Burning Books

Sovereignty and the Fire of Literature

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How are we to understand the drive to destroy cultural objects? Where does the impulse to ruin buildings, paintings, and statues derive from, and how are we to explain the burning of books? Today such impulses may be intertwined with spiraling motions of radicalization.

However, radicalization, as such, whether political or religious, cannot on its own explain the terroristic acts of destruction toward objects that have served as the pillars of culture. Research on book burnings (which is not extensive) has primarily focused on the act as a substitution for violence leveled against humans—for instance, works of literature may be burnt because the authors are of a certain ethnic origin, represent a certain sexual identity, express a certain religious or political belief system, and so on. Few have considered the excessive aggression that the object itself—i.e.,

the book—may raise. How are we to interpret violence directed at something that is *not* human? What is there to hate?

In the burning of books, something is at stake that is directed not against people but against the book as a specific kind of object. Book burnings may be considered from a perspective that is irreducible to ideology, psychologism, political and religious protest, etc. Book burnings are not only acts of instrumental value. What is it, then, in the book that book burners wish to ruin? Book burning is certainly as old as the book itself, and as multifaceted. On the following pages, I will consider some recurring patterns. First, the attack on cultural objects is not merely a substitute for taking human lives. It is also directed toward an overarching freedom that the book seems to assert—construing its own universe, establishing its own laws, demonstrating its aesthetic autonomy, and so on. The variety of forms are infinite. To understand this, we need to explore what kind of freedom the book encompasses. This dimension may be profitably considered in terms of the concept of sovereignty, as explored by Georges Bataille.

Secondly, although book burnings are irreducible to wars against people, including wars against people of a certain sexual identity, the aggression involved is amplified when the book's connotations are sexual. Sexual connotations trigger the aggressor. The sovereignty of the book and its possible sexual components have something in common: They raise an aggression against the kind of enjoyment that the book represents in its freedom. This kind of enjoyment, as explored by Georges Bataille and Jacques Lacan in different ways, takes us beyond the kind of pleasure that the book might represent in terms of other aspects—aesthetic qualities, religious message, political ideas, etc. Lacan's analysis of enjoyment encourages us to explore further; this enjoyment cannot be detached from an anxiety that may, in turn, provoke an urge to destroy.

It may seem like a mystery that so much violent aggression can be directed against an object that has no apparent life and no apparent power. Yet, the lives of books go beyond the political and religious struggles of the moment and are directed toward generations to come. Book burnings are not futile symbolic gestures; the aim is, ultimately, to ruin cultures and ways of life. With their actions, book burners may well unravel the true power of the book.

The Hypothesis of Substitution

The idea that the book burning substitutes for killing people has a long history. We hear it in John Milton's claim in the turbulent seventeenth century that book burnings are a "kind of homicide" and in Heinrich Heine's famous saying, "where they burn books, they burn people."[1] Most accounts of book burnings show how the political, cultural, social, and religious details that surround the burning is a type of violence directed against people. Historically, this is, of course, one reason why books are burnt. In Germany in 1933, book burnings were a part of the project to obliterate ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities. In other cases, books have been burnt because they signify the heretic, the Jew, the Muslim, the homosexual. In still other cases, they may signify the colonized, the excluded, and so on.

The idea that the burning of books, as an aspect of cultural destruction, is a premonition of religious, ethnic, or political killings can be confirmed not only by events from the seventeenth century, or Nazi Germany. It can also be demonstrated by the fact that Serbs set fire to Bosnia's National and University Library in 1992 as well as the systematic and extensive destruction of statues, cultural artifacts, and libraries in areas controlled by ISIS—libraries in Mosul, Iraq, for instance, such as the public

library that contained 8000 rare old books and manuscripts. As we all know, the destruction of cultural objects is an integral aspect of modern wars and conflicts. The reason for this may be interpreted from different angles.

