

Reassessing Marguerite Duras

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Since her death on March 3, 1996, Marguerite Duras continues to “live on” through the ongoing critical appreciation of her works. Numerous collections of essays have been published since 1996, some in direct homage to her passing, like the special issues of the *NRF* (1998) and the *Cahiers Renaud Barrault* (1996), personal testimonies such as *L’Amie* (1997) (*The Friend*¹) by Michèle Manceaux, photo albums, biographies (and repeat biographies²), others, more coincidental, like *Duras, Lectures plurielles* (1998) (*Duras, Plural Readings*), the proceedings of a colloquium on Duras held in London just before her death, and still others, like the special Fall 1999 issue of *Dalhousie French Studies*. The appearance in 1998 of Laure Adler’s monumental biography, *Marguerite Duras*, and its enthusiastic critical reception, as well as the creation of a Center for Durassian Studies in London, where an international conference on Duras was held in February 1999, have kept the author’s name and work alive. Indeed, the title of a recent collection of essays, *Marguerite Duras Lives On* (1998), seems to give new meaning to the notion of the immortal author. At the very least, continuing critical reception of Duras’s works indicates the immense interest in an author whose fictional/theatrical/cinematic work was so intimately connected with her life—and the foregrounding of that life in the media—that her last words were almost “uttered” in print in the body of her brief final text *C’est tout* (1995) (*This Is It*).

The title of this essay points to the opportunity, at the turn of the century, to reassess the work of the author (1914-1996), whose life and works parallel important historical moments of the twentieth century in France: the Empire (Indochina); Resistance and Collaboration; Decolonization (the Algerian war); the Women's Movement; as well as key currents in prose (American-style realism, New Novel, autofiction), in drama (New Theatre), and in film (*India Song* [1974] and *Le Camion* [1974] [*The Truck*]) as contestation of the filmic medium itself. It also affords the chance to examine some of the recent reevaluations of her work. In this regard, my title, "Reassessing Marguerite Duras," rather than the "Works of Marguerite Duras," indicates the necessity to consider the phenomenon of "Duras," the inseparability of the personal and the poetical. How *does* one reassess the work? Through an analysis of its poetics or through the lens of personality which Duras so carefully created and cultivated? Through a consideration of Duras's changing political stances, or in a conflation of the physical body with the textual body, as the title of the Spring 2000 Special Issue of *Dalhousie French Studies* indicates—*Lectures de Duras: corps, voix, écriture?* (*Readings of Duras: body, voice, writing?*). Recent overviews permit a re-reading of Duras from all of these angles—the personal, the poetical, the political, and the physical, and one could certainly add the psychoanalytical—and thus highlight the contradictions of detachment and engagement, fiction and truth, masque and authenticity as confounding markers of her life and work. Indeed, Adler's biography is testimony to the challenge of finding truth in the historical archives in the face of Duras's incessant hybridizing of genres, voices, historical and imaginative realities, real and fictional spaces, physical and textual bodies, and therefore public and private history.

I would like to survey briefly some of the more recent studies on the work as a prelude to a look at the "event" of Adler's biography. In *Duras, Lectures plurielles*, co-editors Catherine Rodgers and Raynalle Udris underscore the very "effet de réverbération troublant" 'disturbing reverberations' (8) in the symbiosis between the author and her characters, the author and her writing.³ Essays in the volume evince, as its title indicates, the plurality of critical

approaches that Duras's work elicits—Lacanian, semiotic, post-colonial, philosophical, autobiographical, feminist, reader reception, and so forth—but one article, in particular, looks at the vicissitudes of Duras's work in the cultural context of our times, foregrounding Duras's different reading publics and posing some of the questions pertinent to the issue of reassessing a contemporary author, especially a female author, in France.

