “nomenclature”⁵ first and foremost, this philosophy precludes analysis of the means by which, for

¹ Gooding 1992: 104; emphasis mine.

² Freud 1977: 231.

³ Foucault 1969: 32-33.

⁴ Mucchielli 2005: 12-13.

⁵ This is the thesis which Ferdinand de Saussure impugns in his *Cours de linguistique générale*: “Pour certaines personnes la langue, ramenée à son principe essentiel, est une nomenclature, c’est-à-dire une liste de termes correspondant à autant de choses [...] Cette conception est critiquable à bien des égards” (1931: 97).

example, fictional representations of “la tournante”⁶ acquire, as Mucchielli’s remarks intimate, all of the descriptive *force* which Freud fathers upon scientifically verified facts. Taken together, these concerns cry out against the aprioristic estimation which Freud forms of literature as the discourse of “distorted” or “degraded” truth (“herabgesetzt” in the original German),⁷ rendering necessary the type of context-specific, critical appraisal upon which I shall now embark. In light of all this, what is, or how are we to understand, and this is the question at issue in this article, the value as truth of Édith Wolf’s *En réunion*, Éliisa Brune’s *La Tournante*, and Fabrice Genestal’s *La Squale*?

2. Detecting Édith Wolf’s “authenticating presences”

In the opening passage of his first “Contribution”, whereas Freud speaks of “science” (“*Wissenschaft*”), but never of “scientists”, he refers repeatedly to “writers” or “authors”, but at no point to “fiction” or “literature” (*Dichtung*). Thus, whereas science is abstract and impartial,⁸ literature is equated with, because reduced to and by, the subjective, the personal. In Freud’s view, therefore, it is the role of the author — his or her personality, moral authority, artistic sensibility, evocative or emotive qualities (in sum, “*Eigenschaften*”) — that impart literature with and yet call into question its truth-speaking potentiality. In an interview published in *Le Monde*, Wolf aligns closely the value which attaches to her 2003 novel *En réunion* and those factors which affect — and, more importantly, enhance — her credibility: “De quelle observation, ou expérience, avez-vous tiré la matière de ce livre?”, asks the journalist Patrick Kéchichian; “D’une expérience professionnelle, de professeur, de 1981 à 1990, à Sarcelles. Pendant toute cette période, j’ai vu la violence s’installer. En 1988, l’une de mes élèves a été victime d’un viol par quatre garçons, dont deux que je connaissais”,⁹ Wolf replies. Already, furnished only with this short extract, the centrality of the author’s role to the epistemic status of narrativity is shown up in all its complexity. Firstly, by virtue of her professional status, “[en tant qu’] enseignante agrégée de lettres”,¹⁰ Wolf’s discourse is accorded particular authority, established in law,¹¹ augmented by experience, and coincident with the intimate knowledge to which she was privy. Next, her legitimacy hinges upon the social standing of the institutional setting from which her narrative derives its origin, and whose internal organization facilitated the infinitesimal observations and the storing up of discursive facts which formed the raw material of her account. Lastly, and perhaps most crucially, by harnessing the persuasive power and voice of the Other, the events which Wolf describes are presented to the reader as *credenda* — as things, that is, to be believed: “[L]a fiction, ici, ne nous éloigne pas de la réalité. Elle nous en rapproche au contraire”,¹² Kéchichian concedes at the beginning of his article. All of these considerations speak to Wolf’s function *qua* author, the idiom characteristic of which is, as I shall discuss and demonstrate further, *representational*: “The representational idiom casts science as, above all, an activity that seeks to represent nature, to produce knowledge that maps, mirrors, or corresponds to how the world really is”, explains the British philosopher of science Andrew Pickering in *The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency, and Science*.¹³ Rather than detracting from, degrading, or reducing the evidential value (“*Erkenntniswert*”)¹⁴ of that which Wolf has to say, the historically contingent rules of formation which govern the author-function are such that the attribution of the work to *this* author lends considerable credence to Wolf’s account. This positivistic mode of attribution does not deny the relation of the author to the *œuvre*, but deploys the author — and such aspects of her individuality as bear upon her capacity to reproduce, as graphically as possible, “the stuff of reality” — as that which the American feminist philosopher Linda Martín Alcoff terms “authenticating presences”.¹⁵ This representational modality, as we shall see, characterizes other, supposedly fictional representations of “la tournante”, suggesting, beyond the boundaries of each work, some commonality of *style*, certain sufficiently invariable as to be describable principles of discursive unity.¹⁶

⁶ For which *Le Petit Robert* offers the following (gender-biased) definition: “Viol collectif commis par un groupe de jeunes sur une adolescente”.