To one scholar, Haig Bosmaijan, books can be seen as metaphors or metonymies for human beings. Therefore, book burnings have a ritualistic side which make them integral to war and conflicts—as if disposing of one's enemy. Book burnings are performed as magic rituals in which objects that represent poison, dehiscence, pestilence, etc., are cleansed from society. But beyond the books loom actual human beings—bonfires are a way of stopping a poison that is spread by humans.[2] Another scholar, Rebecca Knuth, has looked at the modern fate of book burning and interpreted it as a tool for various forms of extremism (we would perhaps also use terms such as radicalization today). In her scenario, also, burnings are performed by people and are ultimately directed against people, although books are a particular kind of cultural object. Knuth uses the burning of Harry Potter books early in the twenty-first century in the US as a paradigmatic case. Here a pattern of extremism, renunciation, and affirmation emerges: Harry's magic is denounced as the work of the devil, and Christ is seen to return with the fire of destruction.[3] Book burnings are tools of political or religious extremist protests, demonstrative acts of purification, organized violence, and threats, aiming to install a new order. All this takes place with the book as a symbol, but the ritual is performed by people and directed against people, according to Knuth.

If we look at the Harry Potter case from another angle, however, we may perceive that the book is not a substitute for humans. A webpage of satire, which comes almost too close to reality in copying the words of fanatics, states: "'The Potter series is worse than pornography. The books are even more dangerous than the Satanic Bible,' reports Pastor Deacon Fred: 'At least

with the Satanic Bible, young people know that the book was written by Satan'."[4] The followers are then ordered to burn all Harry Potter books, as should have been done, the webpage says, with the works of Plato, Aristotle, and all the other infidels. It is easy to laugh at such orders and to ridicule the fanatics. But the violence that was implored when the "real" Harry Potter book burnings took place was no less the aggressive manifestation of a would-be new order of rule.

Book burnings may be directed against certain groups of people, and they are performed by certain groups of people. But there is another dimension to add to the analysis: Books represent a kind of symbolic power that humans in themselves are incapable of incorporating. The power of Harry Potter by far exceeds that of its author, or, for that matter, its teenage readers. The hatred and fear it has evoked may seem excessive if we do not understand what the power of the book consists in; after all, a book cannot fight back or enforce a belief system. It is, therefore, difficult to maintain that the burnings of books substitute for aggression against people. What we see, rather, is an antagonism: On the one hand, we see the freedom of the book, which by far exceeds that of authors or readers, and on the other, we see the hatred of the destroyers, which is far more excessive than the power that the book may seem to represent. The antagonism between freedom and affect is the origin of the spiraling drive of destruction. In other words: The more sovereign or free the book seems to be in the eyes of its aggressors, the more hatred it will incite.

Book Burnings, Desire, and the Drive

Book burnings are not simply replacements for the destruction of people, whether that destruction is propelled by racism or religious fanaticism. Anti-Semitism, however, which was certainly

an aspect of the bonfires in 1933, is, in Theodor Adorno's analysis in *The Authoritarian Personality*, ideology imposed on a drive beyond all control. In the phantasies of the anti-Semite, the Jew is responsible for everything that is bad. Also, in Germany of the 1930s, the anti-Semite had no difficulty imposing a punishment grossly disproportional to what the Jew was accused of. The response to "filth," "meanness," etc. was extermination. As in the quote of Gotthold Lessing from the play *Nathan der Weise*: "Tut nichts, der Jude wird verbrannt." The Jew must burn no matter what he does.[5]

The violence directed against books may seem extraordinarily excessive. "Verbrennung in Berlin," Freud wrote in his diary on May 11, 1933; which meant, "it is burning in Berlin." But also, "I am burning in Berlin." Nazi organizations in Germany, student organizations, in particular, organized big national book bonfires, especially Jewish books. The list of authors whose books were burnt in Berlin in 1933, is long: John Dos Passos, Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, John Galsworthy, André Gide, Maxim Gorki, Ernest Hemingway, Erich Kästner, Helen Keller, Jack London, Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust, H.G. Wells, and many others. Perhaps Brecht was right in looking at the fire as a badge of honor in his poem about the writer whose books were not burnt:

> Burn me! he wrote with his blazing pen—
> Haven't I always reported the truth?
> Now here you are, treating me like a liar!
> Burn me![6]

Indeed, in the long history of bonfires that still goes on, it is not only literary works that are targeted. The example of Germany in 1933 was by no means the only significant event, but it is an easy example to resort to since we know many details about it. It shows that book burnings are propelled not only by the desire

to obliterate ideas of a specific kind or people of a specific origin or identity: Book burnings target books because of the multifaceted forms of freedom that they represent.

German writer Eric Kästner, whose works were thrown on the fire in Berlin in 1933, gives witness to this in his account of the destruction. Kästner not only witnessed aggression and hatred against the book but also moving attempts by students, who were called in to destruct the books, to rescue works from the fire. They hid them under their feet and in their jackets. In doing so, they showed their tenderness for the literature they were set to destroy.

Kästner also witnessed the famous symbolic beheading of Magnus Hirschfeld's statue as the Institut für Sexualforschung was brought down; the head was paraded through town in an act that gave witness to the sacrificial enjoyment involved. He also tells how he made a narrow escape after having been caught witnessing the burning of his own works.

Kästner concludes that the destruction, which was orchestrated by university people, targeted not primarily the so-called other, the Jew or the communist. It was most of all an expression of self-hatred, and it must be seen as a kind of suicide. Here Kästner refers to Heidegger and the *Rektoratsrede* from the same year. According to Kästner, Heidegger's own philosophy came to signify a decline of critical reflection, which, in turn, was to become Heidegger's own intellectual destiny.[7] In pointing to the Führer as signifying the coming of a new reality, philosophy betrays the sovereignty of its own practice. Heidegger assumes both "the heutige and künftige Wahrheit" of dictatorship—its present and future truth. These lines are important: He refers to a spirit, *Geist*, not only of present times but of the future. This will affect, according to Kästner, any writings he is ever to produce.

Here we have reason to repeat the succinct point that the book and the human are not the same. As Hannah Arendt has argued in *The Human Condition*, cultural objects such as

books are not the same as human lives. They live beyond human generations, and it is this permanent quality that makes them incorporate another, much longer timeline. Extending beyond the lifespan of humans, they condition human lives. Finite lifespans are exceeded by the extended, seemingly eternal object of art. In this way, cultural objects, such as works of art or books, come to uphold a value beyond their immediate aesthetic, social, or economic worth.

The Holocaust was intimately connected with the destruction of books and objects. The destruction of Jewish culture can certainly be linked to the destruction of a group that was excluded, violated, and terminated. However, the symbolic act of burning books goes beyond the violence performed against a certain group; it extends to the will to exterminate the very possibility of future lives.

Where they burn books, they not only burn people; they destroy the words and stories that determine what is to count as people, or humans, and ultimately the possibility to have a life. This is a perspective that challenges the saying of Heine, "Where they burn books, they burn people."

What one attempts to burn and obliterate is not only an object that symbolizes the Jew, the Muslim, the homosexual, etc. The bonfires do not only demonstrate hatred of the other; they illuminate the fear of an indestructible alterity that lies at the heart of the book. Book burnings are directed against something that lies beyond existing lives: the future of generations to come.

Must We Burn Kafka?

In what way may the book exceed the representation of humans and condition futural lives? What is it, in the book, that calls for destruction? To examine this, we will turn to the concept of

sovereignty, which has drawn a lot of attention in recent years, even beyond its original sense as a symbolic dimension of law in political theory. The literary work is the paradigmatic example of a book that symbolizes both anxiety and pleasure, sparking enjoyment as well as aggression.