Marcelle Marini, in "Fortune et infortune de l'œuvre durassienne" (1998) ("Fortune and Misfortune in/of Duras's Works") points out how critics proclaimed Duras's symbolic "death" as a writer with each successive work from *Les Yeux bleus, cheveux noirs* (1986) (*Blue Eyes, Black Hair*) on, and she notes, for instance, that Alain Vircondelet's *Pour Duras* (1995) (*For Duras*) spoke of Duras in the imperfect tense, two years before her actual demise. Marini looks at three distinct moments in Durassian reception. An early period, in which the fiction was classified as either woman's literature or American-style fiction, had a limited reading public and escaped serious critical scrutiny. *Le Ravisement de Lol V. Stein* (1964) (*The Ravishing of Lol V. Stein*) and the attendant homage by Lacan, together with the events of May '68, and the proliferation of Duras's plays and films, notably *India Song*, constituted a middle period where the work was recognized, on the one hand, by the *intellectuels de gauche* (intellectuals on the left), and, on the other, by the women's movement. Finally, Duras's consecration in 1984 with *L'Amant* (*The Lover*), her appearance on the set of Pivot's popular television show *Apostrophes*, and the coup of the Prix Goncourt (at age 70) brought together three audiences: "le grand public, la grande presse et l'Intelligentsia" 'the general public, the serious press and the Intelligentsia' (Marini 170).

Trying to play to these disparate reading publics was impossible, but, undaunted and seriously failing in physical and mental health, Duras persisted in creating a legend which both defied and desired critical approbation. Her provocative exhibitionism of the 1980s and 90s, characterized by the voyeurism and violence of certain essays in *La Douleur* (1985) (*The War: A Memoir*), the short texts *L'Homme assis dans le couloir* (1980) (*The Man*

Sitting in the Corridor) and *La Maladie de la Mort* (1982) (*The Sickness of Death*), her meditations on homosexual love, the fictionalization of her real-life companion Yann Lemée as Yann Andréa and Yann Andréa Steiner, the manipulation of and by the media in the scandalous *affaire Villemin* in 1985 and in the interviews in *L'Autre Journal* (1986) (*The Other Newspaper*), and the four-part television self-portrayal *Au-delà des pages* (1988)⁴ (*Beyond the Pages*), culminated in the publication of what some critics called “un livre de trop” ‘one book too many,’ *C’est tout*. The latter, fifty histrionic and self-parodic pages on her demise,⁵ was but one step of a contradictory dual gesture made by Duras in 1995. On the one hand, the publication of *C’est tout* illustrated the need to shock, to defy death, and to remain in the margins of genre and voice. On the other hand, however, Duras’s decision to hand over her manuscripts, correspondence, audio-visual, and unpublished written documents to L’IMEC (*L’Institut de la Mémoire de l’Edition contemporaine*) (*Institute for the Memory of Contemporary Publishing*) reflected an obvious wish to be seen as “dead” in order to be recuperated by the archives of the literary establishment. For Marini,

[Duras] wishes to be irrecuperable. Irrecuperable by literature, all the while of course, entering into literature’s domain, and irrecuperable by death in this last work, all the while passing on into death. This text is thus not *about literature*, but rather it asks us what we demand from literature. (172)⁶

As Sharon Willis indicated in a 1989 MLA session on Duras, the interesting questions to be asked about Duras concern the reactions of her readers. For Marini, there are many pitfalls for the reader-critic of Duras. They include the problem of distancing oneself from an author whose intellectual, ideological, cultural, and historical universe is contemporary with our own; the necessity and difficulty, in France, of legitimizing “les textes de femmes” (‘women’s writings’) and the danger of ghettoizing or adulating a text by a woman writer, because it *is* such. Contemporary critics of Duras also climb a slippery slope because:

Duras cuts critics off at the knees. . . . After, before, during, she writes at once the book, the commentary and then the text of the commentary and the commentary of the text. You're dizzy and on your way to madness. You come out of it either by writing about it critically, which is a creative way of dealing with it, or by mocking it, which seems to me an underrepresented discourse on Duras. (Marini 173)⁷

Marini cautions against unmediated readings of/with the author, in which the text functions as a holding space between author and reader, but she is cognizant of the difficulties that face women critics in deriding a woman writer, emblem of the mother. Yet, in warning against fusional readings—the Kristevan caveat of the Durassian text as dangerous because contagious conveyor of sadness, death, and melancholy, or what James Williams calls “being sutured into Durassian pleasure, the pleasure of control and the temporary loss of control” (“The Point of No Return” 91)—Marini also asks why critics like Kristeva warn us against Duras and not Artaud or Bataille, thereby underlining our very need to read like feminists.

