

FRENCH I

RAYMOND RADIGUET: LE DIABLE AU CORPS

(ed. Livre de poche)

I Introductory

FRENCH I

Raymond Radiguet: "Le diable au corps"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Keith GOESCH: Radiguet, avec des textes inédits
2. André GERMAIN: De Proust à Dada
3. François MAURIAC: Le roman (pp. 107-124)
4. David NOAKES: Raymond Radiguet (in the series "Poètes d'aujourd'hui", catalogued under Radiguet)
5. Claude-Edmonde MAGNY: Histoire du roman français depuis 1918 (pp. 106-120)
6. Henri PEYRE: The contemporary French novel (pp. 62-65)
7. Clément BORGAL: Radiguet

P.S. Remember also that the Oxford companion to French literature (in Departmental Centre) is always a good book to start with.

FRENCH I

Raymond Radiguet: "Le diable au corps"

Lecture 1: Introduction and background

1. Marcel Proust; Stendhal; Mme de Lafayette
2. Max Jacob; Jean Cocteau
3. Francis Poulenc; Pablo Picasso
4. Dada
5. Bernard Grasset
6. Le Prix du Nouveau Monde, 1923
7. Le bal du comte d'Orgel (1924)
8. Les joues en feu (1925)
9. Mann; Kafka
10. Paul Valéry; Paul Claudel; André Gide; Marcel Proust
11. Surrealism
12. Ecriture automatique
13. Guillaume Apollinaire
14. "Prose is architecture, not interior decoration" (E. Hemingway)
15. *Je ne vois qu'une règle: le style ne saurait être trop clair, trop simple" (Stendhal)*
16. "Efforcez-vous d'être banal" (Tristan l'Hermitte)
17. "Il faut faire des romans comme tout le monde"
18. "Ceux qui sont nés éloquents [^{surt} dit Vauvenargues] parlent quelquefois avec tant de clarté et de brièveté des grandes choses que la plupart des hommes ne s'imaginent pas qu'ils en parlent avec profondeur"
(Maurice Barrès) (Vauvenargues, 1745)
19. "Excusez-moi de vous écrire une si longue lettre; je n'ai pas eu le temps de la faire plus courte" (Blaise Pascal)

Le diable au corps: Introduction & Background

1 3 lectures in 3 weeks, in English, each to conclude, [possibly], with a [few minutes question-&-discussion ~~time~~ session; or a] specially arranged longer session in the evening, lectures being an unsatisfactory method of dealing in detail with more than one interpretation of a novel and giving no scope for participation of students in the classes, beyond passive submission to the spoken word, *which is far from the best way of discussing a book*

2 The text: ed. Livre de poche (or l de p Université): same pagination. Dubious advantage of some of the université editorial material, the glossary & footnotes seeming at times devised, designed for semi-savages of former colonial French empire who don't seem to know what a chair might be or a primary school. But there is such a dearth of material to help one's appreciation of Radiguet and Le diable that the few pages of comment at the end of the université edition are almost all that one has to draw on by way of criticism and secondary material.

3 Secondary material: Radiguet's complete works run only to a few pages. Very slight autho~~er~~, very slight study of him. What little there is is of limited helpfulness. Three books mentioned in your bibliography on p 256: *(of universit^e ed.)*

a) GOESCH: a biographical study, tells us something of the person RR, probably all will ever be known or ever be needed to be known. Not very helpful as a guide to appreciation of our text, however.

b) GERMAIN: De Proust à Dada, gives a grand total ~~x~~ of 3 pp to RR. Hardly worth the effort of pushing open the library doors.

c) MAURIAC: Le roman, pp 107-124, looks interesting enough, by the length 17 whole pages! and by the fact that it is by Mauriac, another of your authors this year. But the pages are devoted to Radiguet's 2nd novel, Le bal du comte d'Orgel (see no 7 on the accompanying sheet), and though the article is called Radiguet, it is also devoted to another writer, Julien Green. A quite unnecessary little book.

However, it does contain one acute sentence. But I shall tell you it on another occasion and thus spare you the trouble of opening those library doors again to find it.

Those 3 are all mentioned in your booklist on page 256.

Not mentioned in your bibliography are 4, 5, & 6 ⁸⁷ on the booklist

I have issued to you.