There is an intrinsic relation between the concept of sovereignty and literature, a relation that has been explored by Georges Bataille, in particular. After the Second World War, the communist journal *Action* published an issue in which they asked: Should Kafka be burnt? Kafka's works had already been burnt in 1933, but the question pertained to something else. Kafka explicitly wanted to have his manuscripts destroyed by his friend Max Brod, after his death. In fact, his handing over his manuscripts to Max Brod resulted in a legal battle that lasted 80 years. It ended as late as in 2019, when the manuscripts were finally transferred to the National Library in Tel Aviv, after fights with other claimants of Brod's legacy. In *Literature and Evil*, Bataille answers *Action*'s question: Kafka's authorship was a life slowly burning out. Kafka never wrote with a specific goal in mind. To Bataille, his authorship could be regarded as an interminable practice of enjoyment. Writing was a practice that could not be conducted with the formal guidance of an author's title and reputation. It had to be carried out on the side, before or after office hours in the insurance company where Kafka worked to please his father. Bataille sees this as an infantile aspect of his subjectivity that also determined the character of his work: Kafka lived in the shadow of his father, apparently in a manner that seemed like everyday normalcy, but his "real" existence took place on the side: in the dream, in writing, in phantasy. This was a form of escape which in itself offered no freedom. Freedom was rather found in the irrational impulsiveness of his heroes. As Bataille puts it, Kafka's writings became a world of absolute irresponsibility, of "the unrestrained caprice of his heroes,

their childishness and carelessness, their scandalous behavior and obvious lies."[8] The act of writing, Bataille writes, became a sort of compensation "for the defeat before the father."[9] In this act, Kafka's writing develops through the intimacy of death and eroticism, in a state of sovereignty, which is not unlike the writing of de Sade: a sovereignty that appears to be produced in an absence of laws. The writing reflects the useless attempt to "flee from death" into childishness, irresponsibility, and egoity. The sovereignty that it acts out through the establishment and destruction of other kinds of laws than those contained in the social sphere, is "suffused with useless liberty." In his writings, Kafka does not only represent parables of the law that confront us with their enigmatic demands as an act of literary-philosophical reflection. Writing offers him the clandestine pleasure of opposing the father in the erection of his own phantasmatic laws. It is this specific enjoyment of writing that infuses literature with sovereignty. Through his very act of writing, Kafka performs a simultaneous movement of freedom and submission, enjoyment and refusal, which to Bataille was inherent in the literary embodiment of sovereignty as such.

Sovereignty comes in the form of expanse, an excess that will continuously emerge in the guise of new forms and paths. This, for Bataille, is an aspect of religion, but also of art and literature. Bataille sees literature as an experience that does not mirror social, economic, or symbolic structures—literature transgresses the limits of these structures and opens a source of mystic communion that holds an erotic potential. In literature, we lose ourselves at the cost of experiencing the real; literature forges a mystic communion with and beyond the law as an expression of sovereignty.

This notion of sovereignty is attached to a concept of excess, which to Bataille is an inherent aspect of literature. Literature does not only explore evil, as a philosopher casting a judging

glance at what evil is and is not. When it makes evil part of its voice, literature is evil; it brings with it features that may seem nihilistic—beyond good and evil—but this is only one aspect of the total freedom literature enjoys.

This is also what bestows the very force of sovereignty to literature. It does not need to mirror existing laws; it establishes its own. The enjoyment that accompanies the reading of texts, experiencing plays in the theater, writing of books, gives testimony to this excessive freedom: a freedom that goes beyond that of individual lives, even the lives of generations.

This excess can be described as the staggering and explosive movements of the literature of sovereignty. Kafka both bows to the father and opposes him, Bataille argues. It is easy to see how that paradox is possible: He bows to the law of the father and enjoys submitting to it because he acts out a phantasmatic scenario where the enjoyment of writing is irreducible to a given social order or the representation of a specific kind of authority. Enjoyment is produced by sacrificing to an Other at the level of phantasy. Here, we approach a structure that touches upon that which Bataille calls sovereignty; sovereignty is not the organism of an individual, detached from its social surroundings, nor is it the subjectivity of a cultural being. Sovereignty is attached to the structural components of the law and is expressed as the paradoxical enjoyment of submission.