⁷ Freud 1994: 187.

⁸ This puts one in mind of the argument which Foucault makes in “Qu’est-ce qu’un auteur?” where, of scientific discourses, he affirms: “[C]’est leur appartenance à un ensemble systématique qui leur donne garantie, et non point la référence à l’individu qui les a produits” (1994: 799-800).

⁹ Kéchichian 2003.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Journal officiel de la République française* 1972.

¹² Kéchichian 2003.

¹³ Pickering 1995: 5.

¹⁴ Freud 1994: 187.

¹⁵ Alcoff 1995: 99. Originally published in a slightly different form in the winter 1991-1992 edition of *Cultural Critique* (cf. n. 20).

¹⁶ Clinical discourse, writes Foucault in *L’Archéologie du savoir*, constitutes the system of relations which exist between various discursive elements, “et s’il a une unité, si les modalités d’énonciation qu’il utilise, ou auxquelles il donne lieu, ne sont pas simplement juxtaposées par une série de contingences historiques, c’est qu’il met en œuvre de façon constante ce faisceau de relations” (1969: 72-73).

3. Éliisa Brune's scientific conception of narrativity

Reviewing Éliisa Brune's 2001 novel *La Tournante*, the Belgian academic and journalist Jacques de Decker expounds not upon the story's narrative quality, but upon the approximation of its author to the ideals of objectivity: "Elle est chercheuse scientifique de profession, et l'on sentait dans ses précédents livres [...] qu'elle a l'art d'intégrer dans ses récits des données objectivées et vérifiées".¹⁷ Once again, and rather oddly given that the species of literature known as fiction is customarily concerned with *unreal* characters and events which have their genesis in the imagination, it is the author's capacity to bear credible witness to — "to produce knowledge", in Pickering's words, "that maps, mirrors, or corresponds to" — reality that is deemed to be the narrative's most salient and creditable quality. Despite Brune's protestation that, "[d]ans *La Tournante*, il n'y a rien de scientifique",¹⁸ her narrative — like Wolf's, but *a fortiori* — is situated by others within the parameters of this representational modality, to the extent, even, that the allegorical aspects of the *La Tournante* are obscured completely: "Éliisa Brune publie *La Tournante*", writes Isabelle Rüf in the Swiss French-language daily *Le Temps*, "un récit sociologique qui décrit l'esclavage sexuel où sont réduites des adolescentes imprudentes".¹⁹ Why, though, would Rüf give the reader of her review to understand that the contents of *La Tournante* are sociological, and that the mode of representation proper to Brune's account is not primarily figurative, therefore, but literal?

As Alcott writes, albeit somewhat awkwardly, "how what is said gets heard depends on who says it, and who says it will affect the style and language in which it is stated, which will in turn affect its perceived significance".²⁰ It is not at all surprising, then, that Brune, "[qui] est titulaire d'un doctorat d'économie de l'environnement et journaliste scientifique", should bring certain elements of style — the correlates of her location — to bear upon the task of writing fiction: "Ce que sa formation lui a apporté?", inquires the journalist Emmanuelle Jowa in the now-defunct weekly listings magazine *La Tribune de Bruxelles*, "L'observation, une certaine méthode sans doute".²¹ Although Brune denies emphatically any connexion between *La Tournante* and science, closer analysis of the text reveals various affinities of style which are strongly suggestive of at least some resemblance. Disserting upon the logical-positivist ideals which inform much modern-day scientific inquiry, the twentieth-century British philosopher Alfred Jules Ayer hypothesizes that, "if an observation to which a given proposition is relevant conforms to our expectations, the truth of that proposition is confirmed".²² By weaving journalistic accounts of "la tournante" through the fabric of her narrative,²³ "[en y intégrant] des données objectivées et vérifiées", Brune offers not only an unfolding tapestry of fictionalized events and characterizations but affords the very ground upon which are built the reader's truth-bearing expectations. Thus, because by design, the factual and the fictitious in Brune's *La Tournante* appear to tally, and this correspondence seems to confirm the truth of that which Brune invents imaginatively. What is more, *La Tournante* calls forth throughout the rhetorical mode of discourse least commonly regarded as literary:

On dirait que dans certaines microsociétés, fortement marquées par les rapports de force et par le sexisme, comme il s'en est formé dans les cités, les notions de réputation et de déshonneur sont redevenues des déterminants majeurs pour le statut des femmes.²⁴

If the author is, as Foucault claims, "un certain être de raison",²⁵ one might characterize the being of discourse brought into existence by Brune's *La Tournante*, as the discourse, synonymous with science, of reason. This recourse to *rationality*, forming part of the fascies of relations which constitute Brune's enunciative modality, circumscribes, when reading *La Tournante*, the sphere of possible interpretations — "affect[s] its perceived significance", that is — both in terms of its truth- and narrative value. Epistemologically, although Brune's treatment of "la tournante" cannot be regarded as "strictly scientific", the motor which propels the narrative forward is driven without question by the workings of scientific methodology.²⁶ Whilst it is safe to say, therefore, that Brune's scientific conception of narrativity does not satisfy the formal criteria of scientific

¹⁷ de Decker 2001.

¹⁸ Jowa 2004.

¹⁹ Rüf 2001.

²⁰ Alcott 1991: 13.

²¹ Jowa 2004.

²² Ayer 1971: 99-100.

²³ The three articles which Brune includes are: "Onze jeunes jugés pour deux viols collectifs à Paris", *Le Monde*, 24 April 2001 (cf. Brune 2001: 165-167); "Quand l'ère du soupçon empoisonne une bourgade sans histoire", *L'Humanité*, 6 December 1999 (*Ibid.* 189-192); and an untitled article by Corine Goldberger published in the French edition of *Marie-Claire* in April 2001 (*Ibid.* 225-227).

²⁴ *Ibid.* 136-137.

²⁵ Foucault 1994: 800-801.

²⁶ "Ce côté méthodique est important", Brune tells Jowa in "La science est un roman".

validity, it does, nevertheless, because of its scientized style, enjoy the epistemically elevated status accorded to knowledge worthy of that name. Narratologically, however, at the same time as the novel's claims to truth are bolstered — especially by the apparent congruence between that which is invented and that which is discovered — the narrative quality of *La Tournante* diminishes, and the very stuff of fiction, to procure “intellectual and aesthetic pleasure”, appears to languish away, indeed vanishes: “Enfin, j’ai quand même un petit regret. Trop souvent, on a l’impression de lire une étude sur un phénomène social, quelques personnages émettant des théories sociologiques, intéressantes certes, mais il ne s’agit plus alors d’un roman plutôt d’un essai”,²⁷ laments an anonymous contributor to the book-review website *Critiques Libres*. This analysis, it would seem, therefore, supports Freud’s thesis: the closer the correspondence of Brune’s text with the facts, the less productive, the “clumsier”,²⁸ its literary effects. Hence, if the idiom characteristic of Wolf’s *En réunion* and Brune’s *La Tournante* is, as I have proposed, representational, their style, defined by Foucault as “un certain caractère constant de l’énonciation”,²⁹ is, I should like to suggest, *literal*. Supposing that this is the underlying, signifying structure which characterizes Wolf, Brune, and Genestal’s function as authors, and recognizing that something is thereby both gained and *lost*, “[in diesem Fall] intellektuelle und ästhetische Lust”,³⁰ what else is obscured by this representational idiom, this literalizing style, this way of representing “la tournante” which tends towards the scientific-factual end of Freud’s science-literature opposition? Since it cannot be enough simply to assume the consistency of this style across the piece, however, when considering *La Squale*, are we dealing with the same drama-documentary way of representing, the same matter-of-fact manner of speaking and signifying?