7 *Bogal: not a bad little book*

4 NOAKES: this is a study of the meagre output of verse by RR. It contains also one or two insights into Radiguet the novelist, but they are few and far between and of little value for our purposes.

5 MAGNY: Histoire du roman français depuis 1918. Her pp 106-120 approx deal with Radiguet. Once again I am ~~is~~ dubious whether you will spend many profitable minutes with her. You can always try.

6 PEYRE: The Contemporary French Novel (pp 62-65), again only 3 pages, very brief, but very readable and enlightening. AND it's in English! I have put him on 2-day loan (at the Reserve Desk). ^{ST Ex} Bear him in mind also when you come later in the year to read Mauriac and Duhamel. He is the only critic to come to grips with the text itself, leaving aside the 2 other topics which occupy most other commentators: a the ~~whole~~ details of Radiguet's short life & b the furore that surrounded the publication of Diable in 1923. These 2 topics, do not mistake me, are interesting enough in themselves, and we shall of course touch on them and take account of them in these classes. But they are not important enough to absolve us, as nothing is important enough to absolve us, from the prime tasks of the student of literature: attending closely to the text as Radiguet left it to us; attempting to read that text with an informed mind so as to extract from it as much as we can of what the author put into it; and lastly, judging it. Which is all that literary study is ~~all~~ about. For the primary function of the student of literature is not to pronounce: This is a good book, that is a bad book; but to learn to recognize certain features of language, composition, purpose and technique, to learn to read well in a nutshell; ^{as in all education} and to learn to recognize your own prejudices and to arrive at a standard of judgment which takes account of those prejudices.

There are few rules to guide one in the study of literature. Few positive

rules. One or two negative rules, however, should hold good for whatever work you should find yourself reading, whatever literary form it is couched in: novel, play, essay, verse etc, and whatever period or culture or language the work may be a product of. *eg. Don't think there is a right way & a wrong way to appreciate lit. - only an informed personal response.* Of those few negative rules, the goldenest one is -- and in this respect *Le diable au corps* is probably a good bone for you to sharpen your beak on -- is this: do not judge a work by the standards of your own inherited and unexamined prejudices in ~~xxx~~ matters of belief and morality. Judge a work ^{primarily} by its own standards, by the standards which the author set himself when he conceived it. Judge a novel by what it itself sets out to achieve, and not by what you think a novel should be, because you are trapped unaware in the treadmill of your unconscious biases, the handmedowns of the moral values you have grown into since childhood and that you have not yet grown out of. And since education is ^{just} another way of saying "outgrowing one's moral preconceptions", any book which makes you ^{re-}examine those moral preconceptions must have a fair value as ~~analyze~~ an educative sample. Judge a novel by what it sets out to achieve, not by what you think a novel should be. This is still looked on as heresy by those who subscribe to "smelly little orthodoxies" (what Orwell called). *yet, heretical as it seems to some when applied to art, to all* But the ~~xxx~~ truth of the principle is manifest, if one applies it, say, to any other branch of human activity, like science, or eating. After all, if you judge a carrot, you do not put it through tests better suited to beetroot or cabbages. You judge your carrot according to its own kind and by what it sets out to be. It may be a stunted carrot, a deformed carrot, an ~~insipid~~ insipid carrot, a juicy carrot, it is for you to judge it according to the standards of carrots. ^{However,} If you really dislike carrots, that is all very well, that is your privilege, but what is ~~not~~ your privilege, as students of ^{feeling or of} literature, is to disguise your dislike as honest criticism and carp at the carrot for not being green and round and full of passionfruit seeds. And here I come to the point of this sermon: a 12th century Chinese poem can be ^{accurately read &} honestly judged by only one standard: the standard of 12th century Chinese poets. And a French XXth century novel can similarly be ^{accurately read} judged honestly and informedly by only one standard: that of X_xth century novels in French, if you can establish any such standard. Not by

those of policemen who cannot spell, or by Senator ^{DLP} (McManus)'s illiterate opinions on "disgusting pornography" or by the standards of ^{Mr. Meagher's} Sir Arthur Blyah's hypothetical 14-year-old daughter. Nor even by those of ^{the} Union of Socialist Writers or the ^{SCM} RC Council of Trent, both which bodies ^{have} decreed that all art & literature should conform with and illustrate dogma of party or church. To subscribe ^{to} such anti-literary ^{dogmas} trends is to turn literature ^{ultimately} into propaganda, making sedition of satire and making religious or political orthodoxy into the only criterion of literary merit. And before long the Inquisitors and bookburners would be licking their blue pencils and putting people like RR into gaschambers.