Simone de Beauvoir has also used the trope of book burning in a work that, in many ways, can be seen as a pendant to Bataille's text on Kafka. In *Must We Burn Sade?,*[10] she examines a similar kind of logic that was an expression of sovereignty to Bataille: The sexuality of the writing subject, she argues, is submitted to the enjoyment of writing. This enjoyment is to be found at the pure level of phantasy, in the system of literature that Sade considers "demonic"; a life beyond contradictions and resistance, where "the sexual act creates the illusion of sovereign

pleasure which gives it its incomparable value."[11] Sade's eroticism is achieved, Beauvoir argues, not through murder but through literature. Again, we can see literature as the direct expression of enjoyment. Sade, like Kafka, operates a "useless liberty" of exuberant submission to a specific kind of enjoyment inherent in the literary embodiment of sovereignty, which Lacan has examined thoroughly in his text on "Kant avec Sade."[12]

With Bataille, Sade, Kafka, and Beauvoir—and many others—one may argue that literature represents a form of sovereignty that produces enjoyment. So how may we understand the subject of such literature? The subject of literature is not a transcendental subject or a subject of universality. Neither is it a destroyed subject, in the sense that it would be a non-entity. It is perhaps rather a mask, a position of marginality, a pretense, or a theatrical role of some sort. It may appear as a kind of "das Man," or man without qualities, as in Musil; it may appear as a blueprint, like K or Er in Kafka's short stories.[13] The subject of literature, as such, cannot appear. It must be accompanied by something that makes it appear. The subject of enjoyment can never present itself directly; it can only do so through the means of an aesthetic elaboration—for instance, a theatrical mask, a narrative, or a portrait. In this way, the signifier of the book and the subject of enjoyment are tied to each other. Here we confront an ineffable aspect of enjoyment: As the subject of literature becomes signs to others, it becomes ineffable to itself. The enjoyment of writing demands its own *mimesis*; this is to be found, although transformed, in the phantasy world of the work operating through its own laws of signification. The signifier is different from the sign. The sign has a meaning and a content; it represents something. The signifier points to nothing but itself. In a Lacanian register, a subject comes into being through a signifier that represents a subject for another signifier, meaning that subjectivity and language support each other: There is no

signifier conceivable beyond subjectivity, and no subject conceivable beyond the signifier. The subject of literature is not the author of his enjoyment; the enjoyment of writing must always pass through the desire of the enjoyment of the Other.

The Bonfires of Anxiety

How are we to conceive of the enjoyment of the Other? What we find in the question of Bataille as well as Beauvoir—must we burn Kafka, must we burn Sade?—is the provocation that Kafka and Sade might evoke: What right does literature have to pose as the sovereign? Indeed, neither Bataille nor Beauvoir would be found burning books; their titles are rather rhetorical hints at what literary works that are burnt might be seen to perform: claiming a scandalous right to enjoyment whilst undoing the law of the father as the unquestionable focus of sovereignty. Approaching literature as a discourse beyond content, genre, or expression of subjectivity, both Bataille and Beauvoir touch upon the scandalous core of literature. What literature does is challenge the law of the father as the indestructible core of the symbolic.

When literature creates its own order, it creates the conditions for enjoyment on its own. It stipulates the terms for the excesses and the enjoyment that only literature itself can produce. Enjoyment is a concept that refers to the concept of the drive in psychoanalysis. In Lacan's model, the modern subject is caught in the pangs between desire (which has an object) and *enjoyment* (which has none). What is interesting about the drive is not what it searches for, Lacan tells us in seminar 11, but the road it takes. Every partial drive, every aspect of the montage of the drive, is figured as a bow.[14] It may find its origin in the polymorph, perverse body. But it can be linked to something beyond the body: to the phantasy of the desire of the Other.[15] It is this

phantasy of the Other that literature both challenges and erects. It challenges the phantasy that may permeate a social order and erects another one, perhaps as a duplicate of an existing one—as in the case of Kafka's father—but it is still the expression of a sovereign will. Here again, we encounter the cause of the hatred of literature as an expression of unbounded freedom.