4. Divesting Fabrice Genestal’s *La Squale* of its fictional, imaginary, and unreal qualities

Although Genestal’s *La Squale* is neither in the English nor in the German acceptance of the terms literary or “dichterisch”,³¹ the film merits further, more thorough investigation, and this on account of two sub-considerations. The principal reason why it invites one’s critical attention, and which sets it apart from Brune’s *La Tournante* and Wolf’s *En réunion*, proceeds from the wave of interest (“[la] très large couverture de presse”) which the film generated upon its release.³² In addition to the particular set of conditions which govern the modalities of its reception, *La Squale* deserves inclusion, also, not insofar as it should assume an epithet, that of “literature”, which does not befit it, but because, just like Wolf and Brune’s compositions, it lays claim to — and, simultaneously, divests itself of — its status as “fiction”. Indeed, the premise of Mucchielli’s argument, “[que] les journalistes considér[aient] cette fiction comme un témoignage direct sur une réalité cachée, une véritable révélation”, is borne out by the vast mass of documentation which sanctions and participates in the discursive divestiture of *La Squale*’s fictional, imaginary, and unreal qualities, and which — by effect of accumulation — compels belief in the film’s authenticity: “Choqué par le comportement et les propos de ses jeunes élèves, Fabrice Genestal, un ancien enseignant de banlieue parisienne, a réalisé un film, ‘La squale’, qui reconstitue la barbarie sexuelle des bandes des cités. ‘Le Point’ confirme ces effarants témoignages”.³³ Again, those elements which conduce to the film’s believability are attributed directly to the author who is called upon to fulfil this truth-function. As Émilie Lanez’s remarks make explicit, this particular mode of production — proper to all three of the texts under consideration — privileges the historico-philosophical project of *reconstitution*.

However ideologically aligned, however united in pursuit of this project these literary and cinematographic ways of representing “la tournante” may be, that which differentiates Brune and Wolf’s literature from Genestal’s cinema is the repertoire of techniques, the set of “literalizing procedure[s]”,³⁴ available to each. Whereas Brune includes documentary evidence in her *roman à thèse*, “[son] roman-reportage”,³⁵ Genestal’s “proof” has flesh and blood:

Comme Fabrice Genestal a présidé à la conception du scénario, le souci d’authenticité a été la règle de la distribution. Pas de vedettes [...] Presque tous les interprètes, y compris les deux rôles principaux — Esse Lawson (Désirée) et Tony Mpoudja (Toussaint) — ont été triés sur le volet [choisis avec le plus grand soin] par un casting rigoureux et soumis à six mois de répétitions-collaboration. De ce seul point de vue, le résultat est saisissant.³⁶

²⁷ *Critiques libres* 2001.

²⁸ Freud 1977: 231.

²⁹ Foucault 1969: 47-48.

³⁰ Freud 1994: 187.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² By the end of 2001, almost 100,000 tickets had been sold at the French box-office following the film’s general release on 21 November 2000 (see Delporte 2001).

³³ Lanez 2000.

³⁴ White 1990: 48.

³⁵ de Decker 2001.

³⁶ Videau 2001: 120-121.

Thus, if *La Squale* grips, fascinates, “captivates” the viewer, as André Videau claims, this is because it establishes an originary relation to reality, and Genestal’s first-hand experience of living and teaching in *les cités*,³⁷ the precedence which he accords during the film’s development and production to girls and young women,³⁸ and the weaving into its weft of their testimonial depositions,³⁹ his decision to cast not professionally trained actors, but the natural, nascent talents of local, unschooled amateurs,⁴⁰ the credibilizing use throughout the film of location-shooting,⁴¹ the enlistment by Genestal of the female cast into the service of script-writing — all of these speak to the film’s putatively unfeigned, “true-to-life” quality, to its prepense authenticity, to its studiously conceived capacity, in the words of John Langshaw Austin, the British linguist and father of speech-act theory, “to ‘describe’ some state of affairs, or to ‘state some fact’, which it must do either truly or falsely”.⁴² Judging by Genestal’s stated intentions and the array of literalizing mechanisms which he sets in motion, *La Squale* is pointedly charged with the representational task of describing, reporting — or, to use Austin’s term, *constating* — the truth of “la tournante” in all its frightening factuality, and the consistent use of this “statemental” or “constative” mode of representation gives occasion either to an interpretation of the *La Squale* in the terms intended by the director of belief-commanding revelation, or to the opposite reading which looks upon the film as nothing but an elaborate misrepresentation:

La réalité que tente de dépeindre le film sera projetée ici comme un témoignage potentiel de ce qui est supposé se vivre dans le quartier, suscitant d’emblée une espèce de question fermée, tel un QCM [questionnaire à choix multiple]: “Répondez par oui ou par non si cela se produit ici aussi”.⁴³

Given the illocutionary force of Genestal’s film, however, “[its] *force* in saying something”,⁴⁴ it is little wonder that *La Squale* is most widely regarded *not* as an imaginatively invented, wholly fictitious dramatization, evoking unreal characters and events, but, rather, as an accurate, “utterly realistic”⁴⁵ representation of early-twenty-first-century France, its ghettoized *cités*, and the prevalence and intensity there of gendered and sexualized forms of violence. Hence, Genestal’s *La Squale*, Brune’s *La Tournante* and Wolf’s *En réunion* make the same, common, if curious claim to represent “la tournante” in its totality — which is to say, truthfully. And to this degree, all three texts are from first to last *explicit*, “[where] explicitness, in our sense, makes clearer the *force* of the utterances, or ‘how [...] it is to be taken’”.⁴⁶ Ultimately, it is this explicitness, this stylistic forcefulness, that causes their accounts to be believed. And yet, this intensity of effect is achieved by postulating and giving emphasis to the accuracy of that which is narrated, to the *precision* of that which is represented, “[where] precision in language makes it clearer what is being said — its *meaning*”,⁴⁷ its conformity with fact. In the final part of this article, I should like to problematize this particular use of language, this inwrought pattern of locutionary usage, further. For, by insisting upon those elements which are, by different definitions, “constative”, “literal”, and “representational”, by establishing such firm correlations between their fictional depictions of “la tournante” and the scientific discourse of facts, Wolf’s *En réunion*, Brune’s *La Tournante* and Genestal’s *La Squale* conceal that which is ideological and allegorical through the efficacy of their discursive effects.

5. Conclusion: The “‘descriptive’ fallacy” and its corollaries

Traditionally speaking, and still as commonly construed, the primary function of language is expression. And whilst this metaphor calls forth an image of words being emitted or exuded, as if under pressure, that which is quite literally “pressed out” may be more usefully thought to refer to the extraction of intrinsic meaning from an object. Inasmuch as it has meaning in itself, the thing can speak for itself (*res ipsa loquitur* in the Latin). But if this meaning has not been expressed precisely, as is the scientific use and wont, it is said to have been

³⁷ Tewfik 2000.

³⁸ *L’Humanité* 2001.

³⁹ Ambroisine and Moran 2001.

⁴⁰ Chauvet 2001.

⁴¹ *Le Parisien* 2000.

⁴² Austin 1962: 1-2.

⁴³ Gassmann 2002: 27. In order to promote discussion amongst those most concerned by the complex issues raised in *La Squale*, public showings of the film were held in schools and community centres across France, most notably at the secondary school (*le collège Évariste-Galois de Sarcelles*) where the project had first been conceived (see Lanez 2000). The French psychoanalyst and clinical psychologist Xavier Gassmann attended one such event, at an unnamed location in the northern suburbs of Paris.

⁴⁴ Austin 1962: 120.

⁴⁵ “Adjjatou [Sakho] had also been one of the female leads in the film ‘La Squale’. There was no one closer to the story. I met her on Day Four. The film, she told me, had been utterly realistic” (Goldsmith 2001).

