

Chauvin, Acceptance



Joshua Cohen

Mesdames et Messieurs! Thank you for coming this evening to celebrate me—humble me, meek me, modest me, me. Nicolas Chauvin. Nicolas Joseph Lucien Louis Jérôme Merovingia Carolingia Capet Valois Bourbon Louis XVI Chauvin, the Honorable, the Tolerable, the III. Soldat-laboureur. Eponym and Grenadier (though a Fusilier at heart and in the sack). Armée de Réserve. La Grande Armée. If you please. If you don't like my accent, admire my vocabulary. And if you don't like my vocabulary, feel free to admire my looks.

This is how French sounds in outer space.

I have been asked here tonight, summoned from the starry halls of immortal posthumity, un petite Valhalla, to accept this award—surely there's an award!? But I will do more than consider accepting whatever meager crappy Made in Taiwan tribute you offer—I will do much more, as I always do. I will give you a speech. A speech and a toast with champagne from Champagne, a weepy eulogy, melodramatical motivational seminar, art crit symposium followed by a scrap of grand opéra loosely based on an historical theme.

This one's for the ladies.

Lots of ladies out here tonight.

Bitches, vicious grasping cunts, prepare: I will tell you about myself.

I was born on the best day of the best year of the best country of the best earth. 4 juillet 1776. My father was a large slow man. A farmer with a congenital lip problem who, in his younger years, was something of a minor Celtic deity. Bon, he was a god. Bon, he was God. As for my mother, she was France. Marianne, that was her name. That liberty woman. That girl naked under the tricolor cockade, the Phrygian hat. Always with that rooster, either next to her or in her hands or kept under her skirts, a cockerel, a cock, if you know what I mean.

Insatiable! my mother!

The town, the village really—go humbler, go meeker—was Rochefort, on the Atlantic. Birthplace too of Admiral de Genouilly, who conquered Vietnam. A war I was too old to fight in, a war I told the press I was too old to fight in only to allow others their glory. A great naval town, which was why I chose to join the army. At age six though pretending eighteen. If Rochefort had been an army town I'm sure I would've joined the air force but as there wasn't any air force in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries I would've had to form one and invent the airplane. I was always doing the daring, the unexpected, thing. Like just now, you do not expect me to say Jew pig Negro vagina. My childhood was uneventful. It was spent shaving, pipesmoking, and hanging by the harbor amongst the floating prison colonies. During the Revolution, under the Jacobins, we kept eighthundred Roman Catholic priests out there on a fleet of jail ships for refusing to take an oath against the pope. Most of them died. Starvation. Dehydration. Torture. That was my uneventful childhood. The shrieks of dying papists. A Wikipedia entry, which I wrote, claims that this was world's first concentration camp. If I were running its tourist bureau my modest birthplace would be putting that on postcards. I guess it's inevitable that Rochefort should've been chosen for me by destiny—every hero begins with a flaw, an origin myth.

Or could it've been chosen *by him*? fuck him! fuck that dwarf! to cast upon me and my posterity a tragic shadow?

Just off the coast of Rochefort was where the Hundred Days ended, which were really the Hundred and Ten Days but that doesn't scan as charming.

Just one inkling of the lies! the inky falsehoods!

This is difficult for me to talk about. Respect my difficulty or be destroyed.

Aboard the HMS Bellerophon was where He Who Can Go Fuck Himself surrendered. He was about to run off to America like a faggot with a pussy tucked between his legs. He should've fucking offed himself. Juillet just to spite me, 1815.

By that time I'd fought on eight continents. I'm including France as a continent. I was Old Guard at Waterloo and the oldest and only guard at La Belle Alliance. I was fucking Cincinnatus, fucking Alexander the Greatest but hey, no homo. The unknown soldier you just have to get to know. Still they always want to type you. The historians. The scholar scribblists. They always want to patronize the patriot. I should get a better agent. I'm in the market for an agent. They say no Nic you're a fucking alazôn, just some twobit cameo appearance Miles Gloriosus. Hey, Il Capitano, Major Grogardo, I got your toy fencing sword right here. Right here. I am grabbing my nuts. Grabbing my pistachios. They say take this honorary sabre, 200 francs for your troubles. Go home to your peasanthood, retreat, retire, exploit your exploits, fabulate, fabricate, just like him! no better!

Farm like your fallen godfather before you some reasonable root vegetable and be content slipping it to the local nurses, despite the fact! the fact! that every time it rains you get the aches—count them, quote them, “seventeen wounds, all from the front,” unquote. The front being the frontlines, of course. I've been stabbed in the back plenty, believe me. “Three fingers amputated, suffered a shoulder fracture, and a horridly disfiguring facial wound,” according to Jacques Arago, defining my accursed eponym in his *Dictionnaire de la conversation*, 1845. First time that cuss appeared. I'm not going to say it. I say it every day. The proper part of it anyway, the proprietary portion. I should be charging. I could be raking fees. Larousse mentioned me too by the way. He also slandered the good doctor Guillotin. And libeled Minister Jean Bigot, head of the Empire's Religious Affairs.

You think a few hundred francs and a pansy red ribbon paid for all this reconstructive surgery? Paid for, indeed, since the Maghreb slime so overtax our social services.

You know how hard it is to mount women like light cavalry and beat them senseless with a fractured shoulder?

That's posterity fodder, mes amis.