Kristeva's advice for reading Duras in her liminary essay in the special NRF issue on Duras in March of 1998, is also mindful of the inseparability of the political, the personal, and the poetical—whether in the reader or in the author. She reminds us of Duras's own maxim in *L'Amant*, that the personal is political,⁸ and maintains that Hiroshima, Auschwitz—crises on a cataclysmic level—are indistinguishable in Duras's universe from the crisis of estrangement from the mother (as rendered in what Kristeva calls Duras's “white rhetoric of the apocalypse” [“The Pain of Sorrow” 138]), a personal rift which is in turn inseparable from the notion of language as exile: “Transplanting into a welcoming idiom the sense experiences of a foreign land—childhood, passion, other people, other discourses—is a kind of transsubstantiation of suffering which confers the same fate on exile, translation and writing” (“Une étrangère” 4).⁹ Kristeva sees the translation of pain into writing and reading as both a strength and a danger for Durassian readers.

Patrick Grainville, in the same issue, reiterates Marini's and Kristeva's warnings against the dangers of entering Duras's “hold-

ing space" (25) but extends studies on the corpus to include considerations of the *corps* (body) of its author, in particular her marvelous face¹⁰: "Une tête extravertie, frontale, et un menton en aparté avec soi-même" 'The head of an extrovert, with a high forehead and a chin in an aside with itself' (23). Likewise, Daniel Dobbels lauds Duras's "corps bagué" 'bejewelled body' as "taillé . . . en solitaire" 'cut like a solitaire' (97), playing on her fascination with precious stones (*bagues*) in naming her characters (Lol V. Stein, Stein in *Détruire, dit-elle* [1969] [*Destroy, She Said*], Yann Andréa Steiner, and Aurélia Steiner), in the phonic *dur* (hard) of her own chosen name Duras, and in the reification of narcissistic positions (*solitaire*) in her novels. This intermingling of body and text coalesces also in the raspy musicality of Duras's own voice as voice-over in *Le Camion*, *L'Homme atlantique* (*The Atlantic Man*), and other films. While Kristeva, Grainville, Dobbels and others accentuate the phantasmatic and the corporeal in Duras's works, Grainville also recognizes the concrete reality of Duras's universe, calling her "une voyante dans le visible, toujours concrète, toujours excentrique" 'a seer in the world of the visible, always concrete, always excentric' (23). The role of the quotidian in Duras's later autobiographical writing and indeed in the various forms of Duras's *parole*—fiction, autobiography, interviews, journalistic articles—is the subject of Michael Sheringham's essay in *Lectures plurielles*. He situates the emergence of Duras's public voice in *Les Parleuses* (1974) (*Woman to Woman: Les Parleuses*), for example, as signs of an era (in the 1970's, of the dialogues between Marie Cardinal and Annie Leclerc) "où il était de bon ton de donner la parole à une femme" 'where it was politically correct to let women speak' (123). For Sheringham, however, Duras's commentary on the insignificance of *La Vie Matérielle* (*Practicalities* 1987) is anything *but*, and is always oriented toward "le bruit de fond . . . foncièrement fantasmatique" 'background noise, fundamentally phantasmatic' (130).

If the political is personal and the real veers to the phantasmatic, how should one reassess Duras's work in literature, drama, and film, in its relation to specific historical (or concrete) moments, such as French feminism, French Freud,

colonialism and post-colonialism, resistance and collaboration? In *The Erotics of Passage*, James Williams cites Barthes and asks about the ethical responsibilities of form in Duras's works (137-38). Should the critic of Duras read Duras's formulation of the real as either poetical or as an expression of libidinal energies and drives, or does the work genuinely gesture toward an Outside and an Other? Cécile Wajsbrot asserts, in the *NRF* issue, that Duras's project aims to "transformer le réel de la réalité en réel de la littérature" 'transform the real of reality into the real of literature' (113), and Ingrid Safranek demonstrates, in *Lectures plurielles*, that even Duras's recipe for *la soupe aux poireaux* (leek soup), published in a collection entitled *Outside*, can be poetic. But Safranek recognizes the revolutionary nature of this poetics:

Duras's entire œuvre is a coherent construction despite its multiple avatars and sporadic nature. It is charged by a modernist will to improve the world through the political stance of art; it's about renewing art in depth and postulating the writer's responsibility. (59)¹¹

Duras's peculiar relationship to the real is at the crux of Adler's biography. The historian-journalist realized early on that Duras was not "l'archiviste d'elle-même" 'the archivist of herself' (14), but rather the indefatigable creator of an ever-changing self, albeit a self deeply rooted in the real and the literary transformations of the real. An archival tour de force, *Marguerite Duras* is the result of six years of almost weekly conversations with Duras, of interviews with those who knew her, of visits to archives in Vietnam and southwest France, her father's homeland, and in Paris at L'IMEC.