⁴⁶ Austin 1962: 72-73.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

misunderstood and/or represented falsely: “Si les gens se disent: C’est bien ce qu’on pensait, la cité, c’est la zone et la barbarie, alors ils n’ont pas compris le film, plaide Fabrice G[e]nestal”.⁴⁸ Given his fastidious concern with ensuring the film’s accuracy (“le souci d’authenticité”), and his resolve that it should reconstruct *les cités* and the sexual violence which takes place there, and do so faithfully (“On a reconstitué une cité imaginaire mais emblématique. Car cela se passe dans toutes les cités”),⁴⁹ that Genestal should dismiss so summarily the hypothesis of misrepresentation (of failed or falsified expression) is hardly astonishing. For it is in asserting the correspondence of his words and images with real things in the world that he gains the privileges of authoritative speaking. Thus, to concede that this (or any other) relationship of correspondence is constructed — that, according to David Gooding’s apophthegm, “it is skilled agency that brings about the convergence of material and verbal practices” — would work under and wash away, rendering capriciously insecure, the epistemological grounds upon which such appeals to authority stand. And the denial and/or the dispossession of this potential,⁵⁰ not of the representational power to describe, *but of the performative power to construct*, relations of correspondence with reality, is to perpetrate that which Austin calls the “‘descriptive’ fallacy”.⁵¹ So, whilst Genestal’s *La Squale* and the other texts (including Mucchielli’s) disclose by reaffirming systematically that they represent “the real”, they conceal simultaneously the literalizing mechanisms — the performative forces and effects — by which the appearance of representational correspondence is achieved. What is more, since the epistemic authority which accrues from assigning such relationships of correspondence depends upon their being primary, singular, *originary*, and because such claims carry an automatic presumption of veracity, the “‘descriptive’ fallacy” brings about as its necessary corollary either the exclusion, elision, and effacement of alternative perspectives (“[t]he problematic of historical elision”),⁵² or their appropriation and instrumentalization for the purposes of investing dominant, hegemonic discourses with the accoutrements of authenticity (“the colonization of the specifics of daily existence”).⁵³ Hence, whereas Mucchielli’s sociological description of “la tournante” serves to identify in order to disqualify the discourse of “unreason” — in this case, the discourse of women (“[Q]uid des ‘témoins’ directs?”, asks Michela Marzano),⁵⁴ Genestal’s cinematographic description appropriates the discourse of the feminine Other for his own, however well-intentioned ends: “Mon film doit servir d’alerte, il faut aider ces filles, leur redonner la parole, leur faire comprendre que leur corps leur appartient”, clame le réalisateur”.⁵⁵ Crucially, such corollaries — “of appropriation, instrumentality, and distanciation”⁵⁶ — result from the invocation of some originary relation between words and things which such objectivist discourses inaugurate but claim only to describe.

The distinction from which this article departed — Freud’s — sets science against literature: the former, having escaped from under the improper, because “unreasonable”, influence of affect, deals only with the facts, leaving to the latter the production of certain (emotional, aesthetic, literary) effects. Analysis of Wolf’s *En réunion*, Brune’s *La Tournante* and Genestal’s *La Squale*, however, reveals the convergence of ontological and discursive facts to be the product of signifying effects. This does not mean that these texts should be unceremoniously disregarded, along with whatever truth they convey, but that they should be viewed — like all, even the most rigorously scientific points of view — “[as] *partial* perspectives [...] susceptible to reinterpretation and revision, they are both incomplete and value-laden, telling us something but not everything about the world and doing so at a certain cost”.⁵⁷

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⁴⁸ Chambon 2000.

⁴⁹ *Le Parisien* 2000.

⁵⁰ As Christina Crosby writes in “Dealing with Differences”, “[t]he *relationship*, then, between ‘the real’ and knowledge of the real, between ‘facts’ and theory, history and theory is occluded” (1992: 136).

⁵¹ Austin 1962: 2-3, 72-73, 100, 144-145, 148, and *passim*.

⁵² Terry 1991: 69-70.

⁵³ Mohanty 1988: 72.

⁵⁴ Marzano 2005.

⁵⁵ *Le Point* 2007.

⁵⁶ Butler 2002: 183-184.

⁵⁷ Bravmann 1997: 32.

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