Radiguet does not conform to any orthodoxy. His 1st novel, DIABLE, got him into trouble, on its first appearance, with 3 groups of Frenchmen, each of ~~whom~~ which had its dogma and its accepted standards, and which were affronted when Radiguet, or his publisher, did not ~~ex~~ respect them. The 3 I mean were:

- a ~~the~~ literary critics, who were ^{disinayed & put off} shocked by the unprecedented "Americanized" publicity that preceded the book's publication. They soon got over their shock and most acclaimed the book ^{as a minor} masterpiece;
- b the pious fellow-travelling Christian groups, who were shocked at what they called the book's "cynicism" and "immorality"; this second group overlaps a little on c
- c the jingoistic-RSL type of pressure-groups of the older generation, who had survived the Great War and who saw this book as an insult to themselves, dealing as it did with the amours of a cheeky adolescent with the wayward wife of a soldier away at the war.

Before taking a closer look at the novel, and at the French literary scene of the early 1920s — which we must do, in order to set the book back into the standards of the period and attempt to judge it by the criteria which the author might have set himself — before doing that, ~~and~~ let me resume briefly the few facts about the life of Radiguet which one need bear in mind when reading him.

Some may think that it is not necessary to know anything about a writer's life in order to judge his books. To some extent, I might agree — but it can make a difference to our angle of judgment if we know something of the effect of his life on his work. of Barnes on Offham.

1903 RR born, eldest son to a cartoonist who had too many children and of his granny's wooden leg

informing the letter to the point

D'ailleurs, êtes-vous assurés qu'une oeuvre puisse exister complètement en dehors de celui qui l'écrit? Si beaux qu'on les imagine, les poèmes eux-mêmes possèdent-ils une vie indépendante de la vie du poète? Le cordon ombilical n'est jamais coupé. Les poésies d'Ossian varient de valeur, selon que vous les croyez la composition d'un habile lettré du siècle dernier ou le cri spontané d'une société naissante. Les biographies des grands hommes font, dans bien des cas, le plus intéressant de leur oeuvre. La vie, le caractère de Goethe ne complètent-ils pas le sens philosophique de ses ouvrages? Byron demeure peut-être une figure plus poétique que tous les personnages qu'il a inventés. Hugo, si vous ne voyez pas son rocher de Guernesey, perd de son élévation. Si vous voulez ignorer que Gilbert a avalé la clef de sa cassette sur un lit d'hôpital, que Racine assistait aux prises de voiles des jeunes filles parce qu'il aimait à pleurer, que Chateaubriand bâillait malgré les divines attentions de Mme Récamier, vous supprimez une part importante de vos plaisirs : vous diminuez l'esprit de l'écrivain pour ne garder que la lettre.

Maurice Barrès: Du sang, de la volupté et de la mort - L'Oeuvre de M. Barrès, t. II, Paris, Le Club de l'Honnête Homme, p.p. 79-80