Adler acknowledges in the preface the "fusional" nature of her first reading of Duras's *Un Barrage contre le Pacifique* (1950) (*The Sea Wall*), a novel picked up to bide the time while on vacation at a friend's house when she, Adler, was recovering from the loss of a child. Swept into Duras's own peculiar rhythms and the emotional intelligence and determination of the heroine, Suzanne, in the face of loss, she was able to "repandre souffle et . . . envisager le lendemain" 'catch her breath and remember another day' (9). Refusing the hagiography of the "inconditionnels

de Duras," what Duras herself called her "groupies," Adler sought to answer the question "Who is Marguerite Duras?" recognizing, of course, the difficulty of the task, given Duras's incessant reformulations of the *passé—composé et recomposé*—whether historical, personal, or fictional. She accomplishes this by first stating the irreconcilable nature of the different truths required for memoirs, biography, history, and literature,¹² and then by moving between history and literature, the personal and the poetical (body and corpus), the personal and the political, the real and the phantasmatic.

The epigraph, taken from Strindberg's *Correspondence*, illustrates the complexity of the task and sets the tone for Adler's study: "I have the feeling of being a sleepwalker; it's as if fiction and real life were mixed together. . . . Writing a lot has made my life a shadow." The force of Adler's work is its attempt to provide a historical foundation for the sounding of what Duras called her *ombre interne* (internal shadow). For Adler, the *insoupçonné*, or the unfathomable from which surged Duras's writerly quest, was Duras's strength—"She never came to terms with herself"¹³ (qtd. in Van Renterghem 19)—and it made of her writing an endless search. However, ironically, it was Duras's need to prove to critics the *veracity* of certain facts, especially that *La Douleur* was written from wartime notebooks found later on in an armoire and *not* directly after the success of *L'Amant*, that provoked her consent to an authorized biography, that is, to the writing of *a* life (Van Renterghem 19).

Like Kristeva, Grainville, Manceaux, and others, Adler sees the violence of Duras's early life, marked by the death of a father and beatings by the mother and the older brother in a colonial existence of penury and shame, as the motor for her passionate love affairs, for her untiring search for the freedoms of a utopian, classless society, and for the writing born of revolt. The violence of the past is both weakness and strength: weakness in the vulnerabilities of a narcissist who could never be loved enough; strength in the perseverance and the perfection of her *métier*, of her indomitable fight to become part of the canon in a world dominated by men.¹⁴ This violence of a writing which conflated physi-

cal and emotional desires in an agonistic thrust—"une mise à l'épreuve d'elle-même" 'a testing of herself' (187)—links Duras to two of her strongest, although rarely acknowledged, writerly influences in this century: Bataille and Blanchot. Adler's description of the fragments of paper contained in the IMEC cartons are indicative of Duras's "fabrique d'écriture" 'writing fabric' as skin: "It's paper that has been hurt, sewn upon, reworked, punched with holes, begun again, it's like a self-inflicted wound transferred to paper"¹⁵ (qtd. in Van Renterghem 19).

The *couture* metaphor, based on the reality that Duras was an ardent seamstress, functions with that of cuisine (she was also celebrated for her meals¹⁶) to underscore the traditional side of femininity in a writer who wrote a life much as she made a ragoût (savory stew), oftentimes "ragoûtant" 'unsavory.' Such unsavory aspects of the life are not omitted: Duras as pro-colonialist who participated in the writing of *L'Empire français* (*The French Empire*) under Georges Mandel in praise of France's "mission civilisatrice" 'civilizing mission'; as possible collaborator in her position, from 1942 to 1944, as secretary of the *Comité d'organisation du livre* (Committee on the Organization of Books) in charge of distributing papers to publishing companies; as linked (possibly romantically) with a Nazi agent, Charles Delval; and, immediately following the Liberation, as spectator in the torture of collaborators. But for each compromising detail reported or verified by Adler, there is a redeeming counterpart position: Duras as pro-Algerian *signataire* in 1960 of the *Manifeste des 121*,¹⁷ written by Blanchot and Dionys Mascolo in her Paris apartment and country home in Neauphle; as resister whose husband was deported to Buchenwald in June 1944 and for whose release she worked tirelessly, explaining in part the liaison with Delval; as ardent member of the P.C.F. (French Communist Party), the expulsion from which she never recovered. Adler is aware of the grey areas in Duras's political career and in that respect compares her to Mitterrand: "Mitterrand and Duras face to face was this: two Fellini-like monsters, two old clowns with too much make-up whose act was historical and sentimental inflation, who gave

each other regular shots of agreed-upon lies”¹⁸ (qtd. in Van Renterghem 19).