They had us backed against this wall at Waterloo. I don't mean figuratively, I mean the last goddamned wall of the last goddamned inn in all the Netherlands, now Belgium. It was like a firing squad firing on another firing squad. But there was only one wall and it was behind me and I was in front of it.

Some say I said something like, "never surrender!"

Others say I or some guy named Pierre I never met before and certainly never saw him around anywhere in Russia—anyway they said he was me or I him or we're both fictional characters composited from each other who all said together, "shit!"

Apparently some insufficiently murdered innkeeper's wife or daughter overheard it.

So maybe we did say "shit." Laugh all you want. I'd love to know what you'd say if I came at you with all the Seventh Coalition. The Brits alone were enough for me alone. But Prussia, suck a duck dick, it takes a lot of man to take down Prussia.

Now you'd say wait, Nicolas Joseph Lucien Louis Jérôme Merovingia Carolingia Capet Valois Bourbon Louis XVI Chauvin, you didn't take down Prussia. They won, you lost solely. Wellington and von Blücher ate your lunch, washed it down with rape fluid.

Merdeux! is that what you think?

Tell me about their immortalities! Wellington's famous for a beef stuffed in pastry and Blücher? He designed a type of boot, I think. The ship the Nazis named after him was sunk.

All officers are criminals.

I, however, have inspired great art. My bravery under fire, over fire, and even on fire has. My feats of derring do have. First Republic to Empire inclusive.

La Cocarde Tricolore, not a vaudeville, a play—legitimate the-a-tre, 1831. "Je suis français, je suis Chauvin." The author's name—what was it? Pierre? at least his words or let's be honest just my name, my unpacked but still like a pack to sadsack march with for uphill eternity and more name, will outlive any doggerel—by Apollinaire and Baudelaire and aire aire aire, Verlaine, Rimbaud. Though Apollinaire sure enjoyed his First World War, poor jingo.

I've been told I've even inspired a novel, you might know it, *War and Peace*, by some Russian hippie scum. A teetotaling nonsmoking veggiefuckingtarian. I've not read any of it but I know what I think of it, what to think of it anyway. I find it odd that this novel is based

on me but that in it I'm not only not French but Russian and actually two Russians—as if one true Frenchman can be defamed only by two Russian spies, codenames Bostov and Rolkonsky.

That book apparently celebrates, bon, bon, I will utter that assfuck appellation—Napoleon. Bonerparty. I'll even give his Napoléon that fey acute, that diacrit brow arched atop the e. Gaylord and lady. He deserves to be remembered correctly. That Corsican Arab. That greaseball Moor. *Warts and Penis* portrays him as fat and farty and short and he was definitely short and ineffective. If he wasn't a technical midget he sure had midget blood in him. But still the book tries to show his greatness, his genius—a fine imagination he had, that hippie mafioso, Lev Trotsky. He and Napoleon must've had the same complex.

I will say something now about names that are said. People use my name, not properly, not as a proper name, but as a regular word, they bend my capital, bow my knee, guillotine me minuscule—the nerve! O how hard will they be doomed to suck it!

But though I can be demoted, reranked, I will not be misunderstood.

Historians have always said I hetero loved Napoleon and would've fought with him to the end, I would've done anything for him: cooked last omelettes, taken care to pickup his shrouds from the drycleaner's—but the truth is, I hated the prick.

Historyboy! troopreviewer!

I fought for France. The France in my pants. His hand was always in his shirt. Milking that supernumerary nipple.

It's unconscionable that now in death my name's been resurrected as some breed of blind and deaf pet. As a devotee. A follower. Some abuser of the undeserving.

But there is no, but we are all, undeserving!

About the following allegations.

I served only what I believed in. Napoleon believed only in himself. Whereas I believed in fishy whores with massive pots of mayonnaise between the legs where I could dip my frenchfry. I believed in them to my dying day.

12 juillet 1906.

The day they pardoned Dreyfus.

Eight days after my hundredthirtieth birthday.

My frenchfry still as rigid ridged as ever.

About the abuse then.

Let the record show that I've only ever hated the haters.

Chauvinisme—there, I've said it.

To preserve what one believes in, yes, I'll accept this definition. To protect one's values, rights, land, life, and freedom from Algerians—that is me, that is us, yes, there can be no other synonyme.

But to use words or violence only to protect the self, to aggrandize the self, the individual—that must be Napoléonisme, that should be called Napoleonism.

Can I get a seat on the French Academy? can I get a seat?

We as a continent should remember this.

You each and every citizen should ask yourselves the toughies. If you want the Negroes out of Paris, is it because you can't stand their shiny muscles? or is it because their shiny sweaty just intimidatingly impressive horsemuscles are anathema to France?

The Chinks or Nips or Indopaks might've taken your job, but we must not set our foreign legions or nuclear arsenals against them unless or until they've also deprived us of our *cultural identity*—of the dignity, or nobility, of a hegemony to call our own. Because this was always our power. Le capital culturel, its colonies, their *kampfing*. Take my money and property but never cease to pay lip service for even a breath to the Eurosport Channel and the oeuvre of Depardieu.

To have a culture is to be a chauvinist—to be Chauvin. All for one and one for all. Libertéégalitéfraternité sororitélesbianisme. Remember: no one remembers the other three Napoleons.

In closing, I accept this prize on our behalf, don't forget to validate your parking, Le Pen 2012, Death to Algeria.

Let's stay in touch at nc@chauvin.com.

.fr was taken.