not enough money, a cartoonist on a Paris weekly. The family lived on the River Marne, ^{not} ~~at~~/far from where it joins the Seine, just upriver from Paris. RR seems to have been an excellent primary school pupil, a prizewinner. But a mediocre secondary pupil at a Paris lycée, the principal actually asking his parents to remove him from the school. What accounts for this radical change in the child we do not know, nor do we really need to know. He seems to have had a happy enough childhood and to have gone through not much more rebellion in adolescence than most of us. The exception in Radiguet's case was that he became addicted to literature. He played truant to write verse and read the 3 chaps who appear at no (1) on the accompanying sheet: Proust, Stendhal and Mme de La Fayette, reading them in his father's boat, moored in the River Marne. By his middle teens he had drifted away from his parents and had made contact with the literary world of post-War Paris: first with the poet at no (2), Max Jacob, through whom he was eventually to meet Jean Cocteau (2), who was to be his friend, his mentor, his literary coach and possibly his lover. He became one of the boyfriends that Cocteau surrounded himself with, and thus, through his contact with Cocteau, Radiguet moved about in avant-garde artistic circles frequented by musicians like Poulenc, painters like Picasso (3), on the fringes of artistic movements like (no 4) Dada and the beginnings of Surrealism, of which more later on. Radiguet did some odds & ends of journalism, jotted poems here and there which appeared and disappeared again in small fashionable and short-lived literary reviews. Living among poets and jotting down these verses ^{Cocteau's} ~~in~~ nightclubs, he looked upon himself as a poet, and was looked on by others as a budding poet. By the time he was 16, however, he had begun already writing in prose, encouraged by Cocteau and other friends. And some scenes from *Le diable au corps* were written before the end of 1919, when Radiguet had just turned 17 (the early scenes of the madmaid on the roof, and the scenes of childhood flirtations with little girls). So that Radiguet's publisher (at no 5) Grasset, in the deafening blurbs which he produced about the book in 1923, was guilty of only half-truth in saying it was a masterpiece written by a boy of 17. Some of this novel was written by a boy of 17. But

most of it was written in 1921-22, when RR was 18-19. Cocteau says he had to lock him in his room to make him get on with ~~it~~ the writing of the book. The publication of the book was delayed until the summer of 1923 and caused the literary sensation of that year. It won a fat literary prize (see no 6) the Prix du Nouveau Monde, worth 7000 francs, donated by a rich American lady and awarded by a French committee under the influence of... Cocteau. ^{chairmanship (one of whom, Max Jacob, prob. had not even read it!)} It immediately became a best-seller; translations into many languages straight away. The success of the book enabled Radiguet to lead a less bohemian way of life, to help his parents financially and to get down to the job of finishing a second novel which he had begun before the first was published: **Le bal du comte d'Orgel** (7). It was while he was correcting the proofs of this second novel, in December 1923, that he died of typhoid fever, 6 months after his conquest of the literary world, at the age of 20. That 2nd novel came out the following year. A little volume of verse was published ^{also} posthumously in 1925, under the title of **Les joues en feu** (8). The only other thing of any interest to the reader of **Diabole** is that the book was made into a film after the 2nd war, with Gérard Philippe, quite highly spoken of ^{but not distributed abroad by French cultural services.}

As I have said, in order to judge a carrot you must know something about them; the same goes for 12th century Chinese poems, or XXth century French novels. So, let us take a glance at the literary scene in Paris during the time of RR's maturing, say from about 1913-1923.

These ten years were the period of greatest fertility and experimentation among writers ~~born~~ of the generation born about 1870-1885, not only in France but throughout the rest of Europe. Most of the major works of most of the major writers of the 1st 1/2-century were in fact published or being written between those 2 dates: in English, DH Lawrence, TS Eliot, James Joyce; Thomas Mann & Franz Kafka (9) in German; and, in French, that great quartet of writers born round about 1870 were reaching their late 40s and early 50s and

producing their most important work(10): in poetry, Paul Valéry; in the theatre, Paul Claudel; in the novel, André Gide and also in the novel, no doubt the greatest of them all: Marcel Proust.

If one can define very briefly and no doubt oversimplify what was the importance of works of this generation, what it was that they wrote about that marked them off from the writers of the late 19th century and making them unmistakably XXth century in flavour, putting it at its roughest, perhaps one can define it as a profound interest in inner events; ~~in~~ the oddities of emotion, the vagaries of motivation, and also a profound curiosity about the life of the mind and spirit. They turned their eyes inwards to focus on what happens inside a person's heart and mind; away from the external world of forms, colours, objects, money ^{action} and society, that the ^{19th} generations ~~called~~ known as Realism and Naturalism had been interested in. EG J Joyce in ULYSSES charts and catalogues the events of a perfectly ordinary day in the life of a ordinary man in Dublin in 1906 — but they are the events as they appear in the mind and memory of that man; ^{one of the subjects of the novel is his stream of consciousness} A Gide in his novels examines the most ^{subtle} deep-seated and misleading motives that men give themselves for their own behaviour; M Proust writes one novel of 15 vols and 1 million and a 1/2 words, re-exploring his memory to discover how and why he has grown up from being a little boy into a writer. These writers are passionately and profoundly interested in the ^{outside} world and in physical experience — but they are even more interested in the effect that the world and experience make on the feelings and on the awareness. The most important events for these writers take place inside, not outside, the mind. And this over-riding interest in things inside people, in psychology, feelings and even in spiritual life is a perennial feature of the best French writing over the last 7 or 8 hundred years. And it is in that tradition of passionate interest in not only the outside world but also in the eventful life of the mind and feelings that RR takes his place. For though his ^{novel} ~~story~~ takes place in Paris and in the Marne country ^{just} / outside Paris, and though the reader is well aware of physical sensation in this novel, it is necessary to point out that the novel really takes place inside the heart and mind of a