Adler refers to her subject as Marguerite in the early chapters and Duras later on to underline the progressive media hyping of and by the author, but she also uncovers an authenticity underneath the self-promotional personality. First, Duras was devoted to the *métier* of writing, tutored as she was by Queneau in this regard, and this dedication was surpassed in importance in her personal life only by her love for her son, Jean Mascolo. Second, she held on to a utopian *esprit de révolutionnaire* fueled by her ongoing quest for an absolute—such as love—of freedom, spontaneity and equality. Third, her life was marked by a sense of place. Other critics, like Michelle Porte and Aliette Armel, have recognized the importance of real places in Duras’s imaginary universe, but Adler devotes many fascinating pages to Duras’s most important space in her post-Vietnamese life, her left bank apartment in the Rue St. Benoît. Number 5 was a force field, a “lieu des échanges culinaires, idéologiques, littéraires” ‘a place of exchanges, culinary, ideological, literary’ (143) traversed by the intellectuals of the 1940s and ‘50s, both French (Barthes, Bataille, Queneau, Lacan, Morin, Blanchot, Des Forêts, Merleau-Ponty, Roy, Antelme, and Mascolo) and foreign (Calvino, Dos Passos, Vittorini), as well as by the important events of the second half of the twentieth century: Resistance meetings, Communist Party discussions, Algerian independence, and May ‘68. In this “utopian” salon of friendships, which held the same importance for her as the Communist cell of St.Germain-des-Prés, her communal style of film-making, and the collective spirit of May ‘68, Duras sought to refashion her family of origin as an original classless society. The fraternity of her guests, mostly male, constituted so many variations on a search for the younger brother. This sense of a spontaneously forming but never systematized community of which May ‘68 was the prototype is described by Blanchot in *La Communauté inavouable* (1983) (*The Unspeakable Community*).

I would like to close this overview of recent reassessments of Duras and the questions they pose about the very fact of reassessing a contemporary author by quoting from the most recent work

by Duras, the posthumous collection of her recipes edited and printed by her son, Jean, in the first volume of his new press *Editions Benoît-Jacob*. With poetic concision, it underlines how the communal, the real, and the imaginary meld in Duras's universe to communicate to the reader another universe, one which inspires many *communications* and articles in our own community of twentieth-century French and Francophone scholars. At the end of the twentieth century, in a tweaking of Lautréamont's proclamation at the end of the previous century—"La Littérature est faite par tous, pas par un" 'Literature is made by everyone, not just one person'—Duras signals the peculiar relationship between truth, the real, and the poetical in her own words, from beyond the grave, chosen by her son as the epigraph to *La Cuisine de Marguerite*: "Food is truly made for everyone, like life. But not literature."¹⁹ The singular role that literature played in Duras's life is an uncontested fact. Her quest for truth in and through the practice of art, specifically, writing as "écriture courante" 'flowing writing,' shines through her works. Duras has thus bequeathed her readers with a legacy of love for, and trust in, literature that will survive the media glitz of her later years and endure well into the twenty-first century.

Notes

1. Translations of titles and excerpts that have not been previously translated into English are mine, unless otherwise noted.
2. I am thinking of the Vircondelet series on Duras: *Duras, Biographie* (1991); *Marguerite Duras, ou le temps de détruire* (1972); *Pour Duras* (1995); and the most recent, *Marguerite à Duras* (1998).
3. Indeed, they cite Duras who, in *Ecrire*, wrote: "Un écrivain se tue à chaque ligne de sa vie ou bien il n'écrit pas" 'A writer kills himself in every line of his life or he doesn't really write' (qtd. in Rodgers and Udris 8).
4. According to James Williams, in this series, "Duras repeats . . . that she has the impression of writing 'indecently' on the 'outside'" (*Erotics* 19).

5. Extracts from the work include: “Vous êtes qui? Duras, c’est tout”; “Elle fait quoi, Duras? Elle fait la littérature” ‘Who are you? Duras is everything’; ‘What does Duras do? ‘She does literature’ (26).