How are we to interpret the relation between literary enjoyment and the hatred it evokes? Aggression, to Freud, in *Civilization and its Discontents*, is part of human nature. "When an instinctual trend undergoes repression," Freud writes, its aggressive components, that is, the drive, is transformed into a sense of guilt.[16] A certain submission of the self follows. It becomes weak, deformed, and split. In this weak and exposed self, aggression may find a place to attach.

Such a weak ego is perhaps driven by anxiety, unable to respond to literature or freedom in other ways than aggression. In the short seminar on *On the Names of the Father*, Lacan makes clear that the Other is a signifier that, above all, commands: It may appear as "the sovereign good God" or as "the God of the Jews," a God who demands to have the subject fulfill his desire or a God who demands the *jouissance* of the subject:

> to enjoy when ordered to do so, is all the same something in which everyone senses that if there is a source, an origin of anxiety, it ought all the same to be found somewhere there. To this order "Jouis!," I can only answer one thing, which is: "J'ouis (I hear)." Of course, but naturally I do not enjoy so easily for all that.[17]

In *On the Names of the Father*, Lacan shows anxiety to be a state of affect, in which the desire of the Other is directed toward something that is missing. This is a state in which freedom appears not as possibility, but as anxiety. The subject needs to imagine itself to be desirable to the Other. In the condition of

imagining its desirability to the law, the subject exists in a state of anxiety. The phantasy of command solves the problem: In obeying the command of destruction, as in book burnings, there is no further question as to what the Other desires.

Anxiety, then, is a state in which the Other imposes a command to which the subject can never fully respond. If it attempts to respond, it will itself fade. Therefore, the God of command should be the law of the father, the prohibition, of castration. Literature, however, challenges such limits. If it produces enjoyment, it does so at the cost of limits and prohibitions—which is precisely what the subject of anxiety cannot do without.

In seminar 11, Lacan notes that the most remarkable aspect of the drive is revealed in the violence of the subject against itself; the drive is directed against something that he calls a "headless" subjectivation, a subjectivation without a subject properly speaking. Here, the drive becomes a question of *Herrschaft* and *Bewältigung*, or domination of the desire of the Other. The subject of the drive cannot escape the desire of the Other. In seminar 11, the domination of the drive causes the ascetic phantasy of the extermination of desire itself.

In other words, it is not a coincidence that book burnings are altogether paradoxical rituals—they take pleasure in the extermination of the enjoyment and freedom that the book may represent. Certainly book burnings signal hatred against the other, the wish to excommunicate or even extinguish beliefs and people. But what is at stake is also the obedience of a command: the command of God or a doctrine; the command that says, "destroy." The subject who burns books seeks to satisfy the desire of the Other. Here, the literary work emerges as an irresponsible and flippant answer to the question posed by the subject of fanaticism. Literature not only imagines itself to be free; it performs a perfunctory act of freedom in relation to the punishing Other whose desire it seeks to satisfy.

The Fire of Literature

Book burnings, then, do not simply replace the burning of people; they are attempts at destroying the sovereignty and enjoyment of literature.

As Giorgio Agamben has noted in his book on literature, *The Fire and the Tale* (*Il fuoco e il racconto)*, both reading and writing are metaphysical acts, apostrophizing a lost "mystery."[18] Using a fireplace in the woods as an allegorical image of an original place of meditation, Agamben reads the sovereignty of modern literature as a story of the loss of a "mystic" feature which literature has not ceased to try to recapture. Both reading and writing are acts of creation that search for something lost; a metaphysical dimension that can sometimes leave material traces through the blankness of the page; traces that we can find, for instance, in the elliptic contractions of Kafka's parables, the short notes of Simone Weil's diaries, or Augustin's *retractasiones*.