boy. Obviously, the external events of the story are important; but it ^{is} inside the boy's mind and feelings that the real adventures happen. So, in this, Radiguet is very much of his time, *as well as being representative of a lasting French preoccupation.*

In another respect Radiguet is very different from some of things that were happening in the artistic and literary world in the early 20s. And that is in the way he writes. I have mentioned DADA before (see no 4). As well as the older generation of writers whom I mentioned at no 10, who were all mature middle-aged by the outbreak of war in 1914, there was a younger group who for a short time went by the name of DADA. ^{cosmopolitan} Young writers and artists and practical jokers in whom the daring technical experimentation of their elders had become, in the atmosphere of precariousness and world's-end engendered by the War, a mania for silliness for the sake of silliness, of iconoclasm and self-advertisement, of noisy artistic happenings and demonstrations and uninhibited individualism, expressing itself in new designs, freakish art and music, new books, new ways of printing poems in the shape of butterflies or roses or raindrops trickling down the page. This loose, brilliant, muddled movement eventually dissipated its forces, some of its brighter young things going on to form the nucleus of the more important Surrealism (11), which was to survive as an important artistic force throughout the 20s and 30s. Among the aims of Dada and later of surrealism were: experimentation, invention, innovation, originality and spontaneity at any price in art and writing. The newer and more eye-catching a design, a play, a technique, a colour, a word, the better; the less conscious the intellectual processes, the less control of the creation by the artist, the better. Hence, drugs, alcohol, mysticism, ^{semi-consciousness} hypnotism, and anything else that would relax the control of the ^{mind,} ~~consciousness~~, would be used by the artist so as to release the suppressed strata of the unconscious. This release of the unconscious mind from the control of the waking intelligence ^{later} became known, in writing, as **écriture automatique** (12). The less the hand as it wrote was under the influence of the ~~the~~ ^{mind} conscious, the better; the less grammar, the better, the more colourful and personal the choice of words and images the better; for only by eliminating the control of the conscious ~~mind~~ ^{mind} could the newly discovered

*the aboriginal personality, as it were, be 9
discovers it*

*these
same
years*

the

riches of the unconscious mind be released and put on paper for communication to others. I say "newly discovered" because remember that it was only in the early 20s, that Freudian psycho-analysis, stressing the importance of the deepest strata of ^{suppressed} consciousness, began to have its vogue.

This avant-garde young movement, Dadaism, later Surrealism, was a movement that Cocteau momentarily had a finger in; and therefore Radiguet moved about too on the fringes of it for a while. The significance of this for us as readers of Radiguet is a sort of negative significance: the fact is that there is not a trace of surrealist themes or styles to be found in Radiguet. *And I mention it only because* ~~and~~ it says much for the self-confidence of the 18-year old, for his belief in himself and the ^{ness} surety of his purpose, that, when he came to write his novel, he steered clear of the ~~gimmickry~~ ^{ness} of the surrealist manner. In his early teenage verses there ^{some} are signs of his times, puns and made-up words in the vein of Apollinaire (13). But by the time he came to write in prose in *Le Diable au corps*, there is not a trace of the frenetic adolescent mania ~~for~~ of novelty-for-novelty's-sake that so characterized the work of so many of his generation and which makes them so dated and unreadable nowadays.