6. The French reads: “[Duras] se veut irrécupérable. Irrécupérable par la littérature, tout en entrant bien sûr dans le champ de la littérature, et irrécupérable par la mort dans ce dernier texte, alors qu’elle entre dans le champ de la mort. Ce texte n’est donc pas *de la littérature*, mais par contre il nous interroge sur ce que nous demandons à la littérature.”

7. The French reads: “Duras coupe l’herbe sous le pied aux critiques. . . . Après, avant, pendant, elle fait à la fois le texte, le commentaire, et puis, le texte du commentaire, et le commentaire du texte. On est dans un vertige qui nous emmène vers la folie. Nous nous en sortons ou bien par la prise d’écriture, qui est un accès à la créativité—le fait d’être critique—ou bien par la dérision, qui me paraît une voie dont on parle très peu à propos de Duras.”

8. “Collaborateurs, les Fernandez. Et moi, deux ans après la guerre, membre du P.C.F. L’équivalence est absolue, définitive. C’est la même chose, la même pitié, le même appel au secours, la même débilité du jugement, la même superstition disons, qui consiste à croire à la solution politique du problème personnel” ‘Collaborators, the Fernandez. And I, two years after the war, a member of the French Communist Party. The equivalency is absolute, definitive. It’s the same thing, the same pity, the same call for help, the same weak judgment, the same superstition, let’s say, which consists in believing in a political solution to a personal problem’ (*L’Amant* 8).

9. The French reads: “Transplanter dans un idiome d’accueil le temps sensible d’un pays étranger—enfance, passion, autre peuple, autre dire—revient à une transsubstantiation de la souffrance qui apparente l’exil, la traduction et l’écriture en un même destin” (Une étrangère, *NRF* 4).” See also Michèle Manceaux: “Pour Duras, la souffrance est une donnée inévitable du monde. Elle déteste ceux qui détournent le regard” ‘For Duras, suffering is an inevitable given in this world. She detests those who avert their gaze from it’ (“*Tuer, dit-elle*” 103).

10. Duras herself alluded to her ravaged face in *L’Amant*, and, in *L’Amante anglaise*, the role of the missing head is portrayed as capital to an understanding of the protagonist, Claire Lannes.

11. The French reads: "L'œuvre entière de Duras est un projet cohérent et construit malgré ses avatars multiples et ses intermittences. Il est chargé d'un vouloir encore moderniste d'améliorer le monde par la teneur politique de l'art: il s'agit de renouveler l'écriture en profondeur et de postuler la responsabilité de l'écrivain."

12. "Ce livre m'a précisément conduite à réfléchir sur les frontières de la vérité, du mensonge, de la mémoire, de la biographie, de l'histoire, de la littérature" 'It is precisely this book which made me reflect on the frontiers of truth, of lies, of memory, of biography, of history, of literature' (qtd. in Van Renterghem 19).

13. The French reads: "Je me fais l'impression d'un somnabule; c'est comme si fiction et vie se mêlaient. . . . En écrivant beaucoup, j'ai fait de ma vie la vie d'une ombre . . ." and "Elle ne s'est jamais réconciliée avec elle-même."

14. See Lepape 19.

15. "Marguerite n'a jamais fait corps avec son propre être. Elle était pleine d'obscurités et de fracas à cause de cette question essentielle" 'Marguerite was never comfortable with her being. She was full of doubts and troubles because of this essential question' (qtd. in Van Renterghem 19). The French reads: "C'est du papier blessé, couturé, retravaillé, troué, recommencé, c'est comme une blessure d'elle-même infligée au support-papier."

16. The first book published by her son Jean in his new publishing house is a collection of his mother's recipes, *Duras, La Cuisine de Marguerite* (Paris: Editions Benoît-Jacob, 1999).

17. The official title was *Déclaration sur le droit à l'insoumission dans la guerre d'Algérie* (Adler 356).

18. The French reads: "Mitterrand et Duras face à face c'était ça, deux monstres felliniens, deux vieux clowns trop grimés qui se faisaient un numéro d'inflation historique et sentimentale, se donnaient des piqures de mensonges acceptés."

19. The French reads: "La nourriture est faite vraiment pour tout le monde. Comme la vie, elle est faite vraiment pour tous. Pas la littérature. . . ."

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