What Agamben is after, in attempting to pinpoint the fire of the book as something that lies both within and beyond material aspects of it, is the fact that in reading, thinking, and phantasizing with books, we deal not so much with a human capacity as with the power of literary language. This power is intimately connected with what he calls a Messianic dimension. The Messianic dimension of literature lies neither in vision nor hope; it lies rather in a qualitative transformation of experience.[19] Such a Messianic perspective points to something that has been repeated throughout: Literature dictates its own laws.

In the Messianic perspective on the book, literature is a fire of the soul. If the book burns, then human lives may be destroyed. But what burns is something other than people; what is at stake is rather the possibility of new beginnings, human and non-human. The book conditions lives, not only present lives but also past and futural ones. It conditions not

only the human in the present tense but also the possibility of new individuals. But this is not all. We experience the burnings of books as particular forms of disaster because they bring with them the foreclosure of new beginnings all in all—the foreclosure of futural lives, but also of new stories, new books, new ideas, new tales. It is not only human lives that are stake, but also the book as a form of life.

If books are burnt, it is not only because they symbolize people that must be destroyed, but because they stand for a form of life that must be prevented from forming anew, that must be obliterated without a trace. In other words, it is the possibility of other forms of life than that which can be represented under a particular regime, whether ethnic of religious, that is targeted. The target of the attack, then, is not so much the book as a material object, but the sovereignty of literature that it embodies.

The book burner lives between an imaginary idea of an omnipotent self and a self threatened by annihilation. Therefore, the burning of books cannot be cured by enlightenment. It is not only propelled by religion or ideology, but by anxiety. We need to reflect on book burnings not just as extreme expressions of fanaticism. We must understand the hatred that lies beyond fanatic ideologies and religions. Book burnings are not just a result of belief systems. They are directed at the very core of what the book represents as objects: the sovereignty and the excess of absolute freedom—and the right to enjoy them.

Notes

1. Haig Bosmajian, *Burning Books* (London: MacFarland, 2006), 7.
2. Haig Bosmajian, *Burning Books*, 7, 193–195.
3. Rebecka Knuth, *Burning Books and Leveling Libraries. Extremist Violence and Cultural Destruction* (Praeger: Westport, 2006).

4. Deacon Fred, "Book Burning: A True Christian® Tradition," accessed September 22, 2020, http://www.landoverbaptist.org/news1002/bookburning.html.
5. Theodor Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel Levinson, and Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950), 633.
6. Bertolt Brecht, "The Burning of the Books," trans. Michael R. Burch, accessed September 22, 2020, http://www.thehypertexts.com/Bertolt%20Brecht%20Poet%20Poetry%20Translations.htm.
7. Erich Kästner, Über *das Verbrennen von Büchern* (Zürich: Atrium, 2013 [1958]).
8. Georges Bataille, *Literature and Evil*, trans. Alastair Hamilton (London: Marion Boyars, 1985), 156.
9. Bataille, *Literature and Evil*, 163.
10. Simone de Beauvoir, *Must We Burn Sade?,* trans. Annette Michelson (London: Olympia Press, 2015).
11. De Beauvoir, *Must We Burn Sade?*, 6.
12. Jacques Lacan, "Kant with Sade," trans. James B. Swenson Jr., *October* 51 (1989).
13. Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harvest, 1968), 154–155.
14. Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Seminar XI, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1998), 177–178.
15. Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, 183.
16. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents, Standard Edition XXI*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), 139.
17. Jacques Lacan, *On the Names of the Father*, trans. Bruce Fink (London: Polity Press, 2005), 272.
18. Giorgio Agamben, *Le feu et le récit*, trans. Martin Rueff (Paris: Bibliothèque Rivages, 2015), 65.
19 Agamben, *Le feu et le récit*, 128–130.

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