For the virtues of Radiguet's style are not novel or eye-catching. They are old-fashioned virtues which do not date like up-to-the-minute ones. For it is a paradox of fashion that nothing dates so quickly as the up-to-date. *who will want to wear a mink in 1985?* The virtues of Radiguet as a stylist are: ^{economy, direct density} simplicity, directness, clarity, control, unpretentiousness. *i.e. they are* The opposite of what was being written all about him by others of his generation in the early 20s, who were climbing on the bandwagon of the ~~same~~ surrealists. Open the book at any page and see if you can find a sentence more than 3 or 4 lines long — there will be some, but not many. Or look for a sentence that is tortuous or complicated in its syntax or structure, or mannered in its expression; again, not many, if any at all. Open it at random and count the dazzling images, images that look as if they have been put in for decoration, for effect, to show what a clever young chap the writer is — one would be hard put to it to find any and even if you did could you count them on more than 5 fingers? Count the number of neologisms, of new words which he

See Rodriguez's

description of a word

graphic scene: of -

- a) la bonne sur le toit;
 b) la nuit avec ^{ceci} Mathe;
 c) ~~les roses~~ sur le jardin

looking for decorative instead of
functional wordage. > très peu.

mostly statement of fact, little fancy
 ornamentation: a good example of what E.
 Henryway once said in another context:
 "less prose is architecture, not
 interior decoration" (14).

invents, or old words to which he gives a trendy twist. Again, they are few and far between. Seek out any smart eye-catching devices and you notice the lack of them. ^{→ 10.1 → "Prose is architecture, not interior decoration" (Hemingway) (14)} Try then to define what it is that gives to this little book its impact and effectiveness as an emotional experience for a reader. As with any successful art, the secret lies not just in the story and the subject-matter, not in the precociousness of the artist, but in the resources he uses and the way he uses them. And in Radiguet's case, that means words, plain words used as simply as possible.

~~But haven't I said that Radiguet's language is well-nigh devoid of striking imagery, of what some might look on as "fine" writing, of showy writing. Yes, I have. And~~ the moral is that startling imagery and so-called fine writing, if it is for show, do not usually make for powerful writing, for writing that makes its effect by its directness, by the concentration of its contents into the most economical form. As an example of what I mean, consider for a moment the case of proverbs, eg "Time and tide wait for no man", or "In for a penny, in for a pound", etc. Such sayings make their effect not by startling imagery or by novelty, but by economy, simplicity and 2 other elementary poetic devices: alliteration and rhythm. And ~~the~~ something similar is true of Radiguet at his best — I don't mean that his style is proverbial, or alliterative and rhythmic like a proverb, but rather that he uses language with the same sparingness as a proverb. He writes curt, uncomplicated clauses. He knows the force of economy of detail, he has an eye for the telling detail. He knows the value of the space between the lines, as it were, and is forever tending towards effacement of the writer, so that there shall be no screen of decor between the story's effect and the reader. He is forever striving towards understatement, eg see on p 22, 5 or 6 lines from the bottom of that page, the 2 brief sentences beginning *Revenu à moix, ilallonges dans l'herbe*. In these few words, which actually leave out the important thing that he is trying to convey through these 2 sentences, Radiguet shows his mastery of the art of understatement. For these two lines are crammed with emotive effect, and manage to ~~suggest~~ convey by suggestion, most powerfully convey, a moving bond of kinship &

sympathy and ~~shared~~ strong emotion shared between the youngster and his father. Without mentioning anything about the actual feeling, but by limiting himself to a brief technical description of the surroundings and a mention of how long they stay lying in the grass without speaking, he sketches most touchingly what he wants the reader to feel: that sympathy, unspoken, that exists between the father and the boy. *Because it is unspoken, it is unmentioned in the text, but the 2 sentences are not really about the scene, but about the feeling young man and the father, which they describe, inside the boy's mind.*

The greatest virtue of this style is its ordinariness, in a word: its banality, one of the most sterling virtues of what in French is known as classical style (of which more anon). *in melle 3* And Radiguet's masterly handling of it at 17 shows not only how well he had resisted the temptations of the gimmickry of style that was prevalent all about him in his own generation, but also shows how well he had read and absorbed the stylistic lessons of Stendhal and Mme de La Fayette in that boat on the Marne. For it was Stendhal who wanted his style to be as plain ~~x~~ and trite as a newspaper report, as matter of fact as the

code civil, which he would read ~~to~~ before writing, to get the feel of the plain clear language in which it is written. *unambiguous* *(cf. his letter to Balzac, 16-10-1840: "Je ne vois qu'une règle: le style ne saurait être trop clair, trop simple" (15).)* And it was Mme de La Fayette who, as far back as the 17th century, helped to create this way of writing, which is as

French as good cooking. It was this virtue of ordinariness, of banality, that Cocteau said later that he had tried to inculcate in Radiguet, by repeating to him *Torsten Wernicke's (17th century tragedian)* ~~EFFORCEZ~~ *(16)* vous d'être banal. *something of* And it was this same meaning that Radiguet expressed in the statement at *(17)*: *Il faut faire des romans comme tout le monde.*

One must not strive after effect, after making oneself different for the sake of difference. To say that Radiguet cultivates banality or ordinariness, to say that he wants to write a novel like anyone else, does not mean that his book ends up a trite one, but only that his way of writing gives an appearance of banality. *(17)* It is his style, not his content, that is banal. His way of putting it, in a laconic, controlled report, brings out all the more the extraordinariness of what he actually says. Just as in any other art-form, smart effects can be used to disguise emptiness, while simplicity of resources demands that one should have something to say that is worth saying. *cf. pop songs: empty vessels* For in fact it is much more demanding and difficult to write briefly and with strict discipline, than to

** cf. Barthes on Vauvenargues: RR fits exactly that description from V. (18)*



THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

BOX 4, P.O., CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2600

for Radiguet:

Barres Œuvre, VI, p. 265, says:

« Ceux qui sont nés éloquentes, ~~dit Vauvenargues~~ parlent quelquefois avec tant de clarté & de brièveté des grandes choses qu'à la plupart des hommes ~~on~~ n'& imaginent pas qu'ils en parlent avec profondeur. » (18).

P.S. I cannot trace this to its source (presumably in the Maxims?). Nor does Barres, needless to say, give any reference. (P.S. 1976 - I find it! in Kevin Cumery's little Vauvenargues, p. 60)

effuse and be long-winded and use high colours to hide the poverty of what one actually has to say in a smokescreen of words. As a reminder of that difficulty and of the virtue of control and self-discipline in writing, I leave you with the thought of Pascal, ending a long-winded letter to a friend with the neatly turned paradox which I give you at ⁽¹⁹⁾ ~~(18)~~ ~~(17)~~, quote from memory:

Excusez-moi de vous écrire une si longue letter; je n'ai pas eu le temps de la faire plus courte ⁽¹⁹⁾ ~~(17)~~ ~~(18)~~.

ne venent pas.

Mes Reuerends Peres, mes Lettres n'auoient pas accoustumé de se fuire de si prés, n'y d'estre si estenduës. Le peu de temps que j'ay eu a esté cause de l'un & de l'autre. Je n'ay fait celle-cy plus longue que parce que ie n'ay pas eu le loisir de la faire plus courte. La raison qui m'a obligé de me hastier, vous est mieux connue qu'à moy. Vos Respones vous reüffissoient mal. Vous auez bien fait de changer de methode; mais ie ne sçay si vous auez bien choisi, & si le monde ne dira pas que vous auez eu peur des Benedictins.

Je viens d'apprendre² que celui que tout le monde faifoit auteur de vos Apologies les

1. — Une correction manuscrite de notre collection in-4°, adoptée par l'édition in-8° de 1659 et par toutes les éditions suivantes : *A de saintes religieuses*.

2. — Le second paragraphe de ce P. S. qui commence par les mots : *Je viens d'apprendre*, ne se trouve pas dans notre collection in-4°; mais quelques autres exemplaires in-4° le donnent, ainsi que les deux éditions in-12 de 1657, attribuées aux Elzeviers, l'édition in-8° de 1659 et toutes les éditions suivantes. Nicole n'a pas manqué de le traduire dans sa version latine de 1658. Si notre collection in-4° ne contient pas ce second paragraphe, nous aurons sans doute le droit d'en conclure que notre exemplaire a paru avant que Pascal

lettres
provinciales
lettre XVI,
fin