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*Les institutions vitales, de la violation à la démocratie*

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To understand why (and which) “institutions” are vital in an ethical and political sense, in our present moment of history, we have to understand how (and which) institutions are vital in a philosophical and ontological sense, for (and through) human beings in general. This is what we attempt in a paper which is also a synthesis of what we call “critical vitalism” on this particular theme, which is central to it. We thus show that every institution is the setting of explicit rules for a vital human practice, that democratic institutions answer the specific danger of what we call political violations between human beings and finally that they have to be critical institutions to answer the full range of human polarities and possible violations, up to language, discussion and science. The critical vitalist approach to institutions thus shows how some critical institutions are vital in more than one sense, in